

Good evening to Principal Finley, Vice Principal Ma, the teaching faculty at all the TREC programs, the proud family members and student supports and last but not least my fellow graduates. It is my profound honour to stand before you all today as one of your two valedictorians.

My path hasn't been easiest throughout my high school years. I was on a very dark path full of poor choices. When I turned fifteen years old, I found out that I was pregnant and that is how my journey led me to TREC which was a turning point. So, standing in front of all of you today, as one of your valedictorians is truly something I didn't think I would be getting to do 4 years ago.

I do owe the biggest thank you to a couple of people for pushing me and continuously cheering me on to be the best version of myself, and to never give up even when that light at the end of the tunnel seemed very dim. Those people are staff at First Steps and TREC. I also want to recognize my family and most importantly my daughter, Harper, she was truly my second chance.

Today marks a moment in our lives that many of us have been anticipating. This is a day of recognizing our achievements, big and small. This is the moment when all 42 TREC graduates end their high school journey and are about to set off on another new adventure. As we start the next adventure, we will remember what we have learned, which is far more than math formulas, essays, or how to answer questions on tests. For some of us we learned resilience and how to adapt when life became uncertain. We learned that failure is not the opposite of success, but part of the journey towards success. Most importantly, we learned that growth happens when we step outside our comfort zones, and it is okay to accept help when challenging ourselves.

For each of us the path forward will be different but I encourage all of you to take as many opportunities as you can to create a life full of growth, success and happiness.

In my own experience, taking opportunities, even when they seemed scary, has presented me with a variety of different experiences. This has allowed me to explore different ideas that has led me down a path and ultimately exploring a career in trades. Grads, don't be afraid to try something new, who knows where it can lead you?!?!

I leave you with this quote by Carl Bard, "Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending."

Congratulations to the graduating class of 2026, we did it!