

Quakertown Community School District Special Graduation Section

The Class of 2023

June 6, 2023

'Time is a thief. Put down that phone.'



Grads urged to cherish each moment

By Gary Weckselblatt

The Quakertown Community High School Class of 2023 advisors and student officers celebrated 383 seniors with words of wisdom that were at times funny, serious, and often emotional as families in the packed Alumni Field stands watched and listened with their hearts full and eyes watery.

The 2023 Commencement Ceremony on a beautiful June 6th evening - except for the smoky air, courtesy of the Canadian wildfires - was the culmination of a huge week for graduates. Last week, they were sent off in a big way as the community rallied with support in the fourth annual Parade of Graduates down Park Avenue and Juniper Street; 15 athletes were recognized in a college signing ceremony; and 103 students were lauded in a special evening event for receiving \$9.3 million in scholarship offers.

In his remarks at the Senior Awards



Ceremony, Principal Mattias van 't Hoenderdaal said "If there is ever a group that has shown to be adaptable to whatever life throws at them, it most certainly is this cohort of graduating students. And as you graduate, remember the friendships you have forged, the lessons you have learned, and the countless memories that will

forever be etched in your hearts."

At Tuesday night's commencement, the soon-to-be graduates were urged to live in the now, enjoy the journey, and treasure each moment and the people who love them.

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Insight from the Student Officers



“As we grew up, our teachers felt like friends, friends felt like family, and family felt like home. I know that I have made unforgettable memories, and I hope you all have to.”

Ty Wilkin



“It's the relationships we build that truly matter. The people in our lives, our friends and family, are the ones who support us, challenge us, and make life worth living. Take the time to appreciate and nurture these relationships. They are the foundation of a fulfilling life.”

Sydney Bishop

“As we leave these gates one last time as a class, remember what really matters. Always be grateful and kind. Be willing to try new things because even failure leads to growth.

Remain open to new connections. Live in the moment. Seize opportunities, and make new treasured memories! The world is yours to reach your unlimited potential.”

Julia Henry

Watch Commencement 2023 Again

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NOvVPYxNYq0>

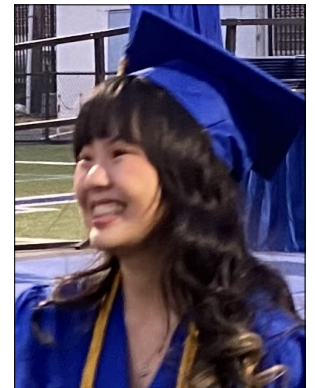


“Meet new people, step out of your comfort zone, ask questions, and turn challenges into opportunities,” Stone said. “Just remember this first chapter is the stepping stone to the next. Looking back to passing standardized tests, worrying about our GPA, completing homework, and writing essays; the things we used to stress over constantly will look and feel like a piece of cake.”

Stone Renshaw

“Whatever path we choose, we must remember to stay true to ourselves and to our values. We must remain committed to our dreams and aspirations, and we must never give up in the face of adversity.”

Jessica Kelso



Wisdom from the Teacher Advisors



“The parent generation before us warned that it goes by ‘in the blink of an eye,’ and we nodded and dismissed that absolute truth we behold right here and now. ... Your life is a lot like a wandering, evolving essay. Don’t procrastinate. Don’t fear it. Enjoy the time spent along the way.”

Jennifer Stover

“Stop and recognize what is occurring right here, right now. Your families, friends, teachers and administration have gathered here to congratulate you, to cheer you on, to wish you the very best, and to show you just how much they love you. The stadium is buzzing from this massive accumulation of energy. Let me hear it - show me some of that energy. This ceremony, right now, is an amazing adventure.”

Tina Sullivan

“Spend quality time with people who are important to you. You matter to them and they matter to you. Time is a thief. Put down that phone. Your parents have loved you for a long time and want what is best for you and want to see you happy, show them they taught you well.”

Darlene Hardy

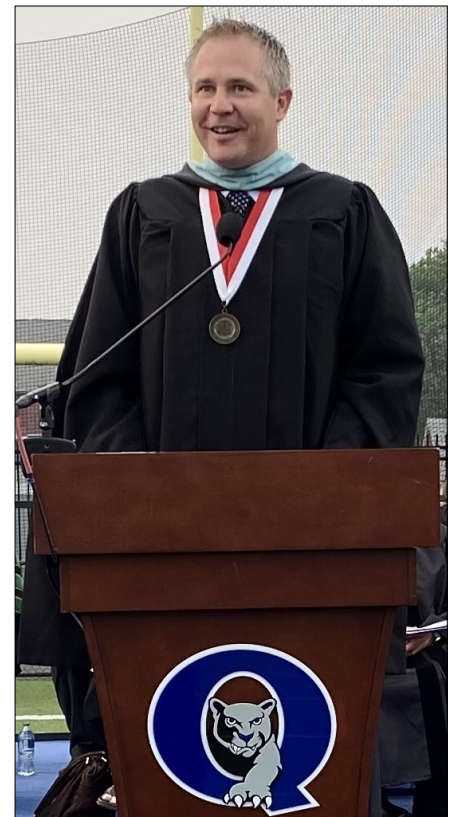


“If there is ever a group that has shown to be adaptable to whatever life throws at them, it most certainly is this cohort of graduating students. And as you graduate, remember the friendships you have forged, the lessons you have learned, and the countless memories that will forever be etched in your hearts.”

**Mattias van 't Hoenderdaal ,
QCHS Principal**

“From ‘Life’s Little Instruction Book,’ with suggestions on how to live a happy and rewarding life, the last suggestion is one of the best, ‘Call your Mother.’ ”

**Glenn Iosue,
School Board President**



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"It's the relationships we build that truly matter," said Sydney Bishop, one of five class officers who spoke from the stage. "The people in our lives, our friends and family, are the ones who support us, challenge us, and make life worth living. Take the time to appreciate and nurture these relationships. They are the foundation of a fulfilling life."

Sydney, Julia Henry, Jessica Kelso, Stone Renshaw, and Tyler Wilkin each shared their thoughts in short speeches. School Board President Glenn Iosue also had words of encouragement for the grads, as did Class of 2023 advisors Darlene Hardy, Jennifer Stover, and Tina Sullivan.

"Instead of looking for the next big adventure, pause, take a deep breath, and realize there is adventure to be found in each and every moment," Ms. Sullivan said. "When you

fully realize this, you will find joy, and spontaneity, and magic, and wonder, the stuff adventure is made of, all around you. Stop and recognize what is occurring right here, right now. Your families, friends, teachers and administration have gathered here to congratulate you, to cheer you on, to wish you the very best, and to show you just how much they love you. The stadium is buzzing from this massive accumulation of energy. Lemme hear it - show me some of that energy. This ceremony, right now, is an amazing adventure."

Ms. Hardy had a similar theme. "Spend quality time with people who are important to you. You matter to them and they matter to you. Time is a thief. Put down that phone. Your parents have loved you for a long time and want what is best for you and want to see you happy, show them they taught you well."

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Mrs. Stover added “The parent generation before us warned that it goes by ‘in the blink of an eye,’ and we nodded and dismissed that absolute truth we behold right here and now. ... Your life is a lot like a wandering, evolving essay. Don’t procrastinate. Don’t fear it. Enjoy the time spent along the way.”

For the 10th consecutive year, as each student walked off the stage they were met at the bottom of the steps by Superintendent Dr. Bill Harner, who asked them what they plan to do next. After shaking the hands of 4,200 QCHS graduates, this was Dr. Harner’s final Panther commencement. “The Class of 2023 will leave an indelible mark and record to aspire to for our wonderful Quakertown Panther school community,” he said.

Indeed, in the Class of 2023:

- ◆ 55 earned membership in the National Honor Society
- ◆ Seven earned membership in the National Technical Honor Society
- ◆ 31 achieved Advanced Placement Scholar recognition by 11th grade
- ◆ Three earned AP Capstone diplomas: Mary Barbour, Sydney Fronheiser, and Darby Vail
- ◆ 11 committed to serve in the Armed Forces: Dominic Basile, Katie Catalano, Lacey Cressman, Nathaniel Grebb, Ethan Horning, Brian Kecza, Owen Jaegers, Tyler Nordquist, Jules Sepulveda, Andrew Shaw, and Jacob Wackerman.

Grads enjoyed a fireworks display following the celebratory tossing of caps into the air. Then it was a mob scene as students and teachers found people to embrace and soak in the emotional final moments of their K-12 student life. It was a glorious night as everyone was entertained by the QCHS band and chorus, and heard from the student officers.

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Jessica said, “Whatever path we choose, we must remember to stay true to ourselves and to our values. We must remain committed to our dreams and aspirations, and we must never give up in the face of adversity.”

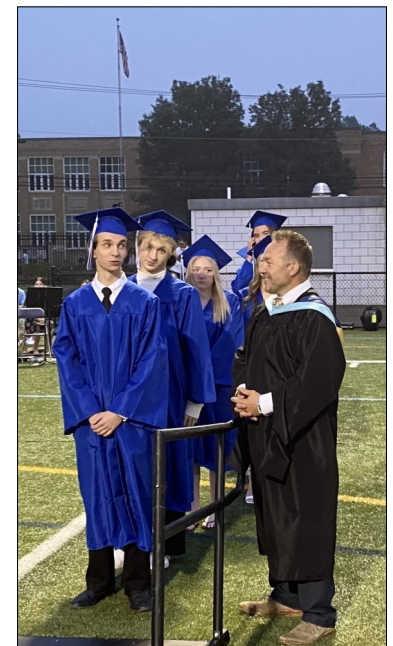
Julia said, “As we leave these gates one last time as a class, remember what really matters. Always be grateful and kind. Be willing to try new things because even failure leads to growth. Remain open to new connections. Live in the moment. Seize opportunities, and make new treasured memories! The world is yours to reach your unlimited potential.”

Ty said “As we grew up, our teachers felt like friends, friends felt like family, and family felt like home. I know that I have made unforgettable memories, and I hope you all have to.”

In his thoughtful comments, Mr. Losue, the Board president, said to remember the word CARE: Curious, Adventurous, Resourceful and Educated. He concluded with “Celebrate your wins. Pick yourself up when your down and try again. Learn to achieve your own greatness in life and pursuit of happiness. Know that your family, friends, and teachers CARE for you. We wish you the best on your future journeys.

“And from ‘Life’s Little Instruction Book,’ with suggestions on how to live a happy and rewarding life, the last suggestion is one of the best, ‘Call your Mother.’ ”

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