**The New Community School**  speech

**Delivered by: Phillips Wood**

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**Phillips,..this is a happy day for you and the audience. Everyone will be smiling and talking. So, stand up front, don’t begin until most of the audience looks towards you,..then start whenever you’re ready. Take your time, speak slowly, and have fun.**

**Hello everyone**, I am genuinely happy to be standing here before you today. I know so many wonderful people in this room, family, friends, relatives, teachers, advisers, administrators, and more. *I am Phillips Wood.*

*And like many others The New Community School gave me the place and the people to help me to overcome things that seemed impossible. It is more than a school, it is like a road map through busy traffic. My teachers and counselors knew my frustration and would not leave my side until I learned to get past each obstacle.*

Where I am today, what modest achievements I have attained, the events and projects I have completed, did not come easily. On the contrary. As so many of my fellow classmates can attest, there were giant roadblocks to avoid. And when we did get around one, sooner or later, there were more. And that is how I came to understand resilience. Resilience, the ability to rebound. To get up, dust myself off, and take the next step. Resilience, how to not let disappointment and failure keep me from trying again,……and again,….and again,…..until I met the challenges head on and got past them.

2.

So, where does resilience come from? It has two sources. The first is from within. It is a force of nature, it is a part of the soul, it is the mind, the body, and the spirit. It gives us new energy, it gives us confidence, it gives us faith and understanding that regardless of how serious our set back is, not matter how frustrating we become at not understanding something, we will do it again, and again, until we get it right. And not just right once, but understanding how we got it right, and why it is now correct. We should never be handed the answer, we should be given the tools to find, and remember the answer.

Secondly resilience comes from people, people in our lives who love us, people who stand behind us, people who believe we can accomplish our goals. And that intangible support, that care, that reassurance, is like a sling-shot propelling us forward. You can’t see that resilience, you can’t touch that resilience, but it is there, and it is very real. It is first and foremost those who love us. It is our family, our sisters, brothers, grandparents, uncles, aunties, and our clergy. It is friends, buddies, pals, neighbors, and even Facebook, (**laughter**). It is every single person who never stops caring, never stops encouraging, and never stops boosting us up to reach that next level. It is our teachers, it is our school.

I would like to share with you the inspiration I received from reading two brilliant humanitarians:

From Nelson Mandela: Quote “Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again”.

And from, 11th. Century president of India and scientist, A P J Abdul Kalam: and in the interest of time, I will paraphrase Mr. Kalam**:** We learn of our hidden reserves and resilience, and in the face of failure, we realize that these virtues were always there.”

Another support tool I always reference are the words that actually came from me, the words I typed, the words from within, that I put in my college application essay. Even reading them now, gives me energy, gives me hope.

3.

In my essay I told my story, my journey, my path. I told of rejection, ridicule, and setbacks. And it is important that we have other interests, sports, hobbies, things that challenge us, and that are also fun. Activities that take us out of our comfort zone and make us utilize mental and physical skills through practice and practice. When we are learning other activities there will be challenges too. So, when we overcome those challenges, the challenges of things besides schoolwork, that also shows we are resilient. It shows we can persevere in different areas of life, not just one. And that variety of successes will give us the broad foundation to then go on to college or trade school, or other places where we can improve our minds. All of that then leads to a more successful and happier life once we become adults.

So, we ask, how can our own hard work, and the help of others, ever be repaid? It is repaid every day that we become better persons, every day that we show respect, every day that we do some good for another person. And most of all it is repaid when we come back to New Community, or someplace very similar, to help someone else get to their finish line, to their goal, to their dream. Someone did it for me, and I will **always** do it for others.

In conclusion today, I thank everyone who has been instrumental in my life. *I would not be talking to you right now, if it were not for each and every one who has helped me to learn. If you find that extra amount of resilience, you’ll know inside that you are going to make it.*

….. **thank you** **Everyone,.. Goodbye,** I hope to see you all again **soon.**