Phillips Wood

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. But for those whom I have not met, my name is 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.

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, 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 New Community.

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

From George S. Patton: Quote “Success is how high you bounce when you hit bottom”.

Nelson Mandela: "The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in [rising every time we fall](http://on.inc.com/2a33AHp)."

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.

In my essay I told my story, my journey, my path. I told of rejection, ridicule, and setbacks. I explained how I got involved with baseball. Baseball, an activity that wasn’t affected by my dyslexia. So, I became quite good at baseball, which then gave me the knowledge and encouragement that I could be good at anything, if I just persevered and showed resilience. So as a pitcher if I had to duck a line drive, then in life I will duck a line drive. If I had to throw out the runner at first base, then I would throw out anything that played against me. And when I pitched hard in a game, I knew to go home and study just as hard. And I was fortunate to find New Community.

So, we ask, how can that 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 insure someone else gets 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.