

The Pursuit of Happiness

Good afternoon, family, teachers, honored guests, and Class of 2013. Before I begin my speech, I would like to first thank my amazing teachers who pushed and guided me through high school, my beloved friends who oftentimes accompanied me through the long nights on Facebook, my fantastic parents and brother who supported me throughout my whole life, my fellow Saesoon Presbyterian Church members who have always prayed for me, and God to whom I give the credit for all of my successes.

I would like to take this opportunity to speak about pursuing happiness. The pursuit of happiness. Each and every one of us has asked or will ask himself or herself the question, “What makes me happy?” The source of happiness may differ for all of us, but as for me, I have found that my happiness comes from the act of aiding and becoming a buttress for others.

Over the past four years, I have had multiple opportunities to serve my community in diverse methods such as translating sermons from Korean to English for my church, singing and playing drum as a part of my church’s praise team, and performing at the Open Mic. Show as a part of the infamous “Four Eggrolls and a Pancake” A Capella group to raise money for a nonprofit organization; however, the common lesson that I derived from all of these activities is that whenever I acted for others, the happiness and the sense of fulfillment lingered for a long time, whereas self-satisfying activities brought me joy for only a brief moment.

The famous humanist psychologist Abraham Maslow claimed that there was a hierarchy of needs. In this hierarchy of needs, the highest step, the step above “self-esteem,” is “self-actualization,” which refers to pursuing something beyond oneself. To me, the way to self-actualize is using my talents and strength to serve as the stepping stone for others because happiness is born not from receiving but rather from self-sacrifice.

In my Biology class, we learned about an interesting phenomenon called “altruism.” Exemplified by organisms such as honey bees, altruism refers to a behavior that benefits others at the cost to oneself. Class of 2013, personally, I believe that if mere honey bees can sacrifice themselves for others, then our class, the greatest, the most spirited class that has ever walked through the hallways of Princess Anne High School, can also act for the benefit of others. When we do so, I believe that we will obtain a lasting happiness that we will be able to enjoy for the rest of our lives.

The famous author Albert Pine said, “What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for others and the world, is and remains immortal.” Congratulations Class of 2013, good luck in your future endeavors, and I hope that your legacy will become immortal through your sacrificial acts towards others.