GRADUATION SPEECH

FOR

SUZANNE WYNNE

Hello everyone!! I want to say that it’s a real pleasure to be here today, celebrating this milestone with all of you graduates, family, and friends. I want to thank \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for giving me the opportunity to speak with all of you at today’s commencement ceremony for the College of Education here at Towson, and I want to acknowledge all of the faculty, administrators and staff at Towson that support each one of us on our quest for knowledge. As one who dwells in both worlds-that of the **educator** and the “**educat-ee**,” I have a unique perspective and a profound appreciation for education and its essential impact on all phases of our lives. As many of you know, I am currently a graduate student in early childhood education as well as a full time first grade teacher and a single mother of three terrific children….(**If you want to make a joke you can say**) I know. That sounds like a lot of juggling…I really hope I don’t drop any of my kids!!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

Busy is an understatement. To me, it’s a luxury to have five minutes to sit down, but I am so blessed to have such great opportunities to learn from and teach my children, my students, my classmates-everyone really, and it is especially fitting for me to speak with you on the day you cross the threshold into “the real world.” Although for many of you, today signifies the completion of the formal part of your education, we all know the **truth**. We **never** stop learning, nor do we want to!!! We’re the lucky ones!! We know that the purpose and meaning of life is to learn and in turn inspire others to expand their knowledge. The Indian philosopher and spiritualist, Krishanmurti, had this to say: “There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning.” You may be leaving Towson today, but your bags are packed with knowledge and wisdom, and each one has just enough room to expand, grow and learn from all you will encounter as you travel through life. It is especially exciting for all of us, as educators, to be inspired as much by the lesson as by the student. Education is a self-fulfilling prophecy of sorts. The more you learn, the more you know, the more you want to know, the more you want to learn.

There will be a lot of people dependent on your skills and passion as an educator-no matter what you do. Whether you’re a teacher or parent, student or friend, colleague or neighbor, being a teacher is **who you are**, and we all make an incredible difference in everyone whose lives we touch. No matter where we are, we have the opportunity to open minds and nurture the inquisitive spirit, and that is the real gift. Will Durant once said “Education is the transmission of civilization.” Imagine the power in that statement!!!

We are teachers, and although we may never become wildly rich, you’ll soon see what true wealth is as you feel the profound impact of inspiring and guiding a young, open mind to new discoveries and revelations. Our benefits are built into our process and we can reap those rewards every day. From the light that shines in the face of a young student experiencing his or her first **AHA!** moment to the feeling one gets while observing your pupil realizing how to solve that mathematic problem, to the collective enthusiasm of an entire class participating together in a craft project, our rewards are perpetual. With a lot of patience and just enough empathy and wisdom, we have the power to transform the young lives of our next generation, and that’s an honor.

Once again, congratulations to all of today’s graduates and may your education continually evolve in the school of life! Thank you!