SENIOR DEDICATION/RECOGNITION SPEECH

FOR

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Hello everyone and welcome to Senior Dedication/Recognition Night at Forest Lake Academy High School. It’s wonderful to see so many of you here tonight and it’s particularly exciting to have this gathering soon after our terrific and interesting Senior Outbreak Weekend. (**If you want to make a little joke you can say**) You know, I was thinking…. It really makes sense to call this dinner a **RECOGNITION** dinner… especially since we’ve all gotten to share more and more of our uniqueness as we work to learn and discover just what our contribution is and will be to the world. I have to say that I really **DO** recognize you so much more than before! Wow!! This is quite a special group!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Our outbreak trip served many functions but the most important gift it gave us was to see each other in different lights….. literally. As you enter your senior year at Forest Lake Academy High School you will find that you are being prepared to see life and challenges and opportunities in many different lights and tonight’s dedication/recognition dinner is one of the first senior events in what will hopefully be a long tradition of acknowledgement, appreciation, and celebration for each of you.

At outbreak we saw one another in daylight, moonlight, and the light of the campfire. But the light from our faith shines on us all of the time. It is a privilege to be a part of this community and to see the next generation take shape while it prepares to lead us into the future. It’s now time to take the steps to ready ourselves for what lies ahead on the road of life. (**If you want to make a joke you can say**) As Adventists we know of God’s design to prepare us for life. We know that there are precious lessons to be learned through suffering. Welcome to senior year!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Elizabeth Kubler-Ross once said, “The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of those depths.” (**You can add**) …. Sounds like Dr. Ross took \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ class!! (**Name a teacher that offers a particularly challenging science or math class and wait for the laugh**). Of course you know I joke, but it’s just my way of acknowledging that adult life will throw curve balls and with education, close community, and a firm belief in God, you will all prevail. There are many lessons in life to learn. Many are not packaged within schoolbooks or in your teachers’ lesson plans, but through your school career you have been earning the tools you will need to make your way in the adult world.

Knowledge is power!! Strength in numbers!!! Enthusiasm is viral!! These are all expressions that you as individuals and as a class have brought to life and as a close observer of this class I know I speak for all of your teachers and supervisors when I say we are very, **VERY** proud of each one of you. To watch you as individuals and then as a group is very gratifying. You’re paying attention!!!! Your willingness to participate in all sorts of activities is an inspiration!! The **alacrity** …. yes, as seniors I’m going to take a chance and throw some BIG words at you… let’s see who knows the definition…. (**Maybe allow the students a chance to see if they know what the word means- as a means of keeping them engaged**) … the **alacrity** you so freely demonstrate adds positivity and energy to the atmosphere here at Forest Lake and it is so wonderful to share. It is in that energy that we know that God is present. We thank all of you for the work you do and we thank God for the opportunity to participate, appreciate, and share these very special moments.

So many memories have been made and shared up to this point in your high school careers (**Name 3 outstanding events the class participated in before senior year**). Who will ever forget the junior/senior banquet from last year? …Or the class officers’ meeting, the class party, or your junior year food festival? Seeing you around campus sparks so many moments and memories…. Who amongst us will ever forget the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and how \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ did \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? Or how about when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ broke all previous records in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? I know my personal unforgettable moment was the opportunity we had to travel with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on our varsity basketball trip to Texas and California!!! Wow!! What a trip **THAT** was!!! Every event is an opportunity to bring each of you closer together and to bring you closer to understanding human nature, the world in which we live, and the strength we receive from God.

I also want to say something and I hope I am not overstating the obvious: It is a **BIG DEAL** to be a senior!!! You’ve finally made it to the top of the mountain and the vantage point is clear and sweet!!! The coming year will be about preparation, challenges, completion and acknowledgement. You have all worked so diligently to get where you are. Now is the time to take the momentum you’ve built and to catapult yourselves into the next level of life. You’re community of friends, classmates, advisors and teachers here at Forest Lake will always be your built in cheerleading and support system, but there are others here with us tonight who really have your backs and your very best interests at heart. To all of the parents, siblings, family members, and friends who are here with us tonight, on behalf of the Forest Lake Class of 2016, thank you for all that you have done and continue to do to make sure that these fine young people know how special they are. Thank you for **YOUR** sacrifices, your encouragement, your support, wisdom, and of course your continuing faith in God and in these terrific students. They literally would not be here without the love, support and encouragement they receive from you. It has been said that behind every creation, supporting us like an arch, Is faith. Enthusiasm is great but it is fleeting, but if one believes, then miracles really do occur. Our families and friends are our supporting arches. They allow us the space to believe and the context in which to have faith and through that faith miracles are ours to discover, found in the smallest and most unexpected places.

Some of the outstanding events… and yes, some were definitely miracles… have happened over the past few months and involve some very special people who are here and in this senior class. (**If there are any seniors in particular you want to mention, do that here**). In the time leading up to Senior Outbreak and at Outbreak itself, I had the privilege of getting to know several of you and seeing facets of your personalities that really shone in that exhilarating atmosphere,

(**Name them here**)

* To \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, it was such a joy to see your spirit really shine through as you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who knew you were so good at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, talk about teamwork!!! What a thrill it was to watch how you worked together to achieve\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!!!

And there are so many other moments and people I can mention…. actually if we had the time I would acknowledge each one of you individually- you all are **THAT** special!!

This class is filled with students- each one of you has significant gifts, powers, and distinctions. Your uniqueness is truly an inspiration. As you progress through your senior year, keep an open mind, an open heart and maintain your faith and trust in God. **You are the future**. You’re the future of this community, of your families, of your faith, and as citizens of the world you are about to inherit unprecedented challenges. Everything you’ve done and learned here at Lake Forest has been done with the intention of filling you with strength; trust in God, and belief in yourselves. Your academic classes were essential in building your foundation. Your elective classes and extra curricular activities provided the opportunities for you to interact and bond and learn about the richness that life has to offer. Your Bible study continued to teach you about the core beliefs that will support you in all of life’s situations…. let’s face it; every day is **neither a picnic nor** a banquet!! (**Wait for the laugh**)… but on the other side of that coin we also have to count our blessings and remember these words when we look at the big picture of the future, “Life **IS** a banquet and most people are starving to death!!!” Fortunately, I have faith in each of you seniors and as I get to know you I really do believe that as you live and continue to learn, you will continue to appreciate and savor all that life has to offer thanks to your education here at Forest Lake.

Remember the excitement and enthusiasm you feel tonight. Remember the sense of community and feeling of belonging that you have right now. Remember the friends you’ve made and the encouragement you’ve received from those who know and love you. Remember the strength you get from your relationship with God. Now take all of that and hold it close wherever you go. It’s the moments like these that will be with you when you need them. Remember to take your strength and wisdom and knowledge and enthusiasm and most of all, remember to give back to others. You’ve inspired those who love and care for you and it’s time to forge your plan to bring your unique talents and joy to the world. Here’s to a wonderful senior year!!! Thank you all!