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English Department

Graduation Speech

May 14, 2012

There are 57 graduating seniors here today. We did not make it here on our own, so I would like to start by giving a round of applause to those who have helped us get to where we are today; parents, family, and friends. I am honored to be here today to speak on behalf of Greensboro College Middle College class of 2012! This Middle College program has brought together an amazing group of students who come from many different backgrounds making us all an individual part of this program. Greensboro College Middle College has given us all the opportunity to learn how to build friendships and family bonds with a lack of judgment, and an increasing amount of open-mindedness.

High school graduation, as we all know, is a great milestone in life, and Class of 2012 we have finally reached that milestone. It is said that high school graduation is also one of the most emotional days for people, some even tend to drop a tear or two sometimes. Parents, I know it seems like we were just babies one day, then big kids the next. Now we're high school graduates. I know there has been some times when you've even wondered if your child was going to make it, or how he or she would turn out. But you have put in enough work to get us here, so be proud of yourselves just as much as you are proud of us.

To get where we are at this very moment, every student has had their own trials and tribulations. There is a reason why we all ended up here at Greensboro College Middle College. Maybe because the traditional education plan didn't draw us in enough. Maybe because we didn't fit in with any of the subcultural groups at a traditional school and were often picked on. Or maybe this was our last attempt to actually care to succeed in school. Whatever that story may be, it all happened for a reason.

My reason for ending up at Greensboro College Middle College may be similar to many of my fellow graduating classmates. I started off in Greensboro but moved to Charlotte, North Carolina for better occupational purposes for my mom. I lived in a single-mother household, just me, my brother and my mom. My mom always tried her best to give us better opportunities in life, but somehow I just always ended up getting involved in the more dangerous situations offered in life. Trouble was my middle name in Charlotte. After bringing my family so much pain and disappointment, my mom had enough and sent me to Greensboro to live with my Grandma. Living with my Grandma was a totally different environment; One, because she was an active duty Police Officer, and two, because she lived in the middle of nowhere.. Upon my arrival, my attitude towards school was still the same, but little did I know my whole outlook on life would begin to change as the days went on. This didn't happen over night, but if you closed your eyes for a very, very, very very long time, you could say it happened in a blink of an eye.

After living in Greensboro for only a couple of months, I finally met my dad, and a whole other side of family that I never knew I had. I think meeting my Dad was the first step of my

growing into a mature, young adult. I've had many male figures in and out of my life that I've looked up to, such as uncles, grandfathers, and members of my community. But there is nothing like having that father figure in your life. Along with my father, came another huge team of supporters that I love and appreciate as well. Every single person in my family has taught me a thing or two and contributed very much to shaping me into the young adult that I am today.

Another male figure that has impacted my life in a positive way is my Uncle Josh. For those of you that know me, you know that I have a lot of family, some blood related, and others, blood couldn't bring us any closer. But if you know Uncle Josh, then you know that he is my AP English 12 teacher, Mr. B. Mr. B is one of the few people that can correct your grammar and pick on you all in the same breath. In fact he is the ONLY person that can tell you the simple definition behind what he calls a "ten dollar word" and turn it into "prutty name." He is also the only person that gives every student he comes in contact with a nickname to show his love for them. Mr. B, as well as the other English teacher here at GCMC, Ms. Galloway, has continued to teach me as much as they can about English Literature, writing essays, and life.

Our experiences here at GCMC were overall great ones, especially when you look back on what we went through to get to this day. When we first came here, we didn't really know what this school was about, but who would be mad about a field trip the first two days of school, especially when there was free food involved? All the memories we have here at GCMC will never be forgotten and will always be cherished. From trips to The Summit and the bowling alley, to BOOT CAMP junior year. From fighting over parking spaces with Weaver kids, to chilling

in the parking lot with pull-out chairs from one of the several mini-vans Ericksen drove to school. From walking into Ms. Mayo's class yelling "Que es buenooo!" to walking into Ms. Ambrosino's room with a cold Dr. Pepper to make her day. Here we have learned to come together as one, no matter your race, shape, or size. We have learned that you can get all the help you want and need, if you just take the time to ask. We've learned to work with what we've got to get what we want and that is why we are preparing to walk across this stage today.

Now after we walk across this stage...and have to come back to get our real diploma, we're officially one step closer to "the real world." Class of 2012, I challenge you all to take everything you've learned from every experience, conversation, and lesson plan with you into the real world and make the best of it. No, it's not going to be easy, nor will success knock on your door tomorrow night, but I want for you all to continue to make PROGRESS. Whether it be in school, at work, or just becoming a better person in life, always always always continue to make progress. You've made this much progress in life to get to where you are now, so don't let that drive end after graduation. Don't forget the positive relationships you've made here as you move along and forge new ones. And if you ever need a motivational push, my brothers and sisters, I am always here for you.