

## **THIS IS ONEIDA MOVING MOUNTAINS Part 1**

The valedictorian of the OBI Class of 2013 was Anna Davidson. What follows below and in the next two weeks' articles as well is the text of her valedictory address to the congregation that attended our graduation service on May 18.

"I recently did an English research paper on Dr. Seuss, specifically on his book, Oh, the Places you'll Go! In it, Seuss writes of the struggles, triumphs, and experiences of life and encourages the reader to persevere through them all. Seuss writes, 'So be sure when you step. Step with care and great tact and remember that Life's a Great Balancing Act. Just never forget to be dexterous and deft. And never mix up your right foot with your left. And will you succeed? Yes! You will, indeed! (98 and 3/4 percent guaranteed.) KID, YOU'LL MOVE MOUNTAINS!'

"This brings to mind the question: What is success? Is it moving mountains? Is it always big, dramatic, and showy? Will it put you and me on a stage in front of thousands of adoring fans or on the front page of the news for some major accomplishment? It would be highly desirable if fame and fortune were the consistent byproducts of success for all of us and the end results of hundreds of hours of blood, sweat, and tears, but all it takes is a look at each of our lives to realize that that this definition of success is elusive, hollow, and for the majority of us, unobtainable.

"Personally, just over my short 18 years of life, I have seen this fact borne out in my endeavors many times. My goal to succeed by winning the state tennis tournament and play division one college tennis - unaccomplished. My desire to get a perfect score on the ACT and have colleges tripping over each other to get me - unaccomplished. To be popular, to be loved by everyone, to be cool and stylish, the list could go on and on, but the bottom line is that in all these instances, I seem to fall short. There's someone more skilled than me or something standing in the way of me reaching success. And, I think if we're all honest with ourselves, all of us can pinpoint instances in our lives where what we wanted with all our hearts, that standard of success that we set for ourselves and daydreamed about, fell apart and smashed to smithereens, causing us to once more search for what would make us successful and silence that self-doubt that comes with unrealized goals.

"Often, I've come to the end of a dream, taken several moments to mourn and then begun to try to get some perspective on the possible victories I achieved in the heat of the pursuit. The saying, 'It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game' is a highly apt maxim, because often I've found that over the course of my pursuits in a certain area, other highly necessary lessons have been learned and lives touched that were hundreds of times more important in the long run than whatever short-term success I so desperately yearned to achieve . . . "

(to be continued)



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