

Welcome to our 2009 Graduation Ceremonies

By Jeff Leahy, Head of School

Because so much at Colorado Rocky Mountain School is relational, let's begin by recognizing two groups of people:

First, I would like to ask the faculty and staff to please rise...and let's all thank them for all the work that they have done this year.

And second, I would like us to take a moment to show our appreciation to all the underclassmen who completed their final exams on Thursday and who are just about to depart on a well earned summer vacation. So a thank you to all the underclassmen who have joined us today, and who have helped to make this a great final year for our seniors.

Today we honor both the vision of our school's Founders and the culminating work of this year's senior class. When John and Anne Holden arrived at the Bar Fork Ranch over 50 years ago, they envisioned a school that now has a unique place in independent school education. CRMS is what it is today – its unique educational philosophy and programs - because of the very place in which it has originated. You cannot take the Colorado Rocky Mountain School and place it anywhere else in America and run exactly the same program and achieve the same results. We are a school whose classrooms often extend beyond our 320 acre campus, and we have an athletic facility that includes the Rocky Mountains and the deserts and rivers of Utah.

As a school we tend to be humble when we talk about our individual and collective success. Philosophically, we don't believe in giving out a lot of awards, and we tend to go about our work without a lot of fanfare. But it is important on an occasion such as today, that we take the time to remind ourselves of the great work we have been doing, and to celebrate the success of our incredible school.

There is a lot to be proud of at CRMS. We are fortunate that we have great students and a caring faculty who have a genuine interest in the success of each individual and the collective group.

We are proud of our progressive school heritage – one that believes in teaching both usable knowledge and citizenship, and holds as primary our mutual responsibility to the collective growth of all its members. Our most important task – the promise we make to everyone outside CRMS – is that we will produce citizens who will have acquired the skills, power, and sense of service to contribute positively to the world.

The depth, breadth, and quality of our arts program is simply incredible for a school of our size. And we are proud of having an active program that is like none other in America, and we believe in the importance of this program in engaging all our students in meaningful ways. All our seniors have been on some incredible trips, beginning with our 10 day Wilderness Orientation. Over half of this year's senior class arrived four years ago as Freshmen with backpacks – in most cases – somewhat smaller and feeling just a bit lighter than themselves. All of our seniors have been at CRMS for at least two years, which means that each would have participated in at least five outdoor trips and two spring interims during their tenure here.

I am sure that John and Anne Holden would be immensely proud of what was shared with us yesterday at the senior symposium. Collectively, I believe these were the strongest presentations that I have ever seen. The incredible experiences that were shared with us are a testament to why we do all the things we do at CRMS.

And finally...This is a senior class that should be feeling pretty proud of themselves right now as they sit there knowing that they are so close to graduating, and they will do so as the first student softball team to beat the faculty in recent history.

It is fitting that the place in which the seniors began their walk this morning is the same place in which we first welcomed them when they arrived to campus for their Wilderness Orientation.

It is our collective desire that each senior departs CRMS equipped with the proper tools, usable knowledge, and confidence to find their way through the next adventure.

So, welcome to our 56th commencement exercises. On behalf of the faculty, staff, and especially our senior class, I would like to thank you all for joining us on this special occasion.

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