



#IdahoStrong Volume 2: District VI Football Commissioner and Father: A Letter to the Class of 2020

I have a student graduating this year from high school, as do many parents. As a parent, we struggle for the right words to say to our graduating seniors, to help them make sense of the current conditions in the world, but more specifically, their senior year that came to an unexpected ending. So if I may, let me reflect on your senior year, and the endless possibilities that await your future. I have watched many of you compete in high school athletics and activities from the fall and winter seasons, only to have the spring season being cancelled due to conditions that warranted the safety of our student athletes, as well as parents that follow each of you to achieve your goals and dreams in each activity or sport you were participating in. And yes, your shining moment, the day you walk down the aisle to receive your graduation diploma, will not follow the normal ceremony of honoring your many accomplishments your senior year. This is not the end, but only the beginning.

I witnessed many of you still working out during the spring as individuals as guidelines prohibited organized practices. Running around the track to get in better shape, knowing that there was not a state medal awaiting you. But you worked out and ran anyway. I have watched some of you practice your debate skills or cheer and dance moves, knowing that state or national competitions would not be in play this year. But you practiced anyway.

Honing your golf swing, practicing your singing voice to achieve that perfect note for state competition, knowing that state competitions may not be held. But you practiced anyway. No medals, no award podiums to stand upon, no state or national competitions to travel to. No graduation ceremony to walk down the aisle to receive your diploma. But you did it anyway.

Preparing and being the best version of yourself. Your success and value are not measured in a medal or awards ceremony, but by who you are as a person, regardless of what life may present you. You confronted the moment, and exhibited great leadership in the process. Adversity not only builds character, but it reveals character. You have shown tremendous character. I applaud you!!

We as parents are often reminded of the generations that came before us. The valuable life's lessons and experiences that were handed down to us, in hopes that we may hand down our life lessons to you. But I am proud to say as a parent of a graduating high school senior, and being a member of an older generation, I believe it is us, the older generation that may take a valuable lesson from our younger generation, you, our graduating seniors. You have led your fellow classmates through troubled waters. You have overcome adversity. You have not let the trials and tribulations of life get in the way of achieving your hopes and dreams. You did it without blaming anyone or anything. You accepted the hand you were dealt, and you played it wonderfully. Your graduating class has stepped up, and have emphatically said,

"We got this". Blaming is easy, leading is hard. What leadership you have shown. May we all step back and take a lesson from your generation. You are the future for your generation, older generations, and generations yet to come. There is a time to follow, and a time to lead. I will kindly

step aside, and watch the graduating class of 2020 help lead all of us into the future. And yes, we will assist along the way, but our future will ultimately rest in your hands.

As a high school football commissioner, a debate judge, a track and field clerk, many of you graduating seniors have allowed me to ride your shirt tails, watch you fall down, but get back up using the adversity you experienced to help achieve your hopes and dreams. Which is why I am so confident in this graduating class of 2020 will help show all of us the way in help shaping our world for a better future.

Congratulations to the graduating class of 2020. It has been my pleasure to watch many of you struggle to find your identity as a freshman, only to find your elegance, grace, and leadership as a senior, regardless of what life may throw at you.

On a personal note, if I may quote some advice from sports personality and author Tim Grover to his daughter, this is to my daughter, and all of the graduating sons and daughters of 2020:

“Every Dream you imagine, everything you see and hear and feel in your sleep, that’s not a fantasy, that’s your deep instinct telling you it can all be real. Follow those visions and dreams and desires, and believe what you know. Only you can turn those dreams into reality. Never stop until you do.”

Dan Andreason

Sixth District Football Commissioner

Dan Andreason with his daughter, Madison, who ran cross country and track at Idaho Falls High School and is graduating this spring. The Andreasons know what it takes to be #IdahoStrong.

