MONADNOCK SUPERINTENDENT'S DINNER

MAKING EXCELLENCE A HABIT!

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PRESIDENT RIVER VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

You can change the world!
Believe it ----Achieve it!
You were meant to change the world!
Changing, reaching and growing
Uniquely you - positioned to change the world
Passion and momentum
Setting things in motion
It's your time to change the world
Spread your wings - Transform the air
Use your gifts
To change the world

Good evening and congratulations Class of 2014. As the President of River Valley Community College, I am so honored to have been asked to give this years’ commencement address.

The class of 2014 will always have a special place in my heart, because you are my first graduating class as president.

I’d like to take a moment to recognize my husband Donald who is in attendance today and who continues to inspire me after 30 years of marriage, I would like to once again recognize the amazing faculty and staff of River Valley Community College and the families and friends gathered here to celebrate you.
This is one of the most important days in the life of a student; it marks both an end and a beginning, the end of one important phase of learning and the beginning of the next.

As I signed each degree being awarded, I saw them as representing a new beginning for each of you to make a difference through the lessons learned here at River Valley Community College.

As I reflected on what I would say today, my mind returned repeatedly to a singular phrase and I knew my message would be a simple one, “You Can Change the World.

Graduates, even more than that, I believe that you are meant to change the world, to make it better through your talent, passion and service.

Changing the world starts with an awareness of your impact in it and the realization that every decision you make will impact the quality of your life and the future you want to create.

The decision that each of you made to complete this phase of your education will enable you to more effectively change “your” world and the world of others.

This singular action has set in motion, a ripple effect that will impact your earnings, health, family, community and open new opportunities.

Research indicates that those who obtain higher levels of education, earn more over the course of their lifetime, make better health choices, inspire their families to obtain higher levels of education and have a greater impact in their communities.
Actually, a recent study published this month by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, stated that over a life-time, the average U.S. college graduate will earn at least $800,000 dollars more than the average high school graduate.

You see, this one very important decision will literally change your world and the world of those around you. Look to the person next to you and say, “I can change the world”.

I would like to share a brief story illustrating the ripple effect that I referenced, sometimes called the Butterfly Effect, it was originally hypothesized by Dr. Edward Lorenz in 1963 and presented to the New York Academy of Science.

**This is what he theorized:**

A butterfly could flap its wings setting molecules of air in motion, in turn moving more molecules of air - eventually capable of starting a hurricane on the other side of the planet.

This was pretty amazing and the New York Academy of Science; felt it ridiculous and dismissed the research. The story gets better.

Thirty years later, scientists from Colleges and Universities worldwide concluded that the “Butterfly Effect” was real and this research is now a well-respected scientific law, “The Law of Sensitive Dependence - Upon Initial Conditions”.

What does this unique law mean to you as graduates and to all of us here today?

It simply means that you matter and that each decision and action you take has an impact and makes a difference.

**Just like the butterfly** that flaps his wings on one part of the planet is cable of putting into motion, actions that can transform the planet, so can you!

Each one of us has within us the ability and the power to change the world, **to make a difference.**
Big differences are made even when we take small steps to move boldly in the direction of our dreams with persistence and hard-work, despite the challenges that arise.

You have it within your power to live the life of your dreams and in so doing, to change the world.

You each have unique skills and talents. Share your gifts even at the risk of being misunderstood as was Dr. Lorenz, the only scientist of his time to think as he did.

Understand that “different” does not necessarily mean wrong, as a graduate you made a decision to pursue your education, a different decision than some others. You decided that you were going to finish what you started.

Just like Dr. Lorenz who was challenged by others because his ideas were different but not wrong. He like you made a decision to continue forward.

Graduates, the journey may not be easy, but often things worth having require extra effort and when the support you need may go lacking, remember to continue forward in the direction of your dreams.

Nothing is impossible

If you believe

Nothing is unattainable

If you believe

No turning back
If you believe

To maximize your success have a vision and plan for your life. Write it down and look at it often and include the steps that it will take you to get from here to there.

When you feel like quitting, work your plan. When you feel like you can’t go on, work your plan. When times get hard, say it with me, work your plan.

I encourage you also to listen to that still voice inside of you which moves you passionately in pursuit of your dreams.

REMEMBER

- Don’t attempt to be someone you’re not. Live authentically.

REMEMBER

- Ultimately, what you look like, what you wear, how much money you make or even the position you hold will not be as important as treating people with kindness.

REMEMBER

- Take care of your mind, body, and spirit and shield yourself from things that will harm any of the three.

REMEMBER

- To Smile and that you were created to change the world.
Monadnock Superintendent's Dinner

Making Excellence a Habit!

Alicia B. Harvey-Smith, Ph.D.
President River Valley Community College

One of my favorite writers, Marianne Williamson, had this to say and I paraphrase:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful - beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, who am I - to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?

Actually, who are you not to be?

Your playing small does not serve the world.

There is nothing enlightened about shrinking, so that other people won't feel insecure around you

We are all meant to shine, as children do.

It's not just in some of us; it's in all of us.

And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give others permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

This passage reminds us to never give less than our very best; for to do so - diminishes us all.

Graduates, as you leave with fond memories of River Valley Community College, your classmates, long hours in the library and let’s not forget lingering moments in the Falcon Room:
I have three wishes for you.

**Wish 1: To Discover Your Passion and Purpose**

I wish an abundance of passion for the work that you will do. After all, you cannot inspire others unless you are first inspired.

**Wish 2: To Develop a Compelling Vision**

I wish for you a compelling vision for your life. Your vision should be a vivid description of what you want your world to look like. The power of a vision sets everything in motion.

**Wish 3: To See A Brighter Future**

I wish for you the beauty and power of optimism. Extraordinary leaders throughout history have been more optimistic than the average person.

Winston Churchill exuded hope and confidence in the darkest days of World War II. Colin Powell said that optimism was the secret behind Ronald Reagan’s charisma and is a force multiplier with a ripple effect for impacting positive change.

**In closing,**

Far away there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations.

I may not reach them, but I can look up, see their beauty, believe and try to follow.

Graduates, this quote by Louisa May Alcott is a reminder to never stop dreaming, to never stop believing and to never stop reaching for your highest aspirations.
Congratulations, Class of 2014. Thank you for sharing this very special moment with me. I believe you have the ability to climb every mountain. Go forward and change the world.