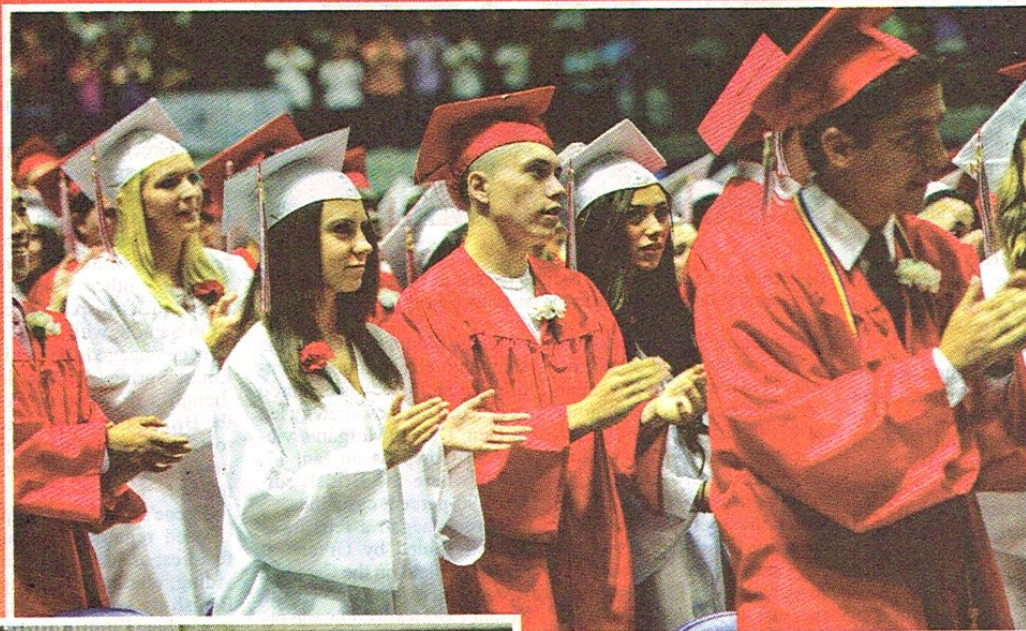


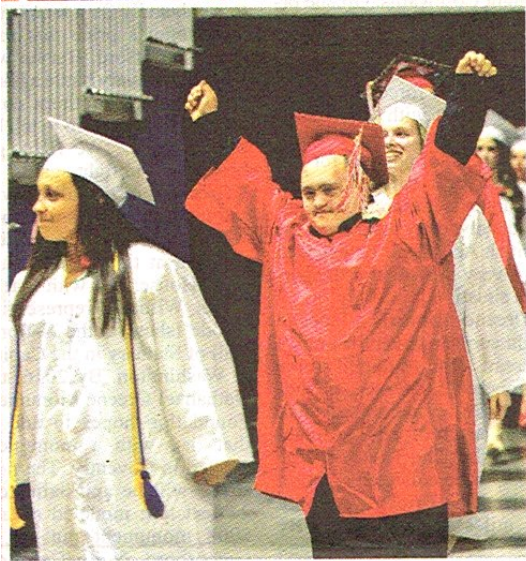
# COVENTRY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION 2014

## Words of Wisdom



The Ryan Center on campus at URI in Kingston was awash in the red and white of Coventry High School Saturday, as nearly 370 graduates picked up diplomas and ended their time as Oakers.

Stacey Sheehan  
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## OAKER CLASS OF 2014 WALKS AT THE RYAN CENTER

**JAMES MEROLLA**  
Special to the Daily Times

**SOUTH KINGSTOWN** — In a warm, heartfelt ceremony that showcased the talents of its diverse membership, nearly 370 Coventry High School seniors graduated on Saturday, June 7.

Held at the spacious Thomas Ryan Athletic Center on the campus of the University of Rhode Island, thousands came to cheer their own. It was the most human of commencement exercises, yet it was efficiently pulled off by the numbers.

And what numbers! This was the 80th C.H.S. annual graduation showcasing 368 graduates, 22 of them given the prestigious

annual Oaker Awards by Principal Michael Hogan, audience members, comprised of enthusiastic family and friends, filling two-thirds of the concrete-floored basketball arena, too numerous to count.

Weather conditions outside were ideal, sunny and 77 degrees, but graduates adorned in shiny red-and-white-cap-and-gowns appreciated the cool air conditioning inside.

Dress codes were observed, but nearly two-thirds of the caps were taped resplendently with flowers, stickers, artwork, signs and personal messages, mini histories of teen lives.

Dignitaries, speakers and graduates filed into the arena to the traditional strains of "Pomp and Circumstance," played by the C.H.S. Band, under the direction of William

Smith.

Kathryn Printer, Vice President of the Class of 2014, was the first to speak. Her opening remarks were a garden, telling how the class entered Coventry High four years before as "seedlings," that had been watered, growing into "strong and prideful Oakers."

"As we turn over a new leaf," Printer said, "We have always known where our roots are planted."

Senior Zoe Michalopoulos sang a stirring, a capella version of The National Anthem. The AFJROTC Honor Guard then performed a slow march up the platform with a slower, deliberate walk around the square central

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# Ryan Center hosts Coventry graduation

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table, and a slow, white-gloved salute over flags and military caps placed on that table in honor of Prisoners of War/Missing in Action to the playing of "Proud to be an American."

Superintendent of Schools Michael Almeida told the Class of 2014 about a new book he had just finished reading called, "Mindset," which examines the new "psychology of success" to fulfill one's potential.

"The mindset you adopt determines how you accomplish things," said Supt. Almeida. "A 'fixed' mindset will hinder you," he went on; "a Growth Mindset will transform the psychology of how you accomplish, change your mind and, thus, your life — especially in the three arenas the graduates now enter — college, the work force and the military."

"Find friends who help you grow," added Supt. Almeida. "Be a person who thrives on challenges. Exceptional individuals have character. Your mindset is more important than talent in determining who you will be."

"Be exceptional," he con-

cluded.

Katherine Patenaude, Chair of the Coventry School Committee, then gave the graduates a quiz she had read online. The first six questions ask you to name the 10 wealthiest people on earth, the last five Heisman trophy winners, the last 10 Miss Americas, Nobel Prize, Pulitzer Prize and Academy Award winners, as well as World Series winners.

"How did you do?" Patenaude asked. "The point is we don't remember the headlines. They pass." Celebrity, fame and awards tarnish, she said.

Then she asked the audience to name the people, the family members, or friends, who influenced them, helped them, made them feel appreciated, or were their heroes.

"It's a lot easier to answer these questions," said Patenaude. "The truth is, people make a difference and we instantly can recall those who care for us and love us."

"On this day of Thanksgiving and celebration, stop and think about the people who have made a difference in your life," she said.

Principal Michael Hobin then spoke about the technological changes in the world



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A group of graduates sits on stage before a sea of red and white Saturday.

over the 80 years that Coventry High has graduated seniors. "We are, more than ever, a global society," said Hobin. He cited the leap from the typewriter and the radio to television to video cassettes to our world of iPads, downloads, all pervasive cell phones, and social media. "Hashtag seniors," he said. "There are so many distractions. But I encourage you to learn and live in the moment. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, 'We are always getting ready to live, but never living.' You are right to plan and be a little nervous about the future."

But Hobin added that students should "savor the struggles and the triumphs as you attain them." He urged students to notice and appreciate sunsets, autumn leaves and "That crazy uncle you see every Thanksgiving."

"Live at every crazy, wonderful and challenging moment," said Hobin. "Live with purpose and on purpose. Embrace the 'now.'" Then, despite earlier admonitions to turn off all cellphones and electronic devices, he took a Selfie with the entire Class of 2014 behind him to uproarious applause.

Hobin then announced the annual Oaker Awards and handed them out to the 22 seniors who stood up to receive them. The Oaker winners included Rachel Ball, Robert Beaudoin, Kathryn Brouillette, Samantha Brown, Madison Chabot, Margaret Desjarlais, Jodie Desrosiers, Kelsey Ferrara, Kathryn Hahn, Casey Head, Aram Hinz Jr. Alec Lemme, Andrew Light, Collins Maliki, Tayla Manson, Alycia Pimental, Kathryn Printer, Sean Roles, Rose Roy, Patrick Spangler, Calla Williams and Vincent Zarella.

"It has been my great honor to serve as your principal," Hobin concluded.

Class President Calla Williams addressed the class saying, "I was going to take one last Selfie, but someone beat me to it."

"We finally did it!" she exclaimed. "I cannot help but feel an overwhelming sense of pride." Williams thanked teachers, staff, administrators, family and friends, "for believing in us when nobody else did."

She then thanked her fellow classmates. "The past four years have been so wonderful. Thank you so much," she added. "Tomorrow, we begin a new chapter in our lives. The world is now our oyster. Good luck out there. May you take a piece of Coventry wherever you go. We did it!"

Kristy Archambault then rendered the Salutatory Address, saying in part, "In 100 years, all that will matter is our impact on other people in the world. We must make our mark to help others."

She thanked all teachers, but

especially her Kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Leyden, who she has visited annually for each of the 13 years she left her very first school class.

Archambault, too, quoted Ralph Waldo Emerson as a stepping off point for service to others, saying this is why she has chosen the profession of nursing. "Nursing is my destiny, to help others. What can you do to help others? If you need help (making life decisions), I will be here to help you."

Valedictorian Kayla Dwyer said the most important lesson she has learned was "balance." "Balance is the key. Choose a goal and independently work hard to achieve it. True happiness (comes with achievement) if you earned it. Success means more when you challenge yourself."

She told the graduates about the importance of her family. How her parents only had a single piece of furniture — one glass table in the kitchen — when they moved into their home two decades ago.

"They were so happy about it," said Dwyer. "My father told me to earn things honestly; to have integrity."

She said she never could have accomplished anything without her support system led by her parents and sister. "We didn't do this all on our own," she said. "Take time to appreciate those along the way. We must never, ever sacrifice precious moments with the people we love. Success is so much more meaningful when people in our lives are there to celebrate (them)."

"If they are with us, whether we fail or if we succeed, that is our only measure of success."

## WAIT, THERE'S MORE!!

Tomorrow's edition of the *Daily Times* will feature a list of all of the nearly 370 CHS graduates and more pictures from the ceremony. Pick up a copy anywhere the *Daily Times* is sold!

