

MAPLETON *from page 1A*

The majority of his speech was quoted from comedian-an actor Charlie Day, who stressed that fear cannot rule a person's life.

"You cannot let a fear of failure, fear of comparison, or fear of judgment stop you from doing what's going to make you great. You cannot succeed without the risk of failure," Schwertfeger said. "You don't not have to be fearless. Just don't let fear stop you."

The guest speaker for the ceremony was former Mapleton teacher Lucinda Longo, who recently left the district to take a job in Gresham.

"I now work in a building where 2,000 people come and go every day, including 1,800 students. A very different experience, one that has made me cherish my time in Mapleton even more," she said.

Longo gave four assignments to the Mapleton's

graduating class.

"Never fear, the assignments are all open book, open notes and getting help from others is encouraged. And if you don't get them right the first time, you can just keep trying," Longo said.

The first assignment was to connect with community.

"We need our community to help us with this life we didn't choose," she said. "We don't get to choose when life is unfair. We don't get to choose our tragedies. As a class, you have had to deal with unspeakable loss. I know, I was there. And there again. And there again. We've lost moms, dads, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles and friends. Best friends. We don't get to choose when our loved ones pass unexpectedly. ... We need each other to help us through our pain."

She asked graduates to find their own communities as they grow older, protect them, cherish them and care for them.

The second assignment was to dream big.

"Growing up in a smaller community is both a blessing and a curse," Longo said. "A blessing because we are not an anonymous face. We are recognized for who we are. A small community can also be a curse, because sometimes we limit our potential by not seeing what is beyond our borders. Who is it you want to be?"

The third assignment from Longo was to be whole. The math teacher traced the word "integrity" to the term integer, a whole number that is not a fraction.

"Integrity comes from wholeness and completeness," she said. "Integrity is not just about being honest. It is about not being a fraction. What it means is you should not act differently based on who is in the room, or not in the room. You should be one full person for everyone. Not different pieces of a person for different

people. Be the person you want to be. And be that person all the time."

Her final assignment was what she said was the most important — work to always have more love in your life than hate.

"We live in a divisive world. A world where it's socially acceptable to choose sides, to hate, to tear each other down," Longo said. "It doesn't have to be this way. You can choose to be kind, grant grace, listen instead of speak. You can choose to accept others' ideological differences as okay, even if they seem crazy to you. You can choose to be baffled instead of angry when other people's beliefs don't make sense for your belief system."

She closed by stating that the seniors have already been working on these assignments all their lives, and if the results didn't turn out the correct way the first time, there is always a chance for revisions.

"May you take these assignments seriously. Our future rests in your hands," Longo said.

The last speech of the ceremony came from valedictorian Trinity Holmes, who talked about the advantages of going to a small school.

"Most freshmen move to an entirely new building with upperclassmen they've never met before," Holmes said. "But our school wasn't like that. We had been in the same building since middle school, so there was no big jump from middle to high school."

She spoke of times her and her classmates would hold competitions to motivate themselves for better grades. There were the math challenges, where they would see who could have the highest percentage in class.

"Those little competitions motivated me to do better, and we had fun while doing it," she said.

Holmes remembered the dances, the sports competitions.

"Sophomore year was also full of phases. Looking back, everyone was trying to be cool," Holmes said. "I went through a little emo phase, fidget spinners were in, and everyone was trying to 'catch-em-all' with Pokemon Go. When you look back at that year, it shows that people and things change, and that's okay. We need to embrace who we are in the present and the future will guide us to who we are meant to be."

She listed a variety of accomplishments the school had gone through, particularly in sports where Holmes helped lead her basketball team in a quadruple over-

time game to secure a spot in the playoffs, a first for girls basketball in years.

"Just as our senior project finished up, track was beginning to start, and prom getting close, coronavirus stopped everything dead in its tracks," Holmes said. "And of course, our graduation ceremony. Even though we didn't get to do these age-old traditions, it will not stop us from forging a new path into a future we create for ourselves. With all that being said, you don't need to tell me how great we are. You don't need me to tell you how far you're going to go because deep down, you know. If you believe in yourself, you will go places."

The ceremony ended with the flower dedications, where each graduate had the chance to dedicate flowers to those whose support got them to the finish line.

After the students received their diplomas, the ceremony ended with the traditional transition of the tassels, which Superintendent Jodi O'Mara introduced.

"As superintendent of Mapleton School District, I hereby certify that these students have completed all graduation requirements for the school district and the state of Oregon," she said. "I hereby present to you, the Mapleton High School graduating class of 2020."

On Friday evening, the seniors gathered at the school to decorate their vehicles and parade from one end of Mapleton to another, reaching as far away as the Swisshome Post Office. The parade was accompanied by two fire apparatus from Mapleton Fire Department.

See PHOTOS *page 9A*

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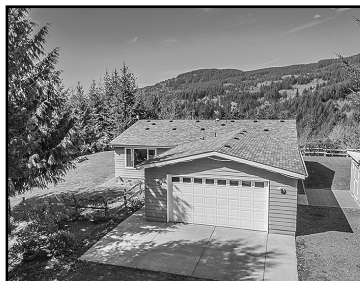
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