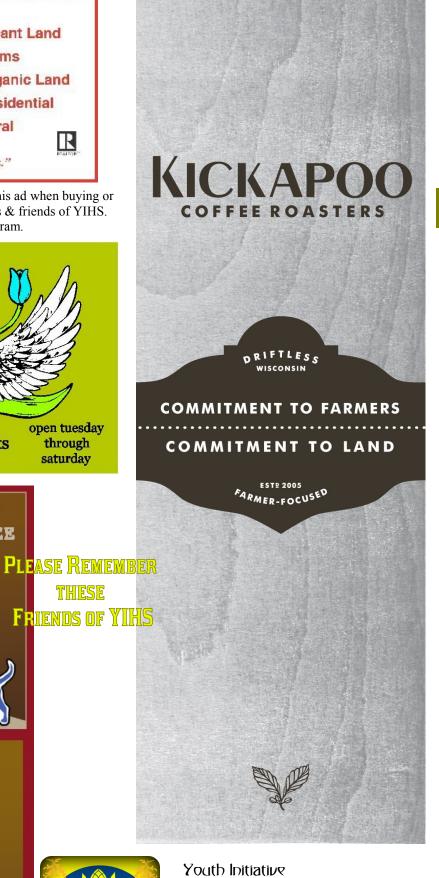


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THESE

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THE MEMORIES

THE GIFT OF GIVING

GRADUATION 2012

**ALUMNI UPDATES &** 

**Testimonials** 

MEMORIAL

GRATITUDE IS A DIALOGUE

**News from the Intensives** 

**OUR MATCHING GIFT CIRCLE** 

**DONORS & THE BOB HORAN** 

IN FOR THE LONG HAUL

The Long Range Planning Committee

Summer 2012

THANKS FOR MORE THAN JUST

Ella Wegman-Laurless

Adrian Ugo

Shaum Lavois

As a member of the development office one of my many duties is the management of gratitude. It is a humble occupation in many ways. First of all, the way we say thank you is pretty humble. Unlike when you donate to NPR, you won't get a complimentary cook book or canvas tote. Instead, what you will get is a hand-written, home-cooked, oldfashioned thank you card. Perhaps some of you have received one.

I write literally hundreds of these cards every year, and most of them aren't for financial donations. In fact most of them are more along the lines of "thank you for lending us your van" or "thank you for coming and sharing your expertise in the classroom for a day" or "thank you for helping out on Clean-up Day". That's another reason being in charge of writing these thank you notes is a humble occupation. It gives me a unique perspective on how this school functions.

Certainly the school needs money and the universe (that's you) provides it for us. A small cache of large consistent donors are frequent recipients of my humble little cards but countless gifts are under a hundred dollars, dotted like little inspirational blossoms throughout the school year. But how does that money go into action?

Through the selfless sacrifice of countless volunteers, parents, students, and community members, the school moves through time like a huge picnic crumb carried away by a troop of ants. And they all get the same humble thank you card, a fittingly democratic gratitude for a generosity that is equal in its spirit of community and sacrifice. Thank you to all who make this school possible.

-Matthew J. Voz, Kaleidoscope Editorial Team



JOIN US THIS SUMMER AT OUR

#### BRATWURST SOCIAL AND ICE CREAM POTLUCK

**THURSDAY 19 JULY 2012** 

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR DETAILS

### 

By Ella Wegman-Lawless

Something we do not do very much any more in our fast-paced society is take a moment before supper (or any other time of the day) to remember why we are grateful. Being grateful in general is not something that is very prevalent in our lives. We push ourselves from one task to the next, from point A to point B and zip by the possible quiet moments that we could use to show appreciation. Thinking it is unnecessary, taking time to be thankful is something we often overlook.

There is so much to be grateful for in our lives. I believe if we take time to be grateful and realize what amazing gifts are given to us, we can be happier and more optimistic. I am very grateful for the extraordinary experience I've had over the past four



LEFT: ELLA IN AN ICONIC PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN THE 5TH GRADE AT PLEASANT RIDGE WALDORF SCHOOL. ABOVE: SEVEN YEARS LATER ELLA IS A GRADUATE OF YIHS.

years at YIHS. There are the typical things to be grateful for: friends, family, shelter, and food. But as I look past those I find I am more grateful for the very small things in life, like my porch, rope swings, and unicycling around the block with my neighbors.

I believe that if more people

# NEW STRATEGIES FROM THE SEALONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Quiet as a mouse and busy as a bee the Long Range Planning Committee has been diligently working all year long and is now putting the final touches on the school's five year plan. We've been working very hard and though we're not quite ready to show you the whole plan, we'd like to share a few of the highlights of the project and catch those of you up to speed who might not be aware of our important work.

- \* The Long Range Plan is the product of hundreds of opinions and insights. Parents, students, faculty, alumni, and community members all had an opportunity on several occasions and in many forums, to help shape the school's growth over the next five years.
- The Long Range Plan focuses of three main areas where we hope the school can achieve the most growth over the next five years:
  - \* Facilities
  - **★** Increased Enrollment
  - **★** Faculty Development
- The Plan is actually two documents: one internal, which is five years in scope and has more specific goals. The second was created under the auspices of AWSNA (Association of Waldorf Schools of North America) and is part of the school's continuing relationship with the wider Waldorf movement. Along with their annual visits to our school AWSNA asks that we submit a long range plan every three years to satisfy the terms of our membership in the organization.
- The internal Long Rang Plan spans from the summer of 2012 to the summer of 2017 and includes 9 Goals.

  Also included are specific objectives the school needs to meet in order to achieve these goals. The persons or committees responsible for each objective are listed in detail and an estimated budget is attached to each objective.
- ★ The goals are as follows:
  - ★ Build a New Facility
  - \* Reach a Stable Enrollment of 60 students
  - ★ Improve the school's marketing strategy
  - ★ Grow and Develop the School's full-time staff
  - ★ Development of the manual skills curriculum
  - Fully live within the Mission Statement of the school
  - ★ Develop a Comprehensive YIHS Orientation Program
  - Implement a Strategic Communication Initiative
  - ★ Implement a Meeting and Facilitation Program
  - ★ Pursue Full AWSNA membership



ONE OF THE MANY TOOLS USED BY THE LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE





The Matching Gift Circle is in its sixth year and now includes 18 members. It is a great way to involve the community with student initiative as the individuals and businesses that form the matching gift circle agree to leverage student fundraising. Together the students and their benefactors raised \$60,000 this year!

#### THANK YOU TO OUR MATCHING GIFT CIRCLE MEMBERS:

Anonymous
Anonymous
Quality of Life Chiropractic
Blue River Enterprises
Elegant Stone Products
Jerome McGeorge & Theresa Marquez
LaFarge State Bank
Bill Brooke Realty
Evanstad Tax

Sleepy Hollow Auto
Kelvin Rodolfo & Kathy Crittenden
Organic Valley
Paper, Scissors, Stone
The Flower Basket
Advanced Electric Equipment
Dairyland Printing
Westby Cooperative Credit Union
American Family Insurance (Phil Strand)



Recently, the family of YIHS students Christian and Corinne Horan experienced the loss of their grandfather Robert "Bob" Horan. Youth Initiative High School soon began receiving gifts in his memory. We wanted to extend our sympathies to all who will miss Bob Horan and our gratitude to all who gave in his memory.

#### THANK YOU TO ALL WHO GAVE IN MEMORY OF ROBERT HORAN:

L.J. & F.K. Horan
Marjorie Horan
Lisa & Steven Thiede
Eileen & John Horan
Deborah & Daniel Horan
Edwin & Charlotte Berndt
G. W. Hagerty
A.J. LaMar

Alvin & Nita Barshefsky
Elisabeth Mellin
Timothy Mellin
Bernard & Darlene Obos
George & Bernadine Tomek
Richard Markowski
Prairie State Legal Services



ABOVE: ELLA IN ONE OF HER DEFINING MOMENTS AT YIHS; SOAKING IN THE CROWD'S ADDRATION FOR HER ROLE AS THE PLANT IN "LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS".

acknowledge what they are grateful for and find the good things in their life that they will be more optimistic and happy. When I find time in my day to go through and name just a few things that I am grateful for I become much more open minded about my life. I realize all the good things that have happened to me and when I do that I can't help but crack a smile and be happy about the beautiful things in this world. When I take the time I start to truly think about the gifts I have been given in my life and what can so easily be taken for granted. It certainly is not hard to go through life without spreading appreciation and thankfulness, to blow by all opportunities to say thank you and spread kindness out into the world. Taking time to be grateful and to say thank you emits happiness into the world. It pushes us to think beyond our own egocentric bubbles and ourselves and say thank you to those who do things for us. Sharing gratitude makes us happier.

"Thank you" is such a common phrase in our lives and if it is not spoken with a lot of feeling, consideration and, of course, gratitude, I think it can often begin to mean nothing. But when someone says thank you and they really mean it and want to send their kindness to you, the web of gratitude begins. Whoever receives that morsel of kindness hopefully will then realize the sincerity and gratitude and pass it on. Being gracious can touch the hearts of a lot of people in a good way. Being grateful and saying thank you can boost someone's confidence and

can remind them what graciousness and kindness is like.

I personally am very grateful for many things in my life. Now that I have graduated and will not see Viroqua for a little under a year I am beginning to realize some of the large things in my life that I am so very grateful for. YIHS, its faculty and classes, and my friends are an example of this. I am grateful for how the combination of the light the street lamps give off and the way the sticky warm summer breeze that drifts through town creates the perfect environment for summer mischief. The curvature of the Driftless region has formed me to go on in life, find what I love to do, and do just that.

Remembering how much we have to be grateful for and finding the time to realize that is so important, whether it is through meditation, in a prayer, or just to yourself as a reminder. These are the ways I believe someone can become a happier person. To spread that on to another person simply say thank you with kindness and gratitude in your heart. That will spread throughout our community and on to the world. Hopefully we can all find a moment in our lives to realize everything and everybody we have to be grateful for and then say thank you.







Adrian Ugo is a lifelong resident of Viroqua who has served the school as a member of the Board of Trustees for four years and donates his time and considerable talent to our carpentry class.

Like many who have chosen to make Viroqua their home, I have always enjoyed a slower, perhaps simpler life. Schooling with friends followed by easy summer days made this tiny corner of heaven just that. Growing up in and around this town, there always seemed to be a sense of familial comfort and acceptance



ABOVE: ADRIAN, AN AVID BOW HUNTER, IS HIMSELF QUITE THE TROPHY

with those I would encounter. Clueless of the inner workings of what made a community actually function, I reaped the benefits of much charitable time and effort given by many, both from those I did and did not know.

As a child and adolescent however, the thought of volunteering *my* time was an abstract if not absurd idea. To volunteer one's time seemed on par with "community service"; something you had to do if you were on parole. My mistake, as I now realize, was in my complete lack of understanding of exactly what motivates a person to become involved in volunteering in one's community: The privilege that it truly is.

The importance of taking part, of volunteering yourself to the community you live in can easily be overlooked in the regular routine of daily living. Many of us feel the stresses of completing the basic day to day tasks let alone finding extra time. We are all busy and it isn't going away. The fact is we all have the same amount of hours each day and what we choose to do with them is one of our defining characteristics as people.

Volunteering at Youth Initiative High School has given me the opportunity to feel the importance and satisfaction that comes "An integral part of the YIHS experience is gladly accepting challenges that one might not face in most high school environments. I remember scrambling to fundraise for the school, cleaning the hallways, and meeting with my peers to discuss the school's future. Now that I'm supposedly "all grown up", I've realized that not only did YIHS provide me with an excellent education, but it also taught me some invaluable life skills. And for those experiences, I will forever be grateful to YIHS."

-Jeff Marshall, Class of 'o6



"I am thankful to YIHS for having allowed me to grow in my own way, and for having nurtured me and my peers with such understanding, love and respect. What I value most from my time at YI is not any specific knowledge or skill, but the combined effect of the experience, which has made me a lifelong learner who is excited about the world and engaged in life.

-Isaac Park, Class of 'o6

"Being SO warmly welcomed as a newbie by everyone. Dance parties in the pit during lunch. Nutrition with Jane Siemon. The overall youthful and lively presence of teachers. Independent studies. Student meeting. JACOB!!! The debate over couches. Theme Week. Service Week. The camping trip. Not being yelled at for breaking a window with a pumpkin. The farming community that surrounds the school. Transcendentalism with Mary Bard. Designing my own trip to Costa Rica. All the constant pranking. Russian songs during morning circle. Valentine's Day Dinner. Doing flood relief work. Learning to write a good thesis statement with John Madden. College tours! Silly fashion days. Stilt walking, kickboxing, yoga. Never worrying what anyone thought of me. Graduation at the Agar's farm. The fact that I want to spend another hour writing this list."

-Talia Winningham, Class of '08

"The Youth Initiative, in retrospect, is an ideal which I am constantly trying to recreate in my current studies and projects. Independent, participant inspired, faculty driven, and community supported. I have found this form to be efficient, creative, exhausting, adaptable and it has been an invaluable tool in my life. Perhaps I may be in possession of a strong imagination and the truth of the situation during my time at YI was in fact bleak and half-heartedly pursued. However, I believe that the image I hold of YIHS in retrospect reflects an honest experience, and not an emotional re-imagined tribute to the school. I am sincerely indebted to those memories of Youth Initiative for working as an example of how to live a respectful, energetic life. May I have a chance to offer something in return."

-Henry Hundt, Class of '09

"I think I am most grateful for Jacob Hundt's natural science courses from which I loved the discussions about earth, or news related issues about the universe. But that is because I like natural sciences... I like how the school carries ethics. I like the diversity and the culture."

-Troy Marshall, Class of '08

It's still a real community and tries to keep track of what we're up to even once we've left the school to continue our own journey. Classes prepare you for a working environment in many professions and teach you to handle various situations in real life. I'm glad to have had the YIHS experience.

-Rebecca Smith, Class of '10

"In addition to a solid education, I left Youth Initiative with a strong sense of independence and confidence that has allowed me to tackle whatever path I choose to follow. Being trusted with responsibility and being expected to think for myself as a student fostered the creativity and resourcefulness that have helped me follow through on my wildest ambitions, no matter how improbable or challenging. I am so grateful to the Youth Initiative community for giving me such a special opportunity to discover and use my own abilities, the self-assuredness that came from their confidence in me is invaluable."



### 

- \* Guthrie Knapp ('o6) has graduated from UW-Milwaukee with a degree in architecture
- \* Caleb Whited-Ford ('09) has taken an internship in Boston at the Harvard Sports Management Department as he works toward a degree from Guilford College.
- \* Nathaniel Baumgardner ('07) works as an Admissions Counselor at the American University in Bulgaria. He lives with his guitar and bicycle in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria.
- \* Jeff Marshall ('06) graduated with a B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities.
  Currently, he lives in Tbilisi, Georgia and works at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University as a Project Coordinator.
- \* Forrest Humphrey ('11) continues his studies at Ohiobased Antioch College. This summer he is in Poland with a team that is restoring medieval religious art using traditional techniques
- \* In the fall Talia Winningham ('08) will begin her second year at Warren Wilson College, where she will study and work in their biodynamic organic garden as part of the colleges work program. She will graduate in the Spring of 2014 with a degree in Documenting the Personal Journey (a major that she created). She spent

- last year in Argentina, Bolivia, and Peru volunteereing for different organizations, taking Spanish classes, trekking in rural areas, studying salsa, and apprenticing with a silversmith.
- \* This summer Henry Hundt ('09) will be conducting research at the Museum of Russian Icons, located in Clinton, MA.
- Isaac Park ('o6) currently lives in Ashland OR, has a "ridiculously cute" 9 month old daughter named Josephine Fern, and is studying biology and chemistry as a pre-med student.
- Troy Marshall ('08) will be working toward his bachelor's degree at UW-Platteville
- Annika Ecklund ('o6) has earned her bachelor's degree and now attends graduate school at Leslie University, Cambridge, MA
- \* After graduating from the University of Minnesota, Morris, Emily Colacino ('07) moved herself on her motorcycle to California to work for the forest service, first in a botany position and currently as a wilderness firefighter on a hotshot crew.
- \* This fall Hannah Murray King ('09) will begin studying at the Florence Academy of Art in Florence, Italy.

with the simple act of helping, of taking part. As a college student and philosophy major, I had nothing better to do than think about things like piles of stones and moral obligations. Unfortunately, acting on our obligations isn't always as easy thinking about them. However, I did decide I wanted to help people in any way I could to be able to be more self-reliant and capable in our rapidly changing world. As it turned out I found that



ABOVE: THIS IS THE CANDE THAT ADRIAN BUILT (WITH THE HELP OF OTHER BOARD MEMBERS) AS A PART OF A \$6000 dollar fundraiser. Left: Adrian's carpentry class constructed this beautiful octagonal hardwood picnic table which is still a focal point of the school's outdoor socializing

chance within the very same town, within the very same building as I spent my childhood school days.

YIHS is that sort of organization that I feel blessed to be a part of in any form. What better avenue to impart positive growth on an impressionable youth than a school, right?...Well, maybe. From my experience, high school didn't really prepare me for the slobbering, salivating beast that is the "real world".

But YIHS is not just a school. Its very nature, perhaps very existence depends on people's willingness to give of their time freely. From the students who work to pay their own tuition, the teachers and staff who donate their time, the parents and community members who comprise the many committees of the school, to the many local individuals and businesses who are excited to financially support this very type of social endeavor, YIHS is a gathering of people who simply *want* to be a part of it. It truly is a privilege to be able to participate alongside friends and family in the passing on of skills and knowledge to those who seek it in earnest.

We have the ability to create for ourselves, our friends, family members, and the community an atmosphere that has brought us all here together. To give, to volunteer your time and ability to such a crucial part of our society is what breathes life into our wonderful little town. YIHS is a shining example of what can come from the heartfelt dedication of individuals working together as a whole.

I am truly happy to have been asked to be a part of YIHS and I look forward to helping in any way I can in the years to come. In the end, perhaps this is all just a colorful way to describe just another school in just another town, but it doesn't feel that way when you're here. I suggest you give it a try, it truly is a privilege.

### 

"One of the main things YIHS taught me is to appreciate the beauty of awkwardness. If you are not afraid of the awkward, uncomfortable, overly-sincere, a lot of other unnecessary, ancillary matter falls away. For me awkwardness equates realness. It is the emotional equivalent of thrusting your hands deep into the soil... and then pulling them out and rubbing them on somebody. I am biological material and so are you and so is this, so wear it proudly. Figure out whats important to you, because the dirt will always be there. "

-Nate Baumgartner, Class of '07





# By Shaum Lavoie

"Thank you."
"No, thank you."
"No, really, thank you."

Have you ever been in this conundrum? An endless cycle of gratitude. I'm lampooning it here with the pingpong of "thank-yous", but, really, what a wonderful cycle to be caught in! When you're as grateful as the person who is thanking you, when you are thanking someone who beams gratitude back at you—this feeling

is why I love to teach at Youth Initiative High School, it's what I experience with students and colleagues.

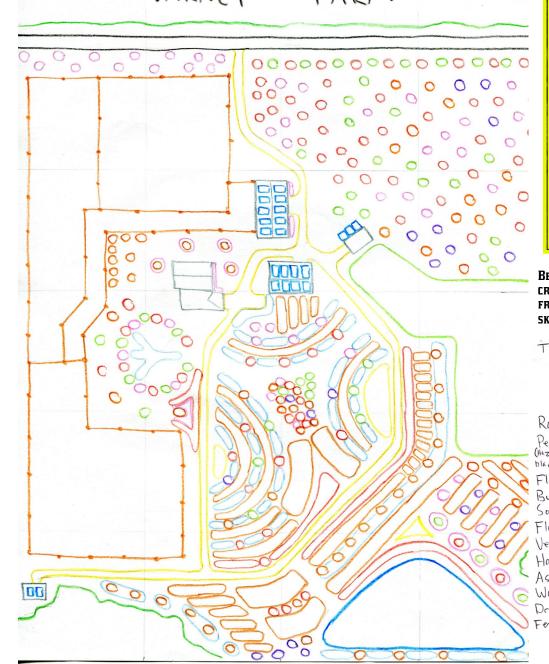
Another image for this cycle of gratitude is a spirited, satisfying dialogue. I'm thinking of the kind of dialogue that could go on for hours and even span years. Most visitors to the Youth Initiative see some glimpse of this dialogue in a class: students asking questions, teachers shooting back comments, other students responding to the question or debating the comment. To the outside eye, this momentary exchange can seem, at best, exciting or, at worst, messy. Yet every student or alumnus, without question, can remember a dialogue like this during their time at YIHS. And, just as a feeling of gratitude extends beyond the utterance of "thank you", so does the fire of these conversations last after the end of class and even after graduation.

It's with this fire and this deep, cyclic sense of gratitude that I prepare to take a year-long leave of absence from teaching at Youth Initiative. I'm attending the Harvard Graduate School of Education in Cambridge, MA for a one-year Master's program called "Arts in Education." During the nine months that my family and I are away, I will certainly be in



SHAWN, HIS WIFE ANNAJO, AND THEIR SON, JULIAN; SOMETIME BETWEEN ME-MORIAL DAY AND LABOR DAY.







BELOW LEFT: SAM VARNEY'S MAP OF VARNEY FARM CREATED FOR THE AGRICULTURE CLASS. ABOVE: IMAGES FROM THE CAMPING TRIP DURING THE WILDERNESS SKILLS CLASS.

```
Trees: Peach O
Apple O
Pear O
Plum O
Churry
Nut O
Raspburry Thicket:

Permac ulture Thicket:

(Hezelauts, currents, respheries,
blackberries, blueburies)

Flower Datch:

Building:

Solar panels:

Flower, Vegetable, and permial garneles:

Vegetable bed:

Hay field:

Aspara gus field:

Oriving Path:

Fence:
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# CUTATE ACADE SE NEWS FROM OUR INTENSIVES SE









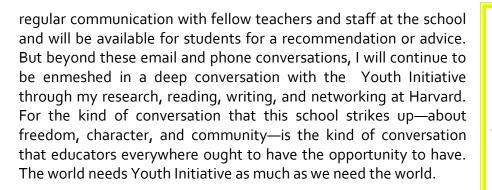


Once again Youth Initiative High School concluded its school year with the unique pedagogical construct that is the intensive main lesson block. For three weeks students focus on one subject all day, immersing themselves in a blend of hands-on, creative, and academic material.

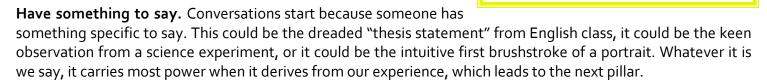
This year the three intensives included Agriculture, which is offered every year and two new

classes: Mural Art and Wilderness Skills. The Agriculture class toured a wide variety of organic, permacultural, biodynamic, and conventional farms. Students created farm design projects along with a written component. The Wilderness Skills course explored wilderness survival skills. From making basic tools and cordage from materials found in the wild to learning the ins and outs of a "wildcrafted" diet, students were shown the basics of learning to live

in the (not always) loving embrace of mother nature. Finally, our muralists blended a sense of place and bit of local history to celebrate the agricultural legacy of tobacco and vineyards in Vernon County. This class glorified Jacob Hundt's barn with this beautiful portrait of Elmer Swenson, self-taught father of North Country viticulture. These active and engaging classes are always some of the students favorites



So in this lofty conversation with the world, I hope that I can live up to the 3 pillars of a good dialogue, which I just made up but seem to be to be universally salient (let me know!):





IT'S A METAPHOR; DON'T WORRY, HE'LL JUMP BACK.

Be curious. " Here's a topic: graduation. Let's come up with some angles of interest on this topic: what do you want to know about graduation?" This was the beginning of an assignment that I recently did with the Sophomores. WDRT, the local community radio station, asked for a series of stories on graduation. So we sat as a class and drummed up curiosity on the topic, coming up with a range of questions and angles for news stories. Curiosity allowed us to build interest and further the conversation, but to follow through, to have a real dialogue, we then need to listen.

Listen. Listening is the hardest of all, at least for me. Listening requires accepting what someone else is saying. Though not necessarily agreeing, you still recognize the validity of their words and experience. When we are open to listening, we can hear the most remarkable

things. When we allow both sides of dialogue time to speak, we lose track of who's leading and instead follow the thread of the conversation. By listening in this way, you tacitly express gratitude while also opening yourself to a change of mind and, continuing the cycle of good conversation, something new to say.

There's always a new point to strike up in an old conversation and always a new note of thanks to speak for a deep-set gratitude. I'm so grateful for the way that YIHS has sparked my interest in education and am proud to bring my experience and the things I have to say about education to my program next year at Harvard. I look forward to a long, spirited dialogue in the years to come. Thank you.







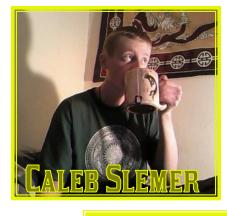






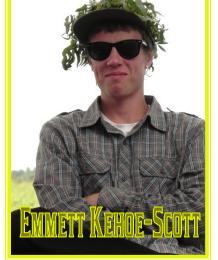














sophisticated setting for YIHS' 16th graduspectacular weather and a celebration of 10 spectacular young

ates made a grand entrance, perched atop convertible sports cars like royalty and marching to the front of the crowd with confidence and grace.

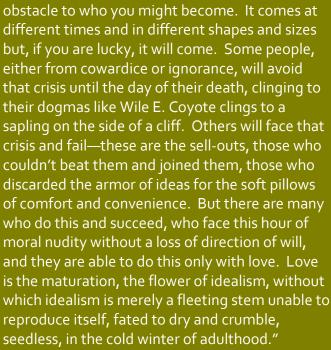


The ceremony began with a rousing commencement speech by faculty member Matthew Voz and then segued into the focus of the event: the words of the graduates themselves. Each graduate took time to share a little piece of themselves; a sentiment of gratitude, a lasting reflection, a prediction for the future, an inspiring quote. The ceremony concluded with the presentation of diplomas to the graduates, the award of the Masonic Scholarship to Ella Wegman-Lawless, and a beautiful rendition of Cat Stevens song from the Senior parents.

We want to congratulate all our graduates and wish them happiness in their future lives. We will miss them, but we know that they are in good hands: their own.



THE FINISHING TOUCHES



"That moment of nakedness before the world, when you will stand before the cruelty of the universe without the armor of ideology is the great crisis of adulthood, a moral, even existential

> -From the 2012 Commencement Speech given by Matthew Voz



