

Despite having completed Dr. Moore's rhetoric class, I still have a very difficult time when it comes to speech making. From that beginning class in ninth grade, where I was actually a bit scared of Dr. Moore, and worried about how I would ever accomplish as much as they put in front of me, I have nevertheless endured, and learned more than I ever thought was possible in four years.

For this graduating class of 2006, that is what Ridgeview has done for all of us. Ridgeview has taught us to endure and shown us that we can truly accomplish more than we ever thought possible. For our class, known as Ridgeview's quietest class, the senior theses perhaps seemed far beyond us. Yet we have triumphed over these, and defended them with strong voices. Each one of us has written our 25 pages, and attempted to find the "meaning of life." As I was looking back over all the papers I have written throughout my stay at Ridgeview, I discovered that I had written easily over 100 pages, probably closer to 200 pages of papers. As a lover of mathematics, and one who often dreads writing, such numbers likely would have driven me away from Ridgeview, frightened of the heavy workload. Many students did leave, worried about the heavy workload or maintaining their 4.0's, but we have endured. We came and we stayed.

Ridgeview has helped me immensely, strengthened me where my greatest weaknesses lie. I am sure each graduate would tell you that never has Ridgeview let them drop their pack, for there are always more assignments, more papers, more tests, and more knowledge. Enticing us with the smell of new books, which they give to us as our very own and teach us to mark up with as much ink as possible, Ridgeview has given us a love of learning.

I would like to thank all of my teacher's, for each teacher I have had has taught me much. Every teacher has drawn more out of me than I thought I had. Without Dr. Moore's Rhetoric class, I would never have even attempted to write a speech. Without the teaching of Mrs. Pichel, Mr. Marks and Mr. Hild, whom I have had as my literature teacher for three of my four years here, I would have thrown my hands up in exasperation, convinced that I was a terrible writer, with no improvement in sight. Through the teaching of Mr. Busek, Mr. Patterson, and Mr. Herndon I have learned the joys of history. The word story is embedded in the word history for a reason, for under their instruction, the fascinating twists of history truly come to life.

Through Mrs. DeMunsuri and Mr. Smith I have seen the wonders available to those who choose to learn a new language. I have learned that though English grammar is often so confusing, a thorough understanding of Latin grammar can shed amazing light on the way our language works. Mr. Smith has given me a love for classical languages and the words of the ancients that I shall carry with me to Chicago. I have seen ties between these languages and mathematics. Each subject has its puzzles. For languages: sentences to work out, verbs to identify and conjugate, connections to make between words, meanings, and derivatives. For mathematics: problems to work through, theorems to prove, connections to make between equations and numbers, which appear where you least expect them. I sincerely thank Mr. Luce for helping me to strive ever onward, encouraging me and believing me to be capable of everything I have set my hands on. Without his announcement at the awards assembly at the end of my ninth grade year that I would be attempting to jump for Pre Calculus to Calc 3, I probably

would have let the opportunity slip by. That opportunity opened the door to many others, including the wonderful classes I have enjoyed at CSU.

I would also like to thank Miss Weiss, for without her urging, I never would have moved beyond my mathematical way of drawing (which despite her protests, really does work!) She has shown me a new side of art, a side that does not require perfectionism, but a free hand and a simple enjoyment of the task.

Let me not forget my science teachers, who have shown me a world driven further by curiosity and embodying the Ridgeview love for learning. Through Mrs. Petterson, Mr. Goodrich, Mr. Doumitt, and Mr. Morse I have learned how to identify the clouds, generate electricity and identify the organelles of a cell.

Through all the stress and all the work, my parents have supported me. I give them my greatest thanks. They have given me even more than simple encouragement, however. They have given me wonderful examples of how to live by faith. They have shown me the great truth in the answer to Sonya's question: "And what would I be without God." God has sustained me through all my tasks and my talents are gifts from Him. I desire to honor God with my talents and to glorify His name.

Ridgeview has challenged my beliefs, and allowed me to nonetheless stand firm and deeply rooted. I think that each of my classmates has been able to look deeper into what they believe, and prepared themselves to face the world and the challenges it offers. Through all the hardships we have developed lasting friendships amongst our classmates and our teachers. As we go out into the world, off on all our separate paths, we will always remember Ridgeview and the teachers and students who make the wonderful school it is.

We will take with us the lesson of endurance through all the trials of life and will always hold on to the joy of learning. We take with us the lessons of character and love of mankind, essential lessons as we embark on the opportunities in front of us. We have learned that when overwhelming challenges rise up, we can overcome them step by step, and rise to greater heights than we thought possible. For these lessons we are grateful to Ridgeview, grateful that we had the amazing opportunity to be a part of the great conversation of life. As we leave, we hopefully have taught these lessons to those who will come after us, following in our footsteps as we follow the footsteps of the graduating classes before us.