

Senior Speech - by Matthew

at The Hiland Hall Graduation on June 7, 2024

I feel like this moment came really fast for me. I was sitting on my porch on the night of May 17th. It hit me tonight that because we had an earlier graduation, I should start on my speech.

I feel like it'd be appropriate to start with a few memories from my 1st day here. I was not looking forward to my 1st day. I was really shy and overall, I wanted to stay home. At activity time I just wanted to do what my friend, Iver, was doing. So when he chose to do little blocks that's what I chose too. My sister (who was 5 at the time) chose the same thing. The structure we worked on at the time was a marble shoot. Lillian, Iver, Myself, and two other students, Weslyn, and Everett worked on this for the whole activity time. I got through the day until outside time. During outside time, I explored the tunnels. Eventually, I would join a house with the little blocks people, specifically the one by the rocks at the entrance of the tunnels. This concludes most of my 1st day memories. After this day that I enjoyed a lot, I was more comfortable but it still took a while to fully adapt.

Next, I want to give a little advice to upcoming seniors. One big piece of advice is don't wait too long to start on speeches, senior projects, and other things. Especially with this earlier graduation the whole time between early April and graduation goes really fast. With the play, and Independent Studies, it really goes by fast and stuff like your senior project takes a good amount of time. Another thing is to just enjoy your time. This time for me went so fast but I really enjoyed it. I think you should really enjoy all the time you have here because although it feels like an eternity sometimes you really only have so much.

Now I think it's time to thank everyone who helped to be the person I am today. My current teachers, Brennan, Quena, Jessica, Peg, Drew, and Meg, the former director, all helped me in many different ways.

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Brennan is my current middle school teacher. He was the one teacher and one of the many people who joined the school in my 1st year which I feel like made it an easier transition from a very different school. Brennan not only helped me with this transition, he helped me with much more. He helped me realize that I could tolerate math and how I could connect it to my interests. In Spanish he helped my interest in language continue to grow. He also encouraged me to learn more on the geographic and cultural aspects of geography. In middle school he brings a really good energy overall. He also helped me through times when it was hard for me to manage my own time.

Quena was my teacher for my 1st three years of school here. She also teaches math and Spanish to the middle schoolers. In math, she aided me in learning many math principles. She also helped me stay engaged with math. In Spanish, she really built my skills as far as vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation. In South Group, Quena assisted me in understanding the school standards. Cambridge School is very different from Hiland Hall. One of the main differences is a less creative environment and one more focused on drilling us on different subjects. Quena really helped me adjust here. I was also a really energetic kid so she assisted me in becoming calmer in a class setting. During this time she helped me with reading, spelling, history, science, and Independent Studies.

Jessica helped with math for South Group prior to Covid. She also teaches a class in middle school on Thursday afternoons. She has helped me learn more on civics this year. She did biographies with middle school in my first year. However, my favorite project of her class is the budget project. In this we got to pick a job and plan a budget in our city or town of choice. I think that this will help me in real life: I think this is something that Jessica does well in her classes, she teaches us how to apply stuff in real life. I also enjoy the occasional picture or story she tells. Most often about her cats.

Peg joined mid covid so I didn't get to spend too much time in her classes. However, she helped with online classes, which I appreciate seeing as these were harder times for me to learn. Peg

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aided with this a lot. She also joined Hiland Hall in person the next year. She helped me a bunch in my last year of South Group, especially in Independent Studies.

Meg was the director for 5 out of 6 years I've been here. One memory I have of here is being really helpful to me during fire drills. When I was younger I was deathly afraid of the fire alarms and although she remained strict about the standards she still helped learn those standards and become more accustomed to and less afraid of fire drills.

Drew is the current director of the school. Although he was here for a shorter time than all the rest of the people here, I have many good experiences with him. He is always really helpful in the classroom. Whenever Brennan or Quena are doing something Drew always steps up. As well as this he has aided me in many of the cooking projects I've been a part of. I truly appreciate this because he is always enjoyable to cook with, and he is overall very helpful in the kitchen as well as everything else.

These people are all to thank for the person who I am today. I'm very thankful to all of these teachers.

I would also like to thank my parents who are always helpful, tolerant of me, and fun to be around among so many other factors. They probably have had and have the biggest influence on the person I am and the person I will be.

Before I finish this speech I want to thank all the other seniors for accompanying me in my experience as a senior and a student overall. I think that all the other seniors each have made my time here so much better.

And lastly, I want to thank my extended family, friends, and dogs for many good memories and hopefully more to come.