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New journey for graduates

Memorial High School class of 2011 heads into future

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As the sun set over Miller Stadium on 59th street in West New York on Monday, the graduating class of 2011 at Memorial High School gathered for one last time.

“We have a great variety of talent, from singers and actors, to academic honors,” said Board of Education President Cosmo Cirillo at the ceremony. “And the West New York Board of Education is extremely proud of this graduating class.”



Speeches

At the ceremony, valedictorian Zulema Peralta said she was overwhelmed with excitement for herself and her fellow senior class, but repeatedly reminded the class in her speech to achieve all the goals that they have set for their future.



‘Don’t be afraid to dream.
Dreams are free.’ – Scott
Cannao



“Do something that makes you happy, inspires you, makes you smile all day,” she said. “Be the actor or actress on Broadway, the environmentalist, the nutritionist, the engineer, the coach, the doctor, and never let anyone tell you that what you have your mind set on is impossible. Never forget the

people that stood by your side, never forget the best friend that said everything will be okay, the teachers that opened worlds that were unknown to you, the coaches that became your confidants, your friends.”

We wish you well

Scott Cannao, the new acting principal at Memorial High School, said that as a former student of the school, he was honored to be in his new position.

“Your journey has been filled with peaks and valleys,” he said. “I am sure this is just one of many more to come. You all look wonderful tonight with your caps and your gowns, but make no mistake. This moment is not only about you, it’s about your parents, your proud family members, your friends, teachers, and anyone who helped you along the way.”

Cannao urged the students to dream, and to remember that achieving dreams takes hard work.

“There is no doubt you will encounter roadblocks on your journey,” he said. “Use these as instruments to learn from, rather than objects to keep you from your goals. The lessons taught at Memorial are more than academic. You have been given the tools for you to succeed. I only ask that you use them to make good decisions. What you choose to do is not as important as the conviction with which you carry out that choice. So be positive, be proactive, fight for what you believe in, don’t shy away from the future, and never forget where you came from.”

Mayor Felix Roque stressed “perseverance” and to honor parents and teachers.

“The word perseverance is my mantra, because to me what it signifies is having a goal,” he said. “Sometimes you know that goal is not going to be favorable, but you go for it anyway.”

He added, “Remember what I learned [from] a student from a middle school, Kobe Garcia. He said your best friends are your parents. Make sure you honor your parents, do the right thing, and always remember keep in touch with your teachers because they are very special people.”

Where to now?

After the ceremony, several of the seniors talked about their future.

“I am going to Ramapo College of New Jersey to study biology,” said Jezenia Barra. “Meeting everyone and seeing the differences between everyone and their talents helped me become more confident in myself and reveal my talents.”

Rudolpho Nunez, who showed up for graduation on crutches after fracturing three bones in his foot three weeks ago, said, “I am going to Bergen Community College to study international business, because I like to travel.”

Karen Valencia is interested in the medical field. “I am extremely excited, because I never thought I would be here,” she said. She said she plans to complete her paramedic training.

Jose Grullon one of the top 25 students in the graduating class, plans to attend Rutgers to study sports medicine, a subject that fascinates him.

“I am really excited because I am going to college,” Adriana Ortiz said. “I will be going to community college then transferring to Hunter College. I want to study nursing, because I really enjoy helping kids and I would love to give back. The education they gave us was lovely. It was the best!”

Kermy Amparo said he has never felt so excited in his life about achieving something like completing high school. He plans to attend New Jersey City University.

Omar Vasquez said, “[Graduation is] a new opening, a new milestone. I plan to go to Bergen Community College for a year then transfer to Montclair State University to study film. My AV club experiences help me become more social.”

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