

Valedictorian Address

Friday, October 21, 2011

By Lindy VanVliet

When I was first given the honour of writing this speech I was ecstatic. And then I realized that I had to write the speech. So like any good student born in the age of the internet I promptly began to look at other speeches that I could plagiarize. To Youtube I went. There I found piles of speeches that had been sung, beat boxed or rapped and I thought, heck I can rap, and then I tried... I can't rap. So I decided that I would start with a really good Harry Potter quote, that didn't work either. This may be the first time in my life that Harry Potter has let me down. So finally I just decided to do a dance number until I realized I couldn't dance unless it was the hukilaw. So I stand before you today, just as me, a proud graduate of one of the most unique and special schools in the country to share my passion for PCVS.

Parents, staff, students and honoured guests I would like to thank you for attending the celebration of the class of 2011. I am so honoured to be able to represent the amazing students who sit before you. Over the past four years we have experienced many good times and many hard times, but together we have made it through to the end. So Grads, give yourselves a hand because we made it, and this is just the beginning!

Over the years PCVS would challenge us, surprise us and even teach us a thing or two. Ms. Dunn and Mr. Roberts would teach us all the quadratic equation, $x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$. Ms. Christie and Mr. Clarke would show us the beauty in Shakespeare, and Mr. Fewings would teach us that life is too short to not dress up like Julia Child at least once. Student Parking would teach us the value of getting to school early. And one of our peers would teach us that licking a door knob is never a good idea. At PCVS there was indeed no day without learning, and of all the lessons we learned the most important one we could ever learn is to be ourselves. PCVS gave each of us the confidence to live our lives to the fullest and for that we owe this school everything.

Over our four years here we have experienced times of joy, like the first bite of the caf cookies after a long two month summer wait, and times of sorrow, like the loss to the teacher in the Delarue Cup. But, together, we have survived until the end. And even though many of us aren't

attending PCVS anymore, this year the Raider community faced one of its greatest challenges. On September 26th the KPR trustees voted in favour of closing PCVS. Within minutes of the vote taking place peoples Facebook newsfeeds were flooded and phones were ringing off the hook. The PCVS community had never been as fired up as they were when they were told that this amazing school might close. And it was at that moment, sitting in my little res room, that I realized how much PCVS has affected each and every one of us. There were grads from 5 years ago writing emails to the trustees, community members contacting Dalton McGuinty and current students of PCVS organizing another round of rallies and protests. Everyone wanted to find any way possible to support PCVS. And this passionate love for our school is not only because PCVS has marble stair cases and art work hanging on the walls. There is something indescribable about PCVS, something that you cannot truly understand unless you have had the honour of being a part of the Raider community. So what is PCVS? It is not just a high school that much is obvious; it is not just an arts school, not just an old school, not just a downtown school. PCVS is a community, a place where each one of us can dress as we like, act as we like and be our true selves. And most importantly, PCVS is a family. And the graduating class of 2011 is a family inside that family. Each one of us came to PCVS with different backgrounds and we had different experiences in high school, yet we all share something special. Each one of us has had the privilege to call this beautiful building home. We have all heard Ms. Hughes heels click clacking down the hallway, heard Mr. Latham singing 3 Days Grace up on the third floor. We have all smelled the paint in the basement, experienced the heat of the third floor in the summer and felt the stickiness of the wooden railings when the humidity rises in June, and on the weekend we all take care of each other just as Ms. Severin tells us to on Friday Mornings. As we go our separate ways we will all be bonded together, making this not a goodbye, but as Ms. Severin likes to say, more of a “See you Later”. We are a family, and families are stuck together forever. As we leave here today we are prepared, PCVS has taught us so much and has equipped us for the world that lies beyond these walls. PCVS has always been known for making artists and visionaries but PCVS also makes leaders, not the leaders of tomorrow, but the leaders of today. So, with the future of the school uncertain it is up to us now, those of us who have had the opportunity to learn at this amazing school: as you go out into the world, make PCVS everywhere you go. Because the PCVS way does not stop after we leave here today, it is something that stays in ours hearts, something that we can use to make this world a little bit

better everyday. And so Grads of 2011, from Caernarvon, Wiggin, Keswick and Warwick, together we will take the first steps into the big scary world. Holding hands we will cross the street into the adult life and we know that we can do it. Because PCVS has taught us, if nothing else, that together we are invincible. Thank-you.