

Huntington High School's 153rd Commencement

Principal Dr. Carmela Leonardi's Address

It is an honor for me to welcome students, faculty, parents, family members, our superintendent, Mr. Polansky, and members of the School Board here tonight. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the two Assistant Superintendents, Dr. Card and Mr. Gergis, the Assistant Principal, Mr. Cusack, all department administrators and deans for their continued support of students and their families.

A very special recognition is extended to the teachers and support personnel who are committed to the success of every student at Huntington High School and continue to take a personal interest in their academic and social development. Our gratitude is extended to secretaries, security and custodians who work daily to provide an optimal environment for students, teachers, administrators and parents.

At every graduation I invariably think that the class we are honoring is one of the most accomplished and competitive thus far. I have solid proof, however, that this is in fact one of the most successful, accomplished and high achieving class graduating from Huntington High School.

Among the graduates is a finalist in the Intel science competition who placed sixth in the nation, the recipient of the prestigious National Merit Scholarship, a tireless volunteer for Island Harvest, the recipient of a \$20,000 Coca Cola scholarship, a budding astronomer at the Custer Observatory, incredible musicians and singers, talented artists who have been recognized as Long Island best and gifted athletes who will be playing varsity sports in college.

I know that part of the reason for these achievements are due to the opportunities this board of education, superintendent and central office administrators continue to offer in the way of challenging courses, electives and internship's experiences. The commitment of our talented teachers to the success of every single student, and the dedication of you, the parents, who have supported them in all that they have done, has made it possible for these graduates to reach their full potential. The main ingredient to the inordinate success this class has experienced thus far, however, is the talent, the passion and the drive that they put into everything that they have done. They have amazed us with their intelligence, capability and humility. They are competitive yet supportive of one another and sincerely grateful for the opportunities that the Huntington Union Free School District has provided them.

This class above all others has worked to include everyone and to extend a helping hand. Relay for Life, in its third year, generated \$ 132,000 in support of cancer research. Students volunteered through the Community First Aide Squad, Huntington Hospital, The Fire department and the Town of Huntington Youth Court.

Over the last four years, these seniors have challenged themselves with Advanced Placement courses that have the potential of earning them college credits. In fact in their senior year alone, 145 graduates took 456 AP exams. 87 took three AP exams or more with three seniors taking six, nine taking seven, and 23 taking five AP exams.

For this senior class the college center processed 1,733 college applications. As of today the class of 2014 has been offered \$19,047,241 in scholarship money.

College acceptances include several Ivy League schools: Columbia University, Dartmouth College, Cornell, Brown, Yale, Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania as well as all SUNYs , all CUNYs (including the Macaulay Honors College) Bard College, Carnegie Mellon, MIT, the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, Emory, Fordham , Hofstra, Johns Hopkins, Kenyon College, LIU Post, University of Michigan, Northeastern University, Northwestern University, Notre Dame, Providence, Rice University, Sacred Heart , Syracuse , Villanova, and College of William and Mary.

Some of the interesting majors they have selected include: exercise science, mathematics, physics, astronomy, music, fine arts, photography, engineering, fashion merchandising, education, psychology, business, accounting, nursing, physician's assistant, criminal justice, health education, molecular genetics, theater arts, jazz studies, musical theater, aviation management, history, game art and design, environmental science.

As you can see, our future is in very capable hands.

And now a final thought for our candidates. As you pursue your dreams and expand your experiences, remember that "The secret of change is to focus all your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new." (Socrates)

Congratulations to each member of this graduating class and their families. May you continue to experience great success in your future endeavors.