

## Ben's Graduation Speech

Hi I'm Ben O'Dwyer, and this is my opportunity to thank all of you for the support and friendships you have given me over the past nine years. Every single one of my teachers, friends, and family members have had a big part in getting me to the place where I am now. Let me explain a little more.

Over these past years I have made friendships that I know will last a lifetime. Some, are standing up here graduating with me, a few have already moved on, and others still have their Senior Project waiting for them. Although many of us will be in different schools next year, I know my friends will always be there for me and I'm looking forward to our futures.

Next I would like to thank my awesome family, because without their support I wouldn't have been able to achieve this much. They help me with everything, from homework to problems with friends and working out difficult situations. My parents are such a big part of my life and have always been so involved in my time here at Sunrise. I also want to thank my sister, Grace. She has been so patient this year because I know that my Senior Project has taken up the majority of our dinner conversation. Boring!

And finally my teachers. All of them, even the ones in preschool, have been and will be teaching me for my whole life. I have you to thank for the dedication you've put in to make sure I'm leaving here prepared. You stuck with me in Kindergarden when I struggled with reading. Thanks Cheryl! You stuck with me in 1<sup>st</sup> grade when I was constantly disrupting circle. Thanks Judy! And you even stuck with me in 5<sup>th</sup> grade when I was learning the fine art of "appropriate" humor. Thanks Kathy & Vicki! Without your love and understanding, I would have had a very different elementary school experience. I'm so lucky to have had the patient and loving teachers at Sunrise Montessori. I love all the teachers who have taught me over the years, and I will always keep every one of them in my heart forever.

I was thinking the other day about a lesson we had at the beginning of the year. It had to do with the block tower in Cheryl's room. We used this tower to help us with a 6<sup>th</sup> year math lesson. When I was 3, I remember thinking this huge, pink tower of blocks was just for fun. 9 years later, I realize that from the moment I walked in to Sunrise Montessori, I was learning valuable lessons. That's what this school is all about. While the lessons seem fun, they are secretly teaching us stuff!

Every moment here has prepared me for all of my moments out there. Every map, bead chain, skyscraper card and test tube. Because of Sunrise Montessori, I have the tools to succeed... and I'm ready!

Thank you!