

Joey Nassar
LFHS Graduation 2022
Commencement Remarks

**Thank you for the
kind introduction.**

**Good afternoon parents,
teachers, friends, and fellow graduates.
I appreciate the opportunity to
speak to you today.**

**I'd like to start by thanking everyone
who helped me get here,
especially my mom and dad.**

**When I graduated 8th grade,
my parents pulled out
all these John Hughes movies
over the summer to show me
what high school would be like.**

I think my mom was cringing at times,
as a movie rating system
didn't exist back then,
and some of the movies got a little
uncomfortable to be watching
with your parents at 14.

PAUSE

I remember seeing the generic
high school clichés:
the school gymnasium dances ...
the popular jocks and bullies...
the nerds...
the exaggerated high school drama...
and what it meant to be in
the band back then —
CLEARLY they had never met The Band Boys!

Now, looking back on my
four years at Lake Forest High School,
I have realized that while
some of these clichés hold true —
many of our high school dances
have in fact been in
the competition gym —

Most of these stereotypes
do not describe the
Lake Forest High School Class of 2022.

Maybe we can credit this
to the pandemic... but more importantly.
I think it's due to
the resilient heart of a Scout...

Our parents and other adults
might say that because we
didn't have their coming of age
experience that perhaps in some
ways ours was stolen or worse...

However, what I experienced
with each of you was something
that still felt *extraordinary*...

Remote in basements and bedrooms,
we found a way to connect...

We innovated to make our
experience memorable,
even if it wasn't
"normal"

**Take for instance the concerts
that happened via zoom by
our music department...**

**the reinvention of our classic
traditions on the front lawn...**

**and the clever use of camera
backgrounds and themed outfits
to bring school spirit
during a difficult time...**

**When I look back at the pandemic,
I first see a camera roll full
of test submissions on Schoology
and the unfortunate reality**

of masked learning...

but I also remember fondly
the times that we worked
together to make our experience
the best it could possibly be...

PAUSE

When things did open,
it was a making up for lost time
and another way we
led with our hearts.

Scout Nation at football games
felt louder...

the ELS game – electric...

the hallways more vibrant...

our performance in athletics

more powerful...

We seemed to cherish

and appreciate the time together

in a way that we didn't before.

Pre-pandemic there was kindness...

but post-pandemic,

there was empathy for one another.

An appreciation for our

shared experience

and the individual ways

we all experienced it.

An understanding that friends

may have had mental health

challenges or struggled with

remote learning.

**That athletes lost important
scholarship opportunities
and now needed to play
harder to get noticed,
and we needed to cheer louder
to encourage them.**

**There was more grace given
to our differences
and more hope given to our future.**

**More cheering for
acceptances in the most
difficult college application
year on record.**

A comradery to help each
other keep up and stay positive.

This is why I think
what defines our class is
the lack of competition
between us and instead
a focus on *TOGETHERNESS*.

Together, we survived a
global pandemic, but
more importantly,
we all survived at least one trip
to the testing center
without our student ID...

PAUSE

Together, we persevered through
countless block days
with back-to-back scheduled exams...

Together, we had to maneuver
through the most inconvenient
cafeteria seating arrangements
possible during Covid...

— *Hopefully you weren't*
the 5th person who got
to your table in the lunchroom! —

And together, we fought with
pride for our school colors
in outstanding athletic
and academic victories,
especially against Libertyville...

PAUSE

So it makes sense that *together*,
we will end our high school career

by throwing our caps in the air
as one, resembling all that we have
accomplished as fellow scouts.
There is a bond that connects us
that is deeper than that
of our parents' generation
and their high school classrooms.

There is a resilience that will thread
us together over the years.

We learned that we could endure
something we could never
even imagine.

We learned that something,
so scary at first,
has shaped who we are today.
We learned that a world coming
together can do remarkable things.

**This high school journey has taught us
to remember to have hope...**

To never give up...

**To hold resilience in your heart
and seize life's opportunities,
and to prioritize those that are not
just for yourself,
but with others.**

**A resilience in our Scout heart
says that while today
may separate us once again,
we will forever find
a way to be Scouts....
and to celebrate all that is**

true of this amazing community.

I will deeply miss this high school
and the privilege it has been
to be the president of our grades
and student council.

I have found *joy* in the lonely days
and the days
when the gym has been filled...

as I know my resilient heart
is one of a Scout.

Thank you and congratulations.