

Hello everyone!

I would like to start by thanking all the parents, students, teachers, and staff for being here today in honor of the 2020 class. As you probably know, I'm Marina and I've been assigned to write a speech speaking about my experience with fellow colleagues throughout the years. I joined the School in Pre-Nursery, along with four other ladies present here today, one of which will be leaving us shortly. When we first came here, I'm pretty sure we had no idea what would come along the way. Years passed and we made our first friendships. In elementary, things started getting more serious and we had a minuscule glimpse of what was to come. By the end of it, we had faced our first obstacles and grew more nervous as Middle School approached. When we started Middle School, things changed insanely fast. More classes, teachers, responsibilities, and worries all became our new reality. We were in a completely new world. However, gradually, we learned how to deal with the hardships, and I can assure you that none of us is the same as we were in 6th grade. Middle School years are like a test; the time we're put in probation to find out our strengths, our weaknesses and our passions. Many people have come and left within this time, and certainly, they have marked us and will stay in our hearts forever. It's a time of discovery; which is very hard since discoveries mostly come with great heartbreaks. Together, we've all grown and developed. It's common sense that our class doesn't seem united; but if there's something that I've learned and experienced recently, is that the moments of need are the ones that bring us together and I know that we can count on each other, like a family.

Now, we go to High School with a sense of déjà vu. The same mindset, the same worries, the same struggles. However, in the end, we will overcome the difficulties together. We cannot predict

and control what will happen and many times bad things happen, but we can choose how to deal with them and how to make the best out of the situation, even when there does not seem to be any positive side.

Unfortunately, many of our colleagues for all of these years will be leaving. Our 2020 class will be spread throughout the world: Houston, Miami, Italy, and Singapore, just to name a few. All of them are leaving behind a family that will miss them immeasurably... You should know that no matter what, you can always count on us to be there for you even if we're in the other side of the planet.

In 4 years, we will graduate and be thrown into the mess that is real life. We'll be forced to make decisions that will not only mold our future, but our family's future, and even our nation's future. In that moment, we should have in mind that our choices affect the people around us. This may sound like a scary idea; but it should not daunt us. Instead, we should embrace the hope of finding our purpose, our reason to exist and follow our dreams and work hard to achieve them.

I would like to thank all of the teachers we ever had for tolerating us and being patient when we gave you no reason to. Thanks for believing in our potential, and in us, which is essential for anyone to excel.

Most importantly, I would like to thank all of our parents because without you, we'd never be here. You comfort us in the worst moments, and scold us whenever it's necessary. Even though we do not say it enough, we love you and your unconditional love is crucial.

Last but not least, thank you for all of the school for embracing us as part of the community, and letting us live in an environment which has become our second home. Together with our parents, you have provided opportunities for us develop our abilities and talents.

A shout out to Isabella, Sofia, Rosario, Ms. Schreiber, Leandro and my mom for helping me revise and edit my speech.

When given the task to write a speech, we were also given the responsibility of choosing a teacher to honor. A teacher **to/by** whom we felt represented and guided us throughout the middle school. It was not an easy choice, and our class was divided in preferences, of course. However, after some debating and clarifying, the class of 2020 concluded that the most honorable choice was Mr. Braga. I believe I speak for all when I say that he has guided, helped and enlightened our class. I know from personal experience that he is always there to listen to us and give advice in our worst moments. As a teacher, he always taught interesting classes with different and new content that sparked our curiosity and led engaging debates. Outside of class, he taught us how to be more respectful, free of judgment citizens, and how to be better listeners. He is a role model that we all look up to and follow. Therefore, it is more than fair that after spending 3 years with you, we express our gratitude. Thank you and we wish you all the best.

Marina Korja

Class of 2020