

Illinois Valley High School Valedictorian: Amanda Brooks

Ranked #1 in class of 2014 GPA: 4.20
 Activities: Soccer, Basketball, Track, S.M.I.L.E., Mathletes, National Honor Society, Fishwatch, College Dreams, Leadership, Cougar Pals
 Plans: I plan to attend Oregon institute of Technology to pursue a degree in Medical Imaging
 Parents: Gregg and Karen Brooks

We get a lot of advice in our lives and I would like to share some that I received recently about giving this speech: My brother told me if I didn't make my speech entertaining he wouldn't come to my graduation, Mr. Bradley said to make sure that I mention him a lot, but only if it is appropriate, so I probably won't be saying much about him, and then Mr. Lathen told me to make sure I go to the bathroom before my speech...I wonder if he's had an accident before.

We first owe a few thank you's. Thank you to our families and our friends for being supportive at all times. Thank you to the mentors, the coaches, the staff, and the teachers in this community for their continuing encouragement and dedication to the students.

I wanted to share a few of my memories from high school; the first soccer game I ever played here was the first team win in years, all the different sporting events I attended, the first day of school freshmen year when Bradley told my class he hated fresh-

men, Mr. Skinner's interesting intercom voice, I guess that's what you would call it, Mr. Lathen's great dancing and singing, and the planned but never carried out food fights.

I wish to share just one thing that I hold dear to me as a way to live my life, that is to be happy, I know it is extremely cliché and you have probably heard it a million times. But it is true, there is no better way to live your life then to be happy. What is the joy in going through life if you're not, you never know when your time is, so make the best of today, the best of tomorrow, and the best of the rest of our lives, and then when you look back you are satisfied with your life, you do not regret what you missed.

Most of this class I have grown up with since we were about five years old and here we are today, I read somewhere that these might just be the best years of our lives. But to be honest if dissecting cats in anatomy and having to ask to go to the bathroom are the best days of our lives, then I'm pretty concerned for the future. About 4,650 days ago most of us started our first day as kindergartners. That seems like so long ago, but looking ahead we have so much more ahead of us. This graduation is a great accomplishment but in the spectrum of life it is just simply a stepping stone to our future success. So live out your dreams, make more dreams, and live those out as well. We're done graduates! Congratulations!

Amanda Brooks
Valedictorian



Illinois Valley High School Valedictorian: Solomon Zook



Ranked 2nd in the class of 2014 GPA: 4.2
 Activities: Martial Arts, piano, soccer, library volunteer
 Plans: I plan to attend the University of Oregon for computer science so that I can eventually become a software engineer.
 Parents: Cody Zook and Cathy Bockstiegel

Can you believe it? Four years ago we were the nervous freshmen, the low men on the totem pole. Now we're leaving the school behind to a whole new crop of people, most of whom were just as nervous as we were when we arrived.

It has been a long four years and a short

four years. Long... because of all the drama and homework, the boring readings and all the other pitfalls of high school. Short...because of the lifelong friendships, the lasting memories, and the truly interesting and amazing things we learned between the bits of drudgery.

It takes teamwork to survive anywhere in life, I've found. I know my experience is limited, but every problem I've overcome has been because someone has been there to help me through it. My support net ranges from my parents, to my friends, and to my teachers. I am a relatively quiet student but I have needed a lot of help to get me through at times. This is where our school excels.

I have known some of you since kindergarten and most of you since sixth grade. But

mostly, I feel like I know all of you, and you all know me. We all know each other and we can turn to each other when we need to.

I know why I am standing up here today as valedictorian, help. I've got plenty of people to thank for that: parents, teachers and friends. However, there's another, more important, side to that idea as well. Everyone else needs people to be there for them too. So make sure you're around when other people need someone to lean on. They'll thank you for it, and maybe even return the favor.

Solomon Zook
Valedictorian

Illinois Valley High School Valedictorian: Lander Nordal



Ranked 3rd in the class of 2014 GPA:4.18
 Activities: Baseball, basketball, soccer, cross country, S.M.I.L.E., National Honor Society, Mathletes, Cougar Pals
 Plans: I plan to attend OIT in the fall to pursue a degree in engineering.
 Parents: Jim and Ginger Nordal

Good evening students and staff, family and friends. It is my honor to be here standing before you today I would like to thank all of you for supporting these students in their endeavors and making sure it was possible for all of us to graduate tonight. This night is not all about me or the rest of

the people speaking before you today, but the entire class of 2014.

As many of you already know a few weeks ago I was playing first base in a doubleheader against St. Mary's. There was a runner on third with two outs. The ball was hit to our shortstop, and he rushed his throw which led me right into the runners' path and we collided. I broke three of my teeth, but I still got the out and didn't let the run score. I got the out because I kept my eye on the ball.

In life you must do just that, keep your eye on the ball. Meaning set goals for yourself and never let them out of your sight. That being said if you are too focused on your goals you might forget about the

base runner barreling down at you and jump right into his way. Or you might miss a better opportunity that presents itself to you.

If and when this does happen to you and you find yourself beat up pretty bad, don't give up. Jump right back into that game and hit a home run. Do not let your misfortunes define your life. It doesn't matter that you got knocked down, but what you do when you get back up!

When we find ourselves broken and abused it is easy to give up and sit on the sidelines of life. But that is the risk of playing the game. As the late Dan Fiske told me frequently "Life is full of risks, all you have to decide is which ones are worth taking."

If you live a life without risk it will be boring and uneventful, but safe. If you take too many risks you may find yourself so broken that it is impossible to enjoy life. The trick is to take just the right amount of risks and live a long and full life even if you do end up missing a few teeth along the way.

All in all my advice to you the graduating class of 2014 is to live your life to the fullest in whatever field you are pursuing. After all, life is too short to have a bad day.

Lander Nordal
Valedictorian



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Lexi

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