**14419, Eileen Sheehy – graduation**

Good Afternoon Everyone,

I’d like to welcome everyone here today for the 2015 graduating class for Wells High School. Today represents change for our young men and women graduating today. Completing high school is a transition that everyone experiences. It is the end of your compulsory education and the beginning of the next season of your lives. Life as you have known it, will never be the same. You will experience many changes after today. As the late President John F. Kennedy once said, “Change is the law of life.”

Some are going to college, some may be joining the military and some already have jobs lined up. You have already had to think about the upcoming changes you will have to face. Some of you are better prepared than others, but I believe you will all face them and find your way, one step at a time. You will find that change will surely interrupt your routines and your feelings. You will find it daunting at times. That is when you need to search deeply to find your own skills and tools to embrace those changes, along with the potential that change has to be a powerful influence on your growth.

Whenever you have decisions to make and new steps to take, be sure to do your research so that you are fully informed before you have to make your decision. Then, once you have done your research, take a risk and make your decision. Don’t let the idea of change scare you from stepping into the areas of unknown. You can chunk it out; you can take one day at a time; you can make it happen. You must believe in yourself and your abilities. “The world hates change, yet it is the only thing that has brought progress,” Charles Kettering said.

Change can be a frightening thing if you allow it to be. But, change can also be a valuable experience. Change is that thing that forces us to adjust, to reflect, and to grow. We need change to push us to new heights and to give us self-confidence. It is that thing in which we fear, but also that thing in which we must embrace. If we do not accept and embrace change then we will stagnate like standing water. It’s so much better to be like a running stream that leads to ever growing waterways until it reaches the ocean, becoming all that it can be. According to Gail Sheehy, “If we don’t change, we don’t grow. If we don’t grow, we aren’t really living.”

“Change, like sunshine, can be a friend or a foe, a blessing or a curse, a dawn or a dusk,” according to William Arthur Ward. It is, therefore, something to be encouraged, something to be sought after, and something to be embraced. For if we view it as sunshine, a friend, a blessing and a new dawn, then we will only see the possibilities and not be held back by the fear of change.

Good Luck to each of you as you accept your diplomas today and step out into a new season.

Thank you