GRADUATION SPEECH

FOR

RAVI PATEL

Hello everyone!! I want to welcome all of our friends, family, faculty, administration, and of course to you, my fellow graduates… congratulations!! We made it!! We did the work. We learned our lessons… at least most of them… we studied, we practiced… we took our tests and planned our next moves…. and up until, oh, maybe a few days ago I’m sure we all thought, “Enough’s enough!! I’m OUT. OF. HERE!!! Time to conquer the world!!! Guess what? Be careful what you wish for!! The moment has arrived and we really, truly are out of here, and it’s time to face all of the excitement and wonder of the unknown as we leave this familiar place and go off to conquer the world… or at least our own parts of it. I know our time here at Carl Harrison High School has been great. Alone and together as a class we have experienced a wild ride and even though we may roll our eyes at the thought that we just lived through some of the best years of our lives, I think we’ll discover in ten or twenty or thirty years that this is so.

It’s been a real privilege acting as your class president for the past year. Senior year is traditionally the one that will really stay with us and work to teach us how to transition from high school student to college or workplace careers and we’ve all had those “experiences” that will play back in our hearts and minds as we work to determine out our paths through the next parts of our lives. I know for me, being the class president gave me an idea of what it means to be a leader. I learned how to schedule meetings and organize them, I learned to listen to everyone’s input and find the common ground that worked to advance our goals as a class. This year as seniors, I am proud to say we (**Name 3 accomplishments the class achieved as a whole**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**Did you have any fundraising events? How much money and resources did you raise?**), our teams \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**mention any special athletic victories**), and our academic achievements gave us much to be proud of (**Name any distinctions or the percentage of the students that have scored well in testing, etc**) as we \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Of course as class president, I had certain powers that might have really impacted this commencement ceremony-powers that maybe you didn’t even know about, but let’s just say, I used them for good-not evil…. even though I was on the graduation committee I was considerate… Honey Boo Boo (**or any other character you might think of to make the audience laugh**) was **NOT** asked to be our guest speaker today!! (**Wait for the laugh**)

Today is for joking and celebrating, and saying our “good byes” and “good luck” and tomorrow is for …. Well actually, tomorrow is for recovering-but that’s another story… (**Wait for the laugh**)… but in the days that follow, as we all prepare for the next steps to adulthood, responsibility and the rest of our lives, I’m sure lots of thoughts will be swimming in our heads. Our time at Harrison High has given us the chance to build a strong foundation. We have definitely been in our own “comfort zones” for the past four years and our worlds are about to change… some will change a little and some will change A LOT. No matter where your own personal journey may take you, there are some thoughts I have that I will keep with me and I invite you to do the same. First of all, since we’ve all grown up in this digital age, remember you are not alone. If you need wisdom, or a helping hand with a problem, or some much needed encouragement, there is no need to feel alone. Even though we have to do our work on our own, your “cheerleaders” watch over you. A couple of clicks on your keypad and you can be reminded, “She believed she could, so she DID.” If you go away to college and you’re feeling homesick or overwhelmed, you can find hope in expressions like, “Don’t count the days. Make the days COUNT.” And we can learn of the wisdom of people who dared to find their way before us, like Eleanor Roosevelt who said, “The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

High school is the part of our lives where we learn to be responsible, compassionate, informed adults. Now that we’ve graduated, it’s time to take those tools and use them. It’s time to remember the lessons and find the curiosity they inspired to learn more. It’s time to think of all that our parents and families and friends have done for us while we studied and planned and did our schoolwork. It’s time to remember the words of President John F. Kennedy and question how we will impact the future. It’s time to really consider and ask not what everything and everyone can do for us. Instead, ask what WE can do for our families, our communities and the world we are about to inherit.

I know that I will miss this great high school life …and all of you. I know, and I am sure you will all agree, that we have found some of our best friends for life while at Harrison… and although going off into the future makes me wonder and imagine what it will be like, not seeing your faces every day, not sharing our private jokes and mutual experiences, I am also really excited. Some may see nothing, but I choose to see a big blank canvas-one on which I will do my best to choose the colors and the shapes that will fill my canvas, and create my future, with hope, possibility, and amazing experiences that I eagerly look forward to sharing with all of you.

As I introduce our valedictorian, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I would like to say, congratulations to my fellow graduates and thank you all!! \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, take it away!!