LFC GRADUATION SPEECH, Maggie Anderson, class of 2017

To begin, let me say, " thank you." For a long time I have looked forward to being able to thank you all, the most important people in our lives, on this special day, and in a special, eloquent way, by avoiding cliches. French is not my native language, so please bear with me. I also hope that the fact that I am thanking you, first and foremost, is an indication of to you of your importance in our lives, in the future. When the class of 2017 looks back on these years spent together, you will always be the ones who come first to our minds: our parents, our teachers, our families and best friends. So, to all of you before (and behind me) on this beautiful evening, thank you on behalf of our graduating class.

Now, I would like to share something very special that the Lycée gave me, something that a diploma cannot fully express. Paradoxically, this graduation is a moment to consider not only the future, but also to reflect on the past. Since no one can predict the future, I prefer to look at the past moments we shared: our experiences and the deep well of our collective memories. Like a thread full of knots, a memory always seems convoluted: it is hard to single out one memory when so many of them are blended together. But this means that a small supply of memories can help us for a lifetime. One can start at one end of the thread with one memory, and trace with one finger its course to the other end, encountering memories that at first glance seem unrelated, but actually conjoin together. For me, some of these precious memories from this year were made in New Orleans: memories of beignets, treks through the French Quarter, of our chaperons and the sun. Even upon our return, these memories led to others. For example, the Visual Arts students created a series of projects inspired from our trip. When I saw their work for the first time, I will always remember how amazed I was at the talent displayed by my classmates. I am still struggling to describe it with my simple words. And this is how a single memory ties into another to become a long thread, infinitely intertwined.

Originally, I did not intend to talk to you about the past. Rather, I wanted to fill this speech with advice for the future, as I always feel that adult speeches, the words of people who have had a long career or led a successful life, are much more valuable than my own ideas. For example, Shakespeare said, "To thine own self be true;" Seneca teaches us that "Friendship always profits." But I don't think that I need to tell you all this. I know that many of the things you will really need for the future are already within you: the fact that you are sitting here in front of me is proof. You are kind; you are loyal to one another; you are all my best friends. I am already looking forward to reuniting with you in 5, 10, or 20 years, because I know that we will have accomplished so much that we will never have enough time to share about it all. I just hope that the memories that we have shared during this year will serve you well enough that they will make you smile, laugh, and remember all of what you are capable.

Therefore, if there is one thing that we can be sure of as graduates of our Lycée, temporarily stuck between childhood and true adulthood, it is our memories. And if in the future we encounter hardships, we will always be able to turn to these simple things: an invaluable

education, our wonderful friends (because I know that, no matter where they will be in the world, we will always be friends) and our huge thread of memories. That this thread will remain within us, forever tangled, and help us throughout a very, very long life.

Thank you