**GRADUATION SPEECH**

**FOR**

**KATHY ANDERSON**

Family and friends, faculties and administrators, (Principal) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, students and fellow graduates... Hello, I’m Alec Anderson and I am proud to stand with the graduating class of 2018 from Noblesville High School! This graduation, as well as recent events, have given us all a chance to really take a look at life and to see what really matters. One thing I have noticed for sure is that when we face a crisis, certain things become very clear... and I know I now think differently about the strength of the human spirit and the power of empathy.

Someone once said, “It is inevitable that some defeat will enter even the most victorious life. The human spirit is never finished when it is defeated... it is finished when it **surrenders**.” Attending high school is a rite of passage... learning lessons... making friends... and building strength ... intellectual, emotional, and physical, are all part of it. Once in a while, things happen that bring home a point. Over these last several days, I, and my fellow graduates, saw incredible bravery, determination, and resiliency from one person. We saw our community come together and watch out and support each other, and we learned to really appreciate what we have, who we are, and how, together, we will have a deeper appreciation of what it means to live a life with purpose.

When I think of human spirit, I, of course, think of Jason Seaman and how his actions literally stopped a tragedy. ... because his job as a teacher wasn’t challenging enough to begin with? Having to deal with the kids in that classroom on a **NORMAL** day is hard enough!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). I think of how our friends and neighbors came together and showed their support... in literally **ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND WAYS**... I saw the colorful marks of encouragement on the sidewalks of the middle school, and I learned that there is a greater meaning to life than I had imagined just the day before that incident. I **KNOW** I am really blessed to have the family, friends, and community that we all share.

Every day we hear of people whose human spirit guides them, and us, to even greater appreciation of the gifts of life.... the young man who, as a child, survived cancer **twice**, only to become the first person in the world to summit Mt Everest with only **ONE LUNG**. He’s also climbed the highest mountains on all seven continents... and he’s just **beginning** to explore his own strength and resilience.... or the parent that may struggle to find a way to care for his or her kids in the face of personal crisis, or Mr.Seaman... Every single one of us has that spirit within.... sometimes it shows in small ways... like when you don’t want to do something you KNOW you should because it’s the right thing to do... and sometimes it will get you through the BIG stuff in life.... but now I know that spirit exists within each one of us, and that makes me proud.

Helen Keller said, “No **pessimist** ever discovered the secret of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit.” We graduates stand here, ready to open new doors. I know now that I’m willing to face the challenges, and I know with encouragement from family and friends, I, and all of us, will find our purpose. I am proud to have gone through high school with all of you. Your friendship will stay with me for a very long time.... and as we all go on to the next parts on our path, let’s remember to go forward with an openness... appreciation, and a promise to live our lives with purpose, empathy, and appreciation for our own unique human spirit. Thank you all!!!