

Welcome faculty, fellow colleagues, family and friends.

It's an honor for me to stand here today and represent the graduates from the Occupational Therapy program of Touro's Manhattan Campus.

Today I will share with you where we've all began and how far we've all come.

As a class, we've began this academic career as students. This role quickly came to include many other skills such as carpentry, basket weaving and magic making to name a few. Over the past three years we have managed to cram so much information into our heads, with the help of the many ridiculous mnemonics and many needed cups of coffee where Starbucks was kind enough to meet us halfway by opening a new branch across the street, during our last year.

And after many papers through which we learnt one decimal point can go a long way.

And after many and I stress many, creative power point presentations we have learnt the power and impact that occupational therapy has in the healthcare profession. And now after all of the necessary fine and gross tuning we have all endured, we can proudly say that we are now part of the best kept secret of rehab.

Someone once asked me during this last year of the occupational therapy program if I do it all again, to which I answered no. However, I'm glad I did it once. To think of meeting all the deadlines once more, is certainly not appealing!!

During these past three years we've gained so much through our experiences in class and in fieldwork, as well as from the wonderful relationships we have formed within our class, within our faculty and within the healthcare profession, at large.

As a class, we entered this program from various backgrounds, coming with different hopes and goals. As the days, weeks, months, and finally years have gone by I think we all can say that we graduate as a team, not just a class. We all have come together as we strived for the common goal – to better ourselves so that we can make a difference to our clients, community and our profession.

We've shown our ambition, enthusiasm and motivation through the various Student OT association fundraising events such as the bagels, raffles, carnival, Chinese auction and Smoochies. We have successfully raised over \$6,000 and have donated to Treats for Troops, AOTPAC, NYSOPAC & Chai Lifeline. And as a class we would like to say thanks to the person who planned and orchestrated these events, Stephanie Michaelson!! Thank you Stef.

The amount of the growth that we've each developed during our OT schooling has given us the tools to make a difference in our practice settings. As Mahatma Ghandi stated "What lies behind you, and what lies ahead of you are nothing compared to what lies within you." In addition to the clinical skills, that we have mastered, we also have the skills to broaden our professional and personal lenses to view any situation in a creative, flexible and adaptable manner.

For example, when I see a basket, it's not just an item that can hold fruit or pens, but rather hours and hours of work. It's a piece of art. It's the catalyst that proved to us during those long first two weeks of the course that we are in this program for good and a few reeds and spokes can not stop us!

To our supportive faculty mentors and professors, we say thank you. Some professors have really taught us by example that a little bit of humor and empathy can go

such a long way in our profession. I think we'll always associate the diencephalon of the brain with shmephalon from jeopardy.

And from the professors that pursued and are pursuing their PHD's we have learnt that our education doesn't stop when we exit the classroom, instead we've all become life long learners and the importance of surrounding ourselves with evidence based research however in the future it won't only be articles but actual practice.

We have one professor, Professor Lana Goodman, who has started the program with us and unfortunately, is not here with us to celebrate our achievements. She guided us through our foundational year of learning, and taught us that the basis of Occupational therapy is looking at the person as a whole and not just the diagnosis or disability. It's Jane Doe with cerebral palsy and not the CP patient in room 201. We all thank Professor Lana Goodman and know that she's with us behind her third wall.

I would also like to take a moment to thank my parents as well as all of the parents who have helped us achieve our dreams and helped to make it possible for us to get to where we are today. Thank you very much.

And now I would like to end with a quote from my all time favorite author, Dr. Seuss: Graduates you have brains in your head,

You have feet in your shoes,

You can steer yourself,

In any direction that you choose.

You're on your own,

And you know what you know,

And you are the guy who'll decide where to go.

Will you succeed?

Yes you will indeed.

98 three quarter percent guaranteed.

Thank you for coming and enjoy the rest of the graduation day.