

## **Alanna Tieman's Salutatorian's Address Huntington High School Graduation - 2010**

From this point onward, our lives will never be the same. We have reached a milestone today. For the past thirteen years we have been told where to be five out of the seven days of the week and when to be there. We have been told what to study and how. Our freedom to make our own decisions was limited. We were like ocean liners being pulled and guided by tugboats safely out of the harbor. And we have now reached open water.

Here, we will all go our separate ways. The ocean is vast and wide, as are our options. Maybe some of our courses will overlap at points, or mirror each other's, but each path we will all soon traverse will be unique. We have been advised on which course to take, but in the end only we can decide our fates. We now have the freedom and the responsibility to choose our own path and follow it wherever it may take us.

The tugboats: our parents, teachers, friends, and others who have guided us, helped us to avoid disaster. From them we have learned much about life and how the world works. When we strayed too close to potential collisions, the tugboats brought us back to the path that would lead us here, to our future. We have learned the ropes. We have been given the compass. And now it is time for us to embark on our own journey, a journey full of exploration and uncertainties. Though we may need to radio the shore for advice or maybe some of us even for a full-blown rescue mission, we are ultimately on our own now.

As we travel onward, the influences of our past will remain always, but this new independence will allow for us to truly discover our own ideas, and in our own way. Our different interests and goals for the future will lead us in different directions. But yet, our lives are irrevocably intertwined in

that we all share the experience of Huntington High School. During our years together at Huntington High School we have forged a bond that will keep us connected, however far away our paths may lead us. Whether it's a best friend, or a friendly face passed in the hallway, whether it's a friend since first grade, or one made just last year, we all have had an impact on each other in some way, either directly or indirectly. I personally am proud to be a part of Huntington High School's Class of 2010, without a doubt the best class ever.

So as we go forth into this crazy world we have to remember all of the valuable lessons we have learned at Huntington, both in and out of the classroom, and we have to remember and appreciate the wonderful people that taught them to us: our parents, our teachers, our family, our friends, the administrators, and the support staff, all of whom allow for learning to take place, and without whom the school could not function. Because of these people we have been given all of the basic information and tools to survive. Now we just have to choose our course and explore it.

The captain's wheel is now ours. We must steer carefully, for the impact of our decisions will create many waves. It is important that we all go about continuing to promote the values we have learned in this great community such as kindness, integrity, tolerance, and perseverance, and that we continue to practice the responsibility to our fellow man that is a necessity in this world. While sailing the uncharted waters ahead, let these values be the stars by which we navigate. I hope each of us remembers these words by the poet William Ernest Henly, "It matters not how strait the gate, How charged with punishments the scroll. I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul."

Congratulations to all of you! We did it!