



# PSA 2008 Valedictorian Speech

by Caitlin Solano  
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*This year's valedictorian, Caitlin Solano, began her elementary school career at Princeton Latin Academy. Ms. Solano reminds us that second in importance to a family's unconditional love is a school with teachers "who treat you as an individual, as opposed to a number or test scores".*

In youth, the amount of growth experienced in every aspect of your life is greater than it will ever be for the rest of your years. This time of learning and development is challenging and sometimes scary. The unconditional love of a family helps guide you through this exhilarating yet confusing process of growing into adulthood. The privilege most people do not get to have is a second family, one in the form of a school that provides an equal amount of love and support: a school that provides you with more than what you pay for, that does not just pay you back with a winning sports team or Olympic-sized swimming pool; a school where the teachers teach you more than what they are paid for, more than the subjects they are paid to know. There is no price tag on what this school can teach you; in fact, there are hardly any words for it. The legacy of this school lives in its graduates. It extends beyond these walls into the world where the graduates choose to take it. It provides the students with the perfect set of circumstances to discover what they have to offer to the world and where their unique interest in knowledge will take them.

After 11 years of being at this school, I have witnessed many people walk in and out of these doors and I have seen students change in a matter of months. I understand now that this is a result of teachers who treat you as an individual, as opposed to a number or test scores. They take interest in who you are, what you want to be, and what you are up to in life. The acknowledgement of a child's individuality allows the child to find it himself. And here I am, years later, amazed at the opportunities given to me by this

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school that allowed me to discover who I am today. Walking in these doors, I was unaware of how it would change my life. At eight years of age you do not have much perspective. What I have received over the years is an education that is distinct from any other and one that I am proud of. I have seen the results of being in an environment where my personal growth and success are encouraged. I have been among peers who are getting the same opportunities and growing with me, and I am grateful to share that experience with them.

There are many ways to thank the people who got me where I am today. There are words that can be spoken or actions that can be taken and I do not know which ones will really demonstrate my thanks. Just know that I will never forget you and what you have given me. I can only hope that in knowing me you know my thanks, because my gratitude goes beyond words, but to put it simply: to my parents, teachers, peers, and especially to Magister Perrulli, I thank you.

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