

You have made a difference. Do you believe me...Do you believe me? You have made a significant difference.

A full 1/3 of your high school career has been influenced by a global pandemic that very few of us saw coming and even fewer of us were prepared to deal with...especially in education. But on March 13, of 2020...you began to reveal character traits of resilience and flexibility that will serve you well for your entire life. Do you remember that in just two weeks' time...you went from learning in a classroom of desks and rows to navigating virtual learning as your only option. Just 16 months ago...you had never heard of:

Zoom

Schoology

Google Drive

Padlet

Doceri

Edpuzzle

Screencastify

Discovery Education

Quizlet

Kahoot

PearDeck

Nearpod

Jamboard

GoGuardian

And In the same time frame you have mastered a whole new vocabulary

Coronavirus

Outbreak

Cluster

Community spread

Super-spreader event

Social distancing

Lock down

Essential workers

Flattening the curve

Epidemic vs. pandemic

Quarantine vs. isolation

Respirator vs. ventilator

Contagious vs. Infectious

Antibodies

And then, add to all of these new learnings, the struggles that you faced that were created by isolation during the lockdown. It is absolutely remarkable that we made it here. Many of you can relate.

Hurt, loneliness, and struggles could have overwhelmed you...but they didn't keep you down.

Pain, need, and want could have broken you...but they didn't keep you down.

Distress, anxiety, and fear could have punished you...but they didn't keep you down.

You rose. You stood up. You chose to care about each other. You persevered and you overcame. And when a friend couldn't stand up on their own...you reached out...took their hand and lifted them. How blessed are we.

Today, as we gather to celebrate your commencement from high school, we give you to the world knowing that what the pandemic taught you may be more important for your life than what we taught you because:

All you know is change

All you know is flexibility and adaptability

All you know is courage

All you know is collaboration

All you know is caring for neighbors

All you know is overcoming obstacle

All you know is perseverance

All you know is figuring out how to deal with struggles

Remember these things because they have made you stronger. These things are who you are...they are your identity. You met unimagined challenges and excelled. You didn't fail...You excelled.

You know some people here may be worrying that our future is in trouble. I'm just not one of them. Your perseverance through adversity proves to me that you can do anything that you set your minds to.

And washing your hands for 20 seconds or about the time it takes you to sing happy birthday twice...is a really good thing.

I can tell you that sitting up in the stands are your future employers. They are depending on your learned ability to overcome trials. Their businesses need it. Your family deserves it and your community will be transformed because of it.

Do you believe me?

Do you believe me?

We see you class of 2021. You have overcome. You have made a difference. A significant difference. I'm better because of you. And you know what's the best thing...I know that you are committed to and will continue to make a difference, a significant difference in your world. So on behalf of the Family of Cedar Cliff...Thank you.

Now Dr. Stoltz and Mr. Kambic

Knowing that there are hundreds of difference makers sitting before us, it is an incredible honor to declare that these members of the Class of 2021 have met all the requirements for graduation outlined by West Shore School District Policy and criteria set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Education - including required subjects and total credits. They, therefore, are entitled to receive a Cedar Cliff High School diploma from the West Shore School District.

Dr. Stoltz