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Leadership

6 June 2019

### Graduation Speech

What does CELA mean to me? CELA means everything. As I began to brainstorm ideas to explain just how much CELA has influenced my life, two words came to me: home and confidence. Beyond the home I live at with my family, CELA is the only other place where I feel cared for and believed in like I do at home. At CELA, people care for me, love me, and want what is best for me. As far as confidence is concerned, I came to CELA as a very nervous 5<sup>th</sup> grader, with minimal belief in myself. Thinking about this paper, I started to reflect on how CELA gradually made me cherish the feeling of home I encountered daily, and the increased level of confidence I now know I have gained. I believe three components in my CELA experience are the reasons for my success. First and foremost, the teachers who believe in me, second, the faith that is practiced every day, and finally, the leadership opportunities provided to each and every student. These are the main components that transformed me from a nervous 5<sup>th</sup> grader to where I am today.

Each and every teacher at CELA has made my journey here feel like home, and has ultimately made me feel like I can do anything. Not only does CELA provide

us with incredibly kind teachers, but also teachers who are passionate about their jobs and their students. What a difference it makes to have a teacher who is excited and passionate about what they are teaching! It makes learning easy. Each day, on the ride home from school, I always have a thousand things to say about what I learned in the classroom that day. The excitement in learning new things is something I had never experienced before coming to CELA. The relationships that I have developed with each of my teachers reminds me that I am in an environment where people who I respect and believe in, also respect and believe in me. The teachers have instilled in me a passion and desire to always want to know more. The power and love I receive from the teachers and staff at CELA has made my confidence grow in ways I never thought it could.

The faith environment at CELA is truly remarkable. Being surrounded by people who love and praise Jesus everyday helps bring me down to earth, humble me, and realize just how blessed I am. The chapels every Wednesday are insightful and powerful. Engaging with the chapel buddies adds a level of fun to the experience. Each week a new value is introduced, which we study, and in turn my faith and relationship in God has deepened. Every morning we have CVLD. It is a calming way to begin each day, and has influenced my faith, love, and connection with Jesus. Beyond Chapel and CVLD class, the staff at CELA are people I look up

to everyday; their kind, gracious, loving spirits are truly inspiring. It begins with a hug as you enter the building, and a smile from Miss Mogard as you pass through the office. These are small, but incredibly important components of the CELA magic formula. Being surrounded by Christ followers and people who so greatly emulate what being a kind Christian means, helps me feel the power and love of our God, and makes me feel tremendously grateful and unstoppable.

Finally, the multitude of leadership opportunities at CELA has helped my confidence grow indescribably. Before I came to CELA, I had no idea what my real interests were. I was resistant to trying anything new where I was uncertain if I would be successful. Therefore, at this point in my life, I did not try many new things. I remember that when I was sitting in music class one day, something clicked, and I realized that singing was something I was interested in and for some reason, I was not afraid to try it. Looking back I have to believe that it is just how CELA makes you feel, that provides you with the courage to try. I would have never imagined that I would be the one to stand up on stage and sing in front of a crowd, but shortly after I began at CELA, that is exactly what I was doing. As well as singing, I have been blessed with my wonderful chapel buddy, Luca Bando. She may not know it, but she has taught me so much. Luca is precious, kind, and innocent, and inspires me to be a positive role model to her and her classmates. The

relationship I have formed with Luca is something that I am forever grateful for.

All the opportunities that are available to me have helped me know that with faith, bravery, and a group of people who love and support you, anything is possible.

Although my time at CELA is over, I will take the lessons I have learned here and utilize them as I continue my journey to high school and beyond. I would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Nahey for carrying out God's plan for them, and building this inspiring leadership academy where I have grown in so many ways. You are changing the lives of so many children in so many ways, and we will, without a doubt, go out and do great things in the world. I would also like to thank all of my teachers and the staff, for their constant love and support towards everything I do. To my family, nothing would be possible without you. I am better in every aspect of my life because of CELA. I have been blessed. Thank you.