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Hello, I'm Pam Desmarais, President of Sacred Heart School. Good evening Parents, Educators, Esteemed Guests and, of course, National Honor Society Members, and Inductees.

I'd first like to thank Sister Janice and Rita Gunta for inviting me to address all of you tonight to celebrate academic success. I am honored to be here. As a graduate of Sacred Heart High School, I know, firsthand, the value of a faith-based education. Success here is buoyed by unparalleled parental and faculty support blended with spiritual fortitude. Excelling is rarely easy, but always rewarding. Consistent effort sparks magic, turns tides, builds courage and rewrites destinies.

I remember being named President of NHS and how proud I was of myself. How grateful I was to have been blessed with the gift of intellect, amazing parents and encouraging teachers. To see that my persistence paid off. To learn that I could make something of myself if I applied my best effort. To know that I could have a great future. To realize that maybe I could affect positive change for someone else. Even just one other person.

NHS members and recipients: you would not be here for tonight's celebration without self-discipline, critical thinking and hours of study over your academic career. Allow yourself to bask in the achievement we are here to acknowledge. Take a moment to breathe in the feeling of accomplishment you have earned. Teachers: know that your tireless commitment to your students matters. Parents: your contribution may be more subtle, but you are to be congratulated as well. You all deserve thanks and recognition.

My children are still young, but I relish in their gold stars and new friendships. I am constantly aware that the educational and social skills they are developing now are the base from which they will spring everlasting. I try to remember how hard it can be to find your way as a child and do all I can to lift them higher. And no matter our age, isn't a helping hand always welcome?

Mother Teresa said, "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other." So, as I congratulate each and every one of tonight's recipients, I ask this: what will you do with your educational achievement? How will you advance humanity?

The unprecedented global expansion and technological advancements that have taken place in your lifetime are astonishing. As progression continues to press on, your education will be an essential component of your success. It will inspire you to innovate. Invent. Transform.

Maybe even revolutionize.

I implore you to demonstrate your intelligence. Spread your education by reaching out whenever you can. Apply your knowledge to empower others, to make their life – and yours – better. Stronger. Along the way, remember that we are inextricably connected to every living being.

Winston Church said, "You make a living by what you get, you make a life by what you give."

Your education at Sacred Heart is fostered by the principles of camaraderie, unity and belief in God. Remember your faith. Use your voice to speak out against injustice. Oppression. Violence. When life presents you moral and ethical challenges, be true to yourself. Embrace everyone with understanding, tolerance and compassion. Standup ... and be counted. Allow the best of who you are to blanket the larger world. Never shrink from leadership. The path you illuminate will guide countless others. They, in turn, will lead as well, and influence the world with change propelled intelligence and kindness.

The road may not be easy at times. And life will undoubtedly push back. Do not be swayed.

Thank you and best wishes for an outstanding year learning new things and cultivating new relationships.