

Class of 2011 President Jesse Graham  
Graduation Speech

So here we are, our graduation. For all of us this moment is the culmination of the past 13 years of our lives, and a final farewell that hardly does that time justice. For some, this ceremony comes as a relief as we are able to cast aside the shackles of high school that bound us as we enter the liberty of the adult world. For others, this end comes bittersweet. Every memory that we have made at school is caught in an emotional struggle with the allure of freedom in the adult world. And that is exactly what it is, the adult world, not the “real world.” To say that we have not yet entered the real world, to say that everything that we have done over the past 18 years of our lives was not real, that it did not matter, would be a lie. We have always been a part of the real world, and as a new chapter of our lives unfolds before us, we cannot help but look to the past to pacify our fear of the unknown. And that fear is not unfounded, for we graduate under the burden of a nation. We graduate with the weight of the world on our shoulders. Now more than ever the earth, our country, and our community need us. And we shall go forth to answer that call, but we will not have to do it alone. We take with us everything we have ever done, everyone we have ever met, and everything we have ever learned while at Penn Manor. So there is no reason to be afraid, no need to sour this chance laid out before us with feelings of regret and a longing for the past. Embrace your future. The possibilities of life are endless. Embrace your parents, teachers, and mentors. You are strong enough to withstand the pressures in life because of them. But most of all embrace one another. We have traveled this journey together, and though at this crossroads every one of us must face their own path that lies ahead, we can always depend on the love and support of the friends we have made at Penn Manor. Let this

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summer be a testament to that bond. With faith in ourselves that we can handle whatever the future may hold and friends at our side, let us enjoy this summer like no other. The past four years of our lives have passed in the blink of an eye, so take the next three months to slow life down and live it to the fullest. Do not forget that you are only young once. And to the Penn Manor Class of 2012, do not be afraid to try something new or act on a whim. Let adventure guide you through your last year of high school, and make it the most memorable year you can, because in the end the memories are what you cherish most. Penn Manor Class of 2011, it has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your president these past four years. We certainly have made this class legendary.