**GRADUATION SPEECH**

**FOR**

**GLENN WORTHY**

Hello everyone!!! To parents and friends, faculty and administrators, distinguished guests, and **OF COURSE**, our graduates, welcome to the 2021 Commencement Exercises for James Hillhouse High School. Helen Keller once said, “Life is either a daring adventure or it is nothing.” While this school has experienced a rich history of experiencing and persevering through some very trying times and adverse conditions over the past century or so, nothing really prepared us for the year we’ve all endured. The good news is, we’re here, we made it, and this graduating class is the living proof of the power of the human spirit..... to continue to demonstrate strength, determination, and possibility to achieve, no matter what. I am **VERY PROUD** of all of you, our faculty, and every single person that came together, in support, with ingenuity and focus, to make sure that this school’s mission and academic traditions prevailed.

Life really **IS** a daring adventure.... one that gets sweeter and more meaningful the more we learn. While you graduates may **THINK** you’re done... **HA!!! No!!!** This is just the beginning!!! To have a strong, comprehensive educational foundation to guide you through every phase of life is priceless. And while we are so proud of our athletes, our academic leaders, our champions of the humanities.... each and every one of you... please realize that without strengthening the most important parts of our **SELVES**... our brains... our hearts... our integrity... **NOTHING** really works.

I say that, not frivolously or by rote... I am deeply aware of the accomplishments of this graduating class and I am inspired by your curiosity, your drive, your enthusiasm for life and the world **OUT THERE**.... in spite of the events and challenges of the past year. It’s both exciting and life affirming to realize that through it all, this class has prevailed. I am impressed and proud to say that we have students attending Harvard, Yale, UCONN and other universities.... Both our girls and boys teams won state championships in outdoor track.... and there are so many more achievements, both high profile and highly personal, that have been accomplished through the impossible. While some may think, and rightly so, that being a high school senior in the middle of a global pandemic is probably not on **ANYONE’s** bucket list.....(**Wait for the laugh**)... you showed up... did the work... and transformed adversity into **opportunity**. Do you even **KNOW** how this has prepared you for the future unknowns in life? It may be too close to understand as you look back in the current rear view mirror, but I promise you that you **WILL** find value as you navigate on your path going forward.

At James Hillhouse High School, we have a simple but clear mission, and that is to see to it that students complete their studies and graduate, prepared for success in an increasingly demanding world. Whether you’ve chosen to continue your education at a world class university, as I mentioned earlier, or through entering the workforce, each and every one of you graduates has a critical role in the evolution of this community and ultimately the world. While we may think our influence is limited, believe me it’s not. Every action we cause and create has a ripple effect on our surroundings. While we may think even the smallest gestures have little to no impact, please know that they **DO**... Since we really never know who might be watching, it’s imperative that we live our lives with awareness, compassion, intention, and common sense. There is so much more involved in attaining a good high school education than studying and having “book smarts.” ... and while that part of your education is a given, there is also the part that cannot be ignored... the one in which you’ve learned to be an integral member of a community... and whether it’s in the classroom... the playing field... or the clubhouse, you’ve learned what it’s like to be a part of a team... to feel included... **or not**.... to feel a part of... **or** **not**.... I would hope that the “**or not’s**” of your high school careers have taught you what it means to act with compassion, respect, inclusion, and consideration of others.

As an educator and as a member of a family and of a community, I think the main thing to realize about life is that, **LIFE** is the **lesson**.... we **NEVER** stop learning... **THANK GOODNESS** for that!! Every circumstance... every challenge... provides the opportunity to see life from a different perspective and to learn from that viewpoint. It is our intention, here at James Hillhouse High, to provide the basis for the curiosity that will fuel your future lessons. This graduating class has done a wonderful job of learning and building strengths that will be treasured as you go through life. You’ve all done an admirable job and those who will follow in your footsteps have considerable achievements to aim for. Congratulations to all of you and may each one of you continue to learn and achieve your most ambitious goals... whatever they may be!!! Thank you all!!