

“Algo Más” based on the story “Esperanza Para Las Flores”

Commencement Address by Dan Pittz to the 2009 Graduating Class of the Colorado Rocky Mountain School, June 6th, 2009

“¡Hola, mundo!”

This is how one of my favorite stories begins. The book is Esperanza Para las Flores, many of the students here know it, and it is about a caterpillar. In the beginning, our caterpillar is new to the world, greeting it with excitement, “¡hola mundo!”- hello world! similar to our senior class when they first arrived here at CRMS. It doesn't take long for our caterpillar to realize something important, “Tengo hambre.” I'm hungry.

While it is true that the senior class can eat a lot, let's look at the metaphor here people. Hunger. At CRMS I hope that you have found a hunger for something, something that you need like food: learning, playing, serving the community, helping others, being with others. Something that feeds you.

In my story, our caterpillar is not content. He finds himself bored, unsatisfied. Buscaba algo más. He searched for something else.

Ahora Ustedes se van para buscar algo más...so now you're off to look for algo más, something else, something more. Felicidades, congratulations. I hope that you are heading off not with a feeling of boredom and of outgrowing this place, but with a sense of gratitude and deep respect.

You have enjoyed this place, these people, and all that you have become here. But it is time to move on. Early on we feel the itch to be independent and adventurous. When granted the privilege of having our basic needs met, we can spend our time searching for that algo más, that something else. And now here you are, ready to end and begin again.

You may find, as I have, that graduation speech advice can be full of contradictions. Mine is no different.

Be content in all that you do, everyday, everything. But never be content. Always search for something better, a way to improve the state of things in your personal life and the world.
Be a master of your trade and then find ways to go beyond what is known in that trade.
Be excellent and then strive to perform at a higher level.

While here at CRMS you became acquainted with so many people who have found that something more, and who are still searching as well. You may have spent time in the garden with Linda and were inspired by her commitment to her craft. Perhaps

Jeff Schlepp and his standards of excellence in drama drew you in. These models have instilled in you an awareness of quality only achievable by an innate love for what they have found.

Soon you will be off to find your own way. You will need to make decisions that will, in graduation speech jargon, “affect the rest of your lives” and “determine your life’s course”. In life after high school, your path most likely will not suddenly appear in front of you, illuminated by solar powered lamps and bordered by native plants. You may find yourself not living the sustainable life that you have always strived for. You may even be tempted to just become a face in the crowd and revel in your newfound namelessness.

In Esperanza para las flores, our caterpillar hero finds himself led entirely astray by the masses. Has it happened to you? Will it happen to you?

The metaphor is not well hidden- he sees a pile of caterpillars and decides to do what everyone else is doing, climbing and fighting each other to the top of a pillar where they arrive to find absolutely nothing. Following every other caterpillar has been a complete waste of time.

Don’t be distracted by what everyone else is doing. Your path is your own to walk. Set off as soon as you can on your *busqueda para algo más*, your own personal search for more.

You may begin your search among the many potential life pursuits that have occupied you here at CRMS. You want to be a Spanish teacher and scholar who develops cutting edge curriculum, a professional kayaker and skier with unheard of contracts who bikes for cross-training purposes, a musical recording artist whose paintings are displayed at the Metropolitan as well as at local art galleries, a community organizer who brings sustainable lifestyles to the masses. This cross-disciplinary experience, while undeniably valuable, can cloud your path. You will have distractions and be unbelievably busy. And still you will search for *algo más*.

It’s waiting for you.

While here at CRMS you’ve been content to eat leaves, to stay on the ground in the safety of your caterpillar life. If we’ve done our jobs as your mentors, you should feel an itch, that discontentment; a feeling that there is something bigger out there in the world for you.

As that caterpillar still on the ground you can’t know what it will be like to be a butterfly. Scary, different, exhilarating. But it’s time.

I’d like to close with the ending of the book,

“Cansado, y triste (la oruga) estaba demasiado agotado para seguir. Poco a poco empezó a comprender.

Tired and sad, the caterpillar was too exhausted to continue. Little by little he began to understand. Somehow he knew what to do. He climbed and climbed again. It was getting darker and darker and he was very afraid.

De alguna manera supo que hacer. Rayitas subió- otra vez. Oscurecía mas y mas y Rayitas tenia miedo. Sentia que tenia que abandonar todo.

He felt that he had to abandon everything...until one day (hands together- hands to the butterfly – 5 sec. pause)...

the end...el fin

o el comienzo...(look at seniors) the beginning.