

Commencement of the Class of 2018
June 2, 2018
“Acceptance of the Class of 2018”
Dr. José M. Torres, President
Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, Aurora, Illinois

Today is the culmination of hours, days, weeks, and years of hard work.

Before I accept the graduating Class of 2018 and award them their diplomas and medallions, which they are anxiously awaiting, I want to share a couple of thoughts and end by **wishing them enough!**

Good morning and welcome!

Dr. Erin Roche, IMSA Board of Trustee Chair
Dr. Robert Rosner
IMSA Board of Trustee members (Rosner)
IMSA Faculty and staff
IMSA Ambassadors and Emeriti
Parents and family members

IMSA Graduating Class of 2018!

Distinguished guests

I asked a couple of seniors for their advice about what I should speak about this morning. They said that I could give some advice. They said that I could talk about their past at IMSA, their future in college, and their work to advance the human condition.

Most importantly, they urged—Keep it short!

So I shortened my speech from 45 minutes to **only 30 minutes** to accommodate their request.

This year at IMSA, as well as across the Nation, teens have demonstrated –that they can make a difference—in our world.

After the mass shooting at the Stonewall Jackson HS in Parkland, FL, ordinary teenagers led a mass movement calling attention to the necessity for gun laws and taught us, as adults, that we must take action to make schools safer.

Throughout history and in recent times, teenagers have made a difference in the world. These include:

- Malala, a recognized global activist, who started out as a blogger for the BBC at the ripe young age of 11

- Nick D'Aloisio, known as the "teenager who has changed the way the world reads" designed the app called Summly, which sums up news articles in just a few sentences. Yahoo bought the app for \$30M when Nick was only 17 years old.
- Ionut Busdisetanu won the International Science and Engineering Fair that included a \$75K scholarship for his invention of a self-driving car that only costs \$4,000 to build -as opposed to Google's \$75,000 prototype.

At IMSA, we have students who have begun to make significant progress in their scientific research, or entrepreneurial endeavors to advance the human condition.

And of course, our alumni demonstrate, time and again, how IMSA over the years has fulfilled our mission of **igniting and nurturing creative, ethical, scientific minds that advance the human condition.**

In May of this year, **Steve Chen**, IMSA Alum and co-founder of YouTube, was inducted into the Order of Lincoln, which is the state's highest honor for professional achievement and public service.

In his acceptance speech, Steve spoke about two important variables in his life that I believe are worth sharing with you, our IMSA Class of 2018 graduates:

Steve spoke about **luck and perseverance.**

Steve said that he was **lucky** to have access to computers at the dawn of the personal computing age and he was **lucky** to hear about The Illinois Math and Science Academy where, in 1993, he received his own computer and a modem, access to Netscape, and his own email address.

Steve explained that he was **lucky** to have joined PayPal and was **very lucky** to work with an incredible leadership team: now iconic names: Max Levchin, Elon Musk, and Peter Theil.

He said that during this time, he met his partner in creating YouTube-- Chad Hurley.

Together, they came up with the idea of streaming videos, something that was impractical at the time.

Steve paid everything off on his personal credit card, burned up the savings he had from the success of PayPal, and finally received his first round of funding that enabled them to continue their work on YouTube, which included working around the clock on weekdays and weekends; holding meetings at 2 a.m. on Saturday nights, working 30-hour

rotations—20 hours of work and 10 hours of sleep.

Steve concluded his remarks by saying,

“As I look back, I understand that **luck is only part of the story**. It may get us to the door, but we choose whether to walk through it or not and that requires **commitment and persistence**. There are plenty of really great ideas that never take off because the first courageous step of taking a chance into the unknown was never taken.

What's the take away?

Yes, you have to have luck, but you also have to **do** something.

Don't just think and ponder about problems and solutions, but to make a difference you have to **take action**.

Tim Notke said, “Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard.”

Persist! Persevere! If you fail, try again!

If you swing and get a strike, don't give up, swing again.

And again.

Maybe you'll hit a homerun...or maybe you'll strike out. You have to get back on the saddle.

You have to get up when you fail.

Or as I read in a shoe box greeting card once...

"As my great-grandfather always used to say, 'if you fall off a bicycle, you have to get right back on!'

And when he fell off his bicycle, sure enough, he got right back on.

And when he fell off again, he got right back on again. And again.

My great-grandmother, watching his valiant efforts said something I've never forgotten.

'You have to pedal, you darn fool!'

The take away...do something!

Let me **end my remarks** this morning by **wishing you enough**.

I don't know how this little story fell into my hands, but I wish to share it with you as I close my remarks today.

The story, as I received it goes like this...Quote.

Yesterday I overheard a mother and daughter in their last moments

together at the airport.

They had announced the departure.

Standing near the security gate, they hugged and the mother said, 'I love you and **I wish you enough.**'

The daughter replied, 'Mom, our life together has been more than enough.

Your love is all I ever needed. **I wish you enough, too, Mom.**' They kissed and the daughter left.

The mother walked over to the window where I was seated. Standing there I could see she wanted and needed to cry.

I tried not to intrude on her privacy but she welcomed me in by asking, 'Did you ever say good-bye to someone knowing it would be forever?'

'Yes, I have,' I replied.

'Forgive me for asking, but why is this a forever good-bye?'

'I am old and she lives so far away.

I have challenges ahead and the reality is--the next trip back will be for my funeral,' she said.

'When you were saying good-bye, I heard you say, **'I wish you enough.'** May I ask what that means?'

She began to smile.

'That's a wish that has been handed down from other generations. My parents used to say it to everyone.'

She paused a moment and looked up as if trying to remember it in detail and she smiled even more.

'When we said, **'I wish you enough,'** we were wanting the other person to have a **life filled with just enough good things to sustain them.**'

Then turning toward me, she shared the following as if she were reciting it from memory.

I wish you enough sun to keep your attitude bright no matter how gray the day may appear. I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun even more.

I wish you enough **happiness** to keep your spirit alive and everlasting.

I wish you enough **pain** so that even the smallest of joys in life may appear bigger.

I wish you enough **gain** to satisfy your wanting.

I wish you enough **loss** to appreciate all that you possess.

I wish you enough **hellos** to get you through the **final good-bye**.

She then began to cry and walked away. Unquote

IMSA Class of 2018: I wish you enough! Thank you!

And now, it brings me great pleasure and it is my great honor to accept the Class of 2018.

By the authority vested in me as President of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy and on behalf of the Board of Trustees and the State of Illinois, I accept these students as graduates of IMSA and proclaim them as worthy to receive their Diplomas and Medallions.