

***Graduation Speech***

After four challenging years, we have finally reached the end of our high school careers. Over these four years, we have made many achievements, overcome many obstacles, and learned many new skills. It is a great honor to be named valedictorian of the Class of 2010, and I thank my family, the faculty, and all of the students here at Karafin for a supportive environment and a rewarding learning experience.

I began to study at Karafin after an extensive search for a school that met my needs. The small class size and individualized attention that I would get made this an ideal school for me. I had a chance to do things that most schools would have never allowed. I was able to borrow an electronic keyboard so I could practice my piano technique. I got to pursue my interest in computers and run downloads while I did my work. I had essentially exclusive access to advanced mathematics software. I am very grateful that this school offered me so much and enabled me to learn the way I wanted to learn.

My time in high school was riddled with many difficulties. I had serious self-control and focus issues that constantly interfered with my work. I worked hard to bring myself under control every day, and sometimes I went to my guidance counselor about three or four days a week so that I had someone to talk to. I owe my teachers and classmates a million thank-yous for their patience and tolerance of my behavior and their guidance that enabled me to overcome these problems.

We're fortunate to have a special education environment. This is truly a special school – we don't usually talk about a school with only eighty students or only six students per class with a teacher and an aide in each class. Most schools aren't this small and don't have such a low student-to-faculty ratio. There aren't many schools that can cater to every student's unique needs. In an ordinary public school, we may not even have been able to graduate.

I am very grateful to my parents, who were constant partners throughout my academic career; to the faculty, who gave me a quality education and endured my outbursts; and my classmates, who were my friends throughout my high

school years. All of them really helped me grow to what I am now. Special thanks to my counselor Mrs. Glover, who was always there to help me, and Dr. Donow, who was a cash machine that was always there when I needed money.

We have all overcome many difficulties during our high school career, and we have all worked hard to get to graduation. The challenges we have passed prepare us for the outside world. We can apply the skills we have learned in a variety of fields and real-life situations. We have spent some twelve years in school to gain the key knowledge, skills, and abilities to become effective contributors to society.

Since this is the end of our high school careers, we have a number of choices as to what to do next. Many of us will be going to college. Others will be getting a job. Whatever you choose to do, I wish you good luck and a successful future. My mother once said that being proud of your school is not as important as the school being proud of you. Indeed, I am proud of my school, and the school is proud of me. Thanks for listening, and I bid you farewell.