

2019 Bexley High School Commencement Address  
by Annie Politi

Good afternoon students, faculty, parents, loved ones, and class of 2019. First of all, I'd like to thank the school for the opportunity to speak today and represent the amazing, talented, bright, and compassionate class before me. We did it! We are *actually* here, graduating!! I can't believe it either. Secondly, I'd like to take a moment to thank my parents for encouraging me before this speech: I really needed it. In fact, I'd like us all to recall something small that happened today that made us smile: a hug from your mom, a warm meal you had before heading over here today, or even just waking up and remembering that today is the day the rest of our lives begin. These small details matter. Yes, the focal points of our day form the foundation of our lives, but without the small details, our life would be just that: an empty framework.

To illustrate this point, I could think of nothing better than a speech that Mr. Featherstone gave my AP euro class at the beginning of fourth quarter this year. We were drowning in textbook pages, math equations, and novels we most *definitely* didn't Sparknote.... Mr. Featherstone told us we were approaching the end, and the framework of our high school years had been established. Our GPAs were relatively stable, we'd already won golf trophies and 1's at OMEA competitions, and we had already had viable futures in front of us. It seemed tempting to coast along now, but Featherstone reminded us that these last two months of school are how we would be remembered at Bexley High school. We would be remembered for going out of our way to help our peers with homework or the perfect lacrosse shot on goal, for bringing positivity

to the school each day, and for going the extra mile when it seems like no one will notice. We would be remembered for the small details of how we carried ourselves each day, and further, we would remember ourselves by this too.

When I came to Bexley as a freshman, I had grand ideas about what my high school experience would be. I had preplanned my class schedules for all four years, what clubs I would join, what sports I would do, and even the school I would be going to. And Bexley didn't disappoint on these significant aspects of a high school career; we have graduated from a school whose academics, sports, arts, and reputation remains unparalleled and as perfect as one could hope for in a high school experience. Yet, coming home from my first day of school, I didn't tell my mom about any of these things. Instead, I told her about Mrs. Blosser giving me a hug when I walked into Women's Glee. I told her about the morning announcements beginning with a big "Gooooood morning Bexley high school....", I told her about finally having a big, bright Bexley blue locker of my very own, and I told her how so many people I'd never met before welcomed me with smiles and open arms. And as high school has gone on, these small details are what I will treasure most about this school. Looking back, I'll treasure Mrs. Groot baking birthday brownies for our study hall, wheelbarrow races at clash of the classes, DKO performing a revolutionary war era song in full colonial attire, and Mr. Logsdon dressing up as a potato bug and walking us to our AP bio exam. Yes, it was as spectacular as it sounds.

And to my classmates, I truly to feel blessed to have been surrounded by some of the most talented, accomplished people I could ever meet. Among the class of 2019, we have submitted Mount Kilimanjaro, started clothing and scrunchie brands, and biked across the United States of America. We have belted out Mamma Mia better than Broadway stars, shot over 1000 points in a basketball career, dominated ITK tournaments, and more. These feats are monumental, unforgettable. But we are not merely summaries of our “big accomplishments.” If we were just accomplishments in a speech, we wouldn’t be the class that we are today. We are the class of 2019 because of the small moments; I’ve witnessed my classmates wearing Birkenstocks to prom, baking cookies every week for my AP Lit class, roaring cheers valiantly in the student section, buying the lunch for another high schooler they had never talked to before, actively speaking out against bullying and unkind words, and spreading compassion in a ripple effect, walking out of school to protest gun violence, and showing the world that we will now enter what kind, responsible, respectful leaders look like. We are the class of 2019 because we are thoughtful, compassionate, particular, bold, engaging, and ambitious. We are the class of 2019 because of the small, quirky details that cannot be translated onto a college application or a grade point average. And for that, we are incredible.

Going to the “real world,” I think it’s important we remember the significance of the details. We are all capable of immense accomplishment, and I have no doubt that our futures will be filled with success. But what will make our futures truly remarkable? What will leave us

feeling full of gratitude but hungry for new experiences? The answer lies in the unplanned, unexpected moments of compassion, extra effort, and vulnerability. The moments we chose to go above and beyond when it seems inconsequential, or even when no one is watching. My parents have always taught me that happiness does not follow success, but that happiness is instead the precursor to success. In order to achieve true success as we enter the rest of our lives, we must give care to these small details that fill others' lives with happiness and in turn, fulfill us as well. Mother Teresa famously said, "Be faithful in the small things because it is in them that your strength lies." Bexley High School, thank you for staying true to the small extra efforts that made this high school experience so extraordinary. And to my classmates, the class of 2019, be faithful in your details, because they are our greatness. Thank you.