



CARDINAL
GIBBONS
HIGH SCHOOL

By Will Garrabrant

It is my privilege to welcome Dr. Fedewa and members of the Board of Trustees, educators, family and friends, and members of the class of 2017.

I've never really been a fan of group projects. That probably goes for most of you in the room today, students and adults. Group projects are a lot of work. Between divvying up responsibility, trying to coordinate working together, and the stress of wondering whether or not everyone does their part, it ends up being a lot. In comparison, working solo seems much easier. This was my attitude towards group work for a long time. Then I came to Gibbons, and I found somewhere I could look forward to working in a group.

I joined the percussion program my freshman year, and have been a part of it during my entire time at Gibbons. I expected a fun music class, not too easy, not too hard, just a good time. I got much more. It ended up taking more work. It ended up taking more time. It also ended up being more important. It was a kind of group work, but that was ok. In fact, that made the program what it is. It was about more than just the individual players learning their parts. It was about putting all of those parts together to create something bigger. When we were all working together, we were able to make something beautiful come together on stage. Working together, we were greater than the sum of our parts.

Gibbons continued to exceed my expectations in everything I did. I have now been in six musicals during my time in high school, and each one ends up being an even better time than I am expecting. Musicals are always fun to watch, and I thought it would be fun to get to sit in the

wings and be part of the music for one. Music is great, but it takes a whole lot of work, so I expected it to take time, and a whole lot of practice. But it was more than that. Practice doesn't feel like work when you're getting to do it with friends. It's not just learning a part on your own, working to perfect it. It never felt like *having* to work with others to get it right, it is *getting* to work with them. When everyone else in the room is just as dedicated to the end result, it doesn't feel like work. We were all having fun learning our parts, and watching everything come together as we all improved. We practiced. We laughed when the conductor sang all of the vocals while we played. We desperately tried to figure out what on earth the person who wrote the music was thinking. It wasn't group work we all dreaded. It was joy.

Not really being a fan of group projects, I definitely didn't think I would enjoy retreats. I hadn't planned on signing up for the senior retreat, Kairos, but after some very persistent suggestions, I finally relented. There were still some doubts in the back of my head, but it couldn't hurt to give the retreat a shot. My expectations from Kairos ended up being dead wrong. I can't go into too much detail in case there's future retreatants in the audience, but Kairos was above and beyond everything I expected. It brought together members of our class that maybe never would have met otherwise. Kairos was a time when very different people were able to come together in a way I never would have imagined. It ended up having such a positive impact on me that I was a leader on the Kairos retreat in January. I had found yet another place where I looked forward to being a part of a group.

This school does not do anything just for the sake of doing it. Whether it's music and retreats, or whether it's art, drama, sports, academics, or any of the million clubs we have. Everything that is done here is done with a purpose. It brings people together. It builds up our school community. Gibbons is a place where we are invested in what we do. Working

together isn't something that creates stress and ends up being more of a pain than it would be to just work alone. Working together is something we look forward to because we know that we are a part of something larger than ourselves. My teachers and fellow students have given me a gift. They have given me an appreciation for being a part of a whole. It is a gift I am lucky to have received so early in life, and one I will carry with me always.