

# Cottage Grove sends 136 'important' graduates out into the world

Principal tells grads 'your brilliance is still in its rawest stage'

BY MATT HOLLANDER  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Some people have really cool jobs with great perks, such as the Nike Store worker in Principal Iton Udosenata's opening anecdote to the graduates and guests of Saturday's graduation ceremony at Cottage Grove High School.

"This acquaintance of mine can get discounts for all of his friends, and he regularly meets some of the most important people in sports," he said. "But then I think to myself, 'I get to work with some pretty important people too,' and I feel lucky that I get to shake their hands here today."

In all, Udosenata would shake the hands of 136 new graduates, but before passing out their diplomas, he reminded them that their education has only just begun.

"In your years at Cottage Grove High School you've learned about grit, perseverance and teamwork. You've learned the difference between dressing for success and a dress-code violation. But understand that your brilliance is still in its rawest stage," he said.

The 2015 valedictorians were Justin Bennett, Luke Bennett, Hijiriko Cattleman, Ronan Hall and Kolby Owens, and each one had a chance to address the graduating class.

Justin Bennett reminded everyone that although it's a cliché to say, 'we've made it,' clichés have a lot of truth to them and that there are many more 'we've made it' moments ahead.

Luke Bennett said that life doesn't slow down for anyone, so go on more adventures and "use what we've learned."

And while most graduates are anxious to move up and out to



photo by Matt Hollander

Cottage Grove High School's Class of 2015 had five valedictorians, who each shared thoughts on the occasion.

better things, Owens reminded his classmates that Cottage Grove will always remain.

"Give it a couple years; we'll

all be back," he joked.

The salutatorians, who also had the opportunity to speak, were Shannon Dempsey and

Conner Borigo.

In her comments, Borigo reflected on the memories that she and her fellow graduates made

while growing up in Cottage Grove.

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## A bridge from school to life: Kennedy students complete the journey

Fifty students earned their diplomas or GED certificates on Saturday

BY MATT HOLLANDER  
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Al Kennedy High School principal Mike Ingman stepped to the podium during Saturday's graduation ceremony at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church and recited "The Bridge Builder," a poem by Will Allen Dromgoole.

"That's what we do here," he explained. "We help these young men and women build



photo by Matt Hollander

Rachel Eckstine (pictured), along with Sasha Cole, spoke on behalf of the class at Saturday's graduation ceremony.

bridges from school to life."

Fifty students were honored on Saturday for earning their diploma or passing the General Education Development (GED) test. The class of 2015 could very well be the largest in the history of Al Kennedy.

In addition, 25 scholarships were awarded to students for

furthering their education.

Mary Meir was recognized with scholarships from the Masonic Lodge, Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council, Wayne Fields and the Cottage Grove Community Foundation.

Amanda Woody received scholarships from the Kiwanis Clubs of Cottage Grove and

the Bohemia Sunrisers, as well as the Cottage Grove Board of Realtors.

Sharla Cole also earned a scholarship from the Bohemia Sunrisers. Cole, along with Rachel Eckstine, spoke on behalf of the class.

"Many people told me that high school would be the best years of my life. While it has at times been fun, this has also been the hardest thing I've ever overcome. I am so proud of this class," Cole said.

Eckstine, who dropped out of high school after two years, said that her faith in giving Al Kennedy a shot was rewarded by graduating on time.

Ten students received Oregon Gear Up scholarships, including Christine Ahlwardt, Arleth Christensen, Cole, Andy Crowder, Eckstine, Casey Finch, Ray Lloyd, Meir, Emily Peters and Jason Richter.

Five more scholarships were awarded from the Oregon Youth Conservation Corps to Eckstine, Casey Finch, Connor Fitch, Bryson Howard and Mark Peck.

Before passing out diplomas, Ingman left the class with four pieces of advice: one, work hard in life because it's a requirement for success; two, make your own path and don't be afraid to be an individual; three, don't be afraid to fail, so long as you learn from the mistakes; and four, find your own paradise, which isn't a place but a feeling.

"I hope that you can all find something as special as what we've had here at Kennedy," he said.

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(more info to follow)



Community Development Department  
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Notice is hereby given that property owners or persons in control of property are required in the City of Cottage Grove to cut or remove tall grass, hazardous vegetation and combustible materials during the fire season from **June 15<sup>th</sup> to November 1<sup>st</sup>** (CGMC 8.12 Nuisances).

Tall grass and hazardous vegetation includes wild blackberry bushes; weeds & grass more than 12 inches tall anywhere on your property including public lands out to the street. Vegetation that is likely to endanger buildings or other property should it catch on fire must also be cut or removed.

During the fire season inspections will be made and property owners notified that they must cut or remove the hazardous vegetation. Failure to cut or remove the grass or vegetation will result in the City having to abate the problem. The cost of abatement will be charged to the property and if unpaid will become a lien against the property.

Property owners are reminded that they must keep hazardous vegetation and tall grass cut less than 12 inches until **November 1<sup>st</sup>**. Questions can be answered by the Community Development Department at City Hall, by calling 541-942-3340 or by email: [planning@cottagegrove.org](mailto:planning@cottagegrove.org)

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