



HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2022

GRADUATION

June 10, 2022 · Burlingame High School · Burlingame, CA



HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2022



Tyler
Ashley Goldstein



Arianna
Belonochkin



Benjamin
Lu



Zoe
Mennuti



Matthew
Nolan



Christopher
Rossi



Ayal
Tzur



Mason
Wang



Josiah
Zumot

· CLASS OF 2022 ·

SENIOR CLASS ADDRESS

Every year, the graduating class elects
one of their members to speak on their behalf.
The class of 2022 has bestowed this special honor upon
AYAL TZUR

Class of 2022: As of this moment, we have survived four of the most challenging and confusing years of our lives...and high school. We made it. Before we begin, I'd like to thank the teachers for putting up with us for the past four years, and for the endless stream of thoughtful lessons and inspiring stories. Thank you, teachers. I'd like to thank all the other staff members for ensuring that our school runs safely and efficiently. Thank you, staff. I'd like to thank my and the other seniors' parents for the resources, love, and support they've given us to flourish in every aspect of our lives. So, thank you, parents, for being understanding, and thoughtful, and changing our diapers.

Class of 2022: We started our high school lives in the time of eating Tide Pods and Fortnite dances, and we now end it in the era of TikTok and the Will Smith slap. But our journey didn't begin four years ago; it started in good ol' 2009—kindergarten. While we all didn't know each other at the time, I'm sure we had the same experience. After kindergarten, I'm pretty sure it was blissful ignorance that got us through elementary school. Those were the days of chasing each other around on the playground and trading Pokemon cards. The days when we woke up on Saturday mornings excited for the morning episodes on Cartoon Network. The days of playing Smash Bros and Mario Kart on the Wii. First grade, where we got introduced to a baffling concept called "homework." Third grade, we started developing more backbone and became sassy toward the teachers. Fifth grade, the first time we experienced graduation, and the year we learned how humans are *actually* made.

Then, in the blink of an eye, we were in middle school. The years of starting to develop more profound and more complex thoughts and forming bonds that would last us through high school and beyond. The caveat being that these were—as most would call it—"the awkward years," and they were right. This was the time when we all started to meet each other. The years of fidget spinners and the rise of Snapchat. The year of being the rambunctious and annoying 8th-graders and at the same time, the year of a lot of growth. We learned from the world, and even each other, how to be true to ourselves and others.

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CLASS OF 2022 SENIOR CLASS ADDRESS

And then, in *another* blink of the eye, we were in high school. Here came the rise of our own Breakfast Club, and a few of us learning to drive. Then came all of the talent shows, Spring Sings, all the after-school parties, clubs, spirit weeks, all the times we turned in our work late, and so, so much more. That's what Stanbridge gave to us. A place to learn and let loose a little. Then came Friday, March 13th, 2020: the day our high school journeys took a bit of an undesirable turn. We are a class that survived the Covid-19 pandemic. We're graduating from one of the most historical events in the last century! Many years from now, we'll be telling our kids about this time, and many more after that the kids of our kids, and they won't believe us when we tell them we had to spend over a year and a half doing school from behind a screen. The times we were texting friends during and after class. We woke up before class and ate breakfast during first period. That one semester where we had *an hour-and-a-half* per class. Yeah, what were you teachers thinking?

As students with special needs, it was hard to adjust to a whole new school environment out of nowhere, but that perseverance and determination to get back to normal made us stronger. Class of 2022, we are a class of strength. We took on the brunt of adversity and came out with a big smile on our faces. We are unstoppable. We are one of the most vigorous classes to come out of Stanbridge Academy. We learned how to make the most out of every moment. We learned how to have fun in our own company. We learned how to truly utilize challenges as a means of growth.

As we move on to bigger and better parts of our lives, remember that your success is not defined by the opportunities you're given, it is defined by what you make of the opportunities that you have. To find success, you need to want it more than anything. You strive for success. You don't let anything stop you. Take each challenge and obstacle as a learning opportunity. But success isn't always achieved alone. We fall at some point or another. We tend to try to sacrifice everything for success. That's why we've got our friends to pick us up and guide us through the darkness we tend to create for ourselves. To tell us when we're being stupid and irrational. To tell us to take a breath and put a smile on our faces for everything the world might throw at us.

Class of 2022: No more waiting in fear and no more delaying the moment to make something great. Do something that you've never done before or that you've always wanted to do. No more telling yourself that you're not good enough because you know damn well that's not true. I've seen all of you grow through adversity at one point or another, and you can deny it all you want, but I, and so many other people in your lives, have seen you turn into extraordinary adults. That cycle of denial that's delaying your success and postponing the happiness you deserve, ends now. I don't want to hear any of that nonsense.

Class of 2022: As of this moment, right here, right now, the world is yours.

Seize it.



TYLER ASHLEY GOLDSTEIN

Eight long years. That is the amount of time I have spent at this school. In this time, I have grown and learned much with the help of my friends, family and the teachers of Stanbridge.

I started going to Stanbridge around 2015 as a fifth grader, where, compared to the previous school I had been in, in which I suffered abuse at the hands of both teachers and students for my learning differences, I found myself welcome. In my own words, I said to my mother, “Stanbridge is a place where I can be myself; where I don’t have to pretend to be someone I’m not.” This environment has cultivated and helped produce many of the skills necessary for me to pursue the things I wish to achieve.

The environment itself would be nothing without the wonderful people working inside of it, of course. Stanbridge, as a school, was truly made for me, thanks to the staff.

First, thank you to all the counselors for caring for me and many others, serving as an ear to hear us when we were not at our best. To David Hopper, and now Matt Robidoux, I thank you both from the bottom of my heart for lighting the spark that was my passion for the musical arts, showing me the ropes, and giving me a way to express myself through sound. Camille, I thank you for teaching me, through multiple mediums, how to visually represent my own thoughts with art. And, most of all, Adam. Regardless of whether you are here with me today or not, I want you to know that, without you, I would not be where I am today (and this speech would likely be a lot less grammatically sound). On a serious note, I really hope that wherever you go, that you find success, as with me, who hopes to take the skills you gave me, relating to literature and writing, to make an income. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for being the best teacher-friend-musical-writer a kid could ask for.

I could be thanking the dozen or so staff members that also helped an equal amount along the way, but that would make this go on for hours, so I’d like you all know: You are wonderful, and you have shaped and molded me into the wonderful, definitely-not-annoying person I am today. And, for that, I’d like to thank you all.

I wouldn’t have stepped a single foot into this school if it weren’t for my family ceaselessly fighting for my rights up until today. Mom, I could never thank you enough for protecting and caring for me, always being there to ensure I was safe and sound both physically and mentally. It was thanks to you that I found this wonderful school. A simple thanks isn’t enough, but since my little small man brain can’t think of anything else, I’d like to show appreciation for you and every other member of the family who was there for me with a simple phrase: I love you.

Finally, there are teachers and family, and then there are students. Thank you to my closest friends—Chris, Ayal, John, Ariana, Matt, Josiah, and many, many more. Without you guys (and my therapist), I’d be in a less desirable state, in a less desirable place. Here’s hoping we keep talking to each other for years to come as we enter this new chapter in our lives.

What’s next for me? God if I know, but it’ll be an interesting endeavor. Thank you Stanbridge, it’s been a nice almost-decade.



ARIANNA ALEXANDRA BELONOCHKIN

Hello everyone, I'm Arianna.

I want to thank my friends Ayal, Tyler, Chris, Josiah, Lizzie, Nate, Ben and Sandy, and so many others, for helping me through tough times and generally being the lights of my life.

I want to thank my Mom and Grandma; honestly they have done so much for me and I love them a lot. I wouldn't trade them for anything.

And to my brother. Even though we fight constantly, I hope you have a good life and family, and I wish the best for you.

I want to say thank you to some of my teachers: Matt Juul for his stories, for his weird situation on Algebra that actually helped me, and for his lovable personality. To Camille, I want to thank you for helping me with my art and just being calm around me. To Kyli, I want to thank you for being there, and I hope the best for you in your next job. To Mary, I want to thank you for listening to me and literally giving me the best advice I could ever ask for.

Now, for the teacher I appreciate the most. I want to dedicate this speech to Adam. Adam was one of, if not the most important and amazing teacher that I have ever had. He is smart and kind and has helped many students that were going through tough times, including me. I wanted to say this to remind everyone at this school and at least give him a mark on this school so nobody forgets him. Adam you have really made us happy and I want to make this the last hurrah before you leave us for good. Thank you Adam for everything you have done for us.

Thank you for listening.



BENJAMIN LU

I came to Stanbridge when I was in sixth grade. Before coming to Stanbridge Academy, I was at Meyerholz Elementary School. At Meyerholz Elementary school, students were always rushing me on the playground and in the classroom. Also, I would get frustrated and upset when people corrected me. My parents chose Stanbridge for me because teachers at this school take their time with me.

At Stanbridge, I have learned how to use my own words to answer the English reading questions, like in the “Visiting Australia” packet. In P.E., I learned how to stop the runner on the baseball plate at the baseball game, pass the basketball to my teammates during the basketball game, and pacing and running fast on the mile track. During pre-calculus class, I took my time to do some solving for the unknown side of the triangle.

Some of the friends I made here include Alexander Chun, Adai Morrison, and Eamon Kuehle. I really liked going on the Washington D.C. trip, because I was able to visit different museums like the Smithsonian Museum, and meeting people at other schools.

Various people have helped me over the years. Mary Stadler helped me stay calm when I got frustrated by trigger words like, “You have to do it correctly.” I also asked Kyli Brown to help me finish and correct my “Visiting Ireland” packet questions and reading. When I didn’t know my answers, I asked Colleen to help me finish creating my Five-Year Plan packet in Bridges class. In pre-calculus class, Matt Juul wrote down the pre-calculus notes like the Pythagorean Theorem of trigonometry.

My goals for the future are being a photographer that takes pictures of animals. I’m planning on taking some classes at West Valley College. When I get older, I will have my own apartment and have a cat as my pet. When the pandemic is over, I will travel to Tokyo, Japan for the future.



ZOE MENNUTI

Hello, and thank you for introducing me. I could not be happier right now, graduating and receiving a diploma that I've worked 12 years of my life for. Next school year, instead of eating microwavable mac n' cheese while making fun of horrible sequels, I'm going to Landmark College. And I wouldn't be graduating from high school or going to Landmark College if it wasn't for the support I got from my family and the staff at school.

Before I begin my short speech, I'd like to thank the people and things who have helped me get through this stressful school year—without any finals I might add. I'd like to thank my mom, my brother, the people who have worked with me after school to make sure I got out of the house every day, and for helping me get rid of my Dracula tendencies. I'd also like to thank my trusty pillow for screaming into when it was necessary.

When I first came to Stanbridge, I was this shy, quiet, awkward kid on the spectrum who just transferred from a public school that stunk. Literally. Anyways, when I was still in the mainstream classes, about two months in I knew something was up and I wasn't developing like everybody else. Instead, I was not growing at all. Socially, academically, or in general.

When I shadowed at Stanbridge in sixth grade, I immediately knew I wanted to go to this school, because of how safe it was, and for the fact that I could go at my own pace instead of struggling to keep up with everybody else in the mainstream classes. And during my time at Stanbridge, I've grown socially and academically, more than I have grown socially or academically at my old school.

Welp, at Stanbridge it was much smoother sailing, and now I am out of here in large part due to the guidance and support of my teachers and school staff. Thank you! I have lots of good memories and there's lots I'll miss... like card games at lunch, and getting quiet time.

Thank you.



MATTHEW EVAN NOLAN

Well, June 10th... We're finally here, I can't begin to tell you how long I have been waiting for this day. I came to Stanbridge in eighth grade. To put it lightly, school was not my favorite place to be. Having a place like Stanbridge that was simply able to put up with a kid who didn't want to come to school and teachers who weren't willing to give up on me has made all the difference in my growth.

I want to thank my parents for supporting me and being there for me throughout my entire school journey. From driving me to various practices and games to supporting school events, they have been behind me all the way.

I also want to thank my teachers who have helped me get to graduation. Your support has done nothing but benefit me and pushed me to be the best version of myself. I especially want to thank Adam and Mark for your extended support, and for being people I could really connect with and look up to. I wish both of you the best of luck, and thank you again for everything you've done for me.

After graduating high school, I plan on taking a gap year and working as an electrician's assistant, and later attending postsecondary education.

Lastly, I'd like to thank my classmates for their friendship and support throughout the time we have attended Stanbridge together. Congratulations to everyone who is graduating today, I wish you all the best of luck in your future endeavors.



CHRISTOPHER ROSSI

I started in Kindergarten at Stanbridge. My parents sent me here because they were aware I was different, although I was not diagnosed with anything. I've spent every year of school here except for second grade, since I got moved up a grade, and my junior year, where I went to Woodside High School and then returned after doing nothing all year. By "nothing all year" I mean nothing in school, since that was actually the most productive time of my life for personal growth.

Anyways, there are some specific people who I would like to thank for helping me grow a lot as a person while at Stanbridge. I would like to thank Mary, Adam, and Jay. Mary for listening to me and helping me understand my problems and my mind more clearly. Adam and Jay for being good role models for me, as well as just being very fun and smart people in general, along with being great teachers. I also thank Linda the office lady for being my friend and making me laugh. And I'm grateful for all my friends and all the time I have spent with them.

Okay anyways, After I graduate, I would like to continue learning on my own, the same way I was doing before school started. I would like to get into a schedule of being productive and doing work on my own before heading into college or a job. Basically, I just want a bit of time to figure myself out and fortify my mind. Okay...speech done. Bye.



AYAL ARYEH TZUR

Do you remember the kind of world the *High School Musical* movies had with all the singing about love and the carefree attitudes? Oh my god, do I wish actual high school was like that!

It was just after my elementary school graduation when my mother told me that I had autism, and at that time, I didn't entirely know what that meant. I did well academically throughout elementary school, but my social skills weren't as developed. When I started middle school, I

had to go to a school in Marin that would help me improve my social skills, but being put in a room with other socially-challenged kids didn't help with anything. The school was also an hour away from home, which meant that I didn't have any friends, and I would see my sisters bringing all their friends home. I wanted that. I was genuinely miserable at that school. When one of my dad's friends mentioned Stanbridge, which is a ten-minute drive compared to the hour it took to Marin, I took a tour and shadowed for a day, and that's when I knew I had to go here. I saw that Stanbridge had an academic environment that genuinely cares about ensuring its students get the educational and mental attention they need, which I needed at the time.

While being here, I've met some of my closest friends, learned that I'm the loudest and most dramatic friend you know, and that the world is full of unique people with interesting stories. Stanbridge gave me patience, compassion, the foundation I needed to explore the world to the fullest, and an understanding of how particular minds function. So much happened during my four years in and out of high school that it would probably take a few years to list them all, but Covid was the worst out of everything. Doing school online really dipped my productivity and enthusiasm for learning, and I felt like I would go crazy if I had to stare blankly at that computer screen for another five hours. I'm pretty sure, at some point, I *did* go crazy. The day we all got to come back on campus—the day I started my senior year—you have no idea how happy I was to be back in an environment where I could touch my classmates' faces.

I've got to thank my mom and dad for supporting me through all these years; you guys really put up with a lot of my sass, and I don't understand how. My sisters, Avital and Danielle, for being there when I needed them and pretending to like me. Adam, for giving me a fresh new perspective on the world. Jay, for giving me the constant opportunities to improve as a student and the four years of incredibly corny jokes. Matt Juul, for all of the great stories you told us that somehow improved my math skills and work ethic. Colleen, for giving me the skills to help me survive in this ever-changing society. Most of all, I have to thank all of my friends for all the jokes, the fights, the emotional moments, and the time one of you actually broke into my house...thanks, Josiah.

So, what's next for me? Hofstra University, a great college in New York, is where my journey takes me next. I'm going to be majoring in communications, so I can't wait for a lot of sleepless nights behind a screen again. As for what I want to do for a career, I don't really know yet, but I think not knowing leaves you with a lot of options. It leaves you with the chance to experience life beyond the constrictions of high school and to really get to understand yourself further. I'm sure that I'll make a million mistakes before I know what I'm doing, but that just comes with being a human at any age. Wherever I go, whatever I do, I know I'll have my friends, old and new, and all of my family to support me through this exciting and unpredictable new chapter in my life. Thank you.



MASON GARRICK WANG

My name is Mason Wang and I am a senior. After I graduate, I am going to a college called Dominican University of California located in San Rafael, CA.

When I was born, the doctors said to my parents that I had a heart murmur due to a little hole in one of my heart's chambers. This would cause problems as I grew up. When I was in kindergarten, the teachers said to my parents that I had a learning issue, which turned out to be Auditory Processing Disorder. This issue was when the teacher talked too fast, then I needed to tell them to slow down and repeat what they said many times until I got it. Sometimes it took me a while to process information and words. When there was too much noise, I got distracted easily and couldn't focus on the work I was doing.

At Stanbridge Academy, I have grown by speaking clearly and louder so others can hear me, learned to stay focused on tasks, avoid background noise distractions, and not to worry too much on something. I read better and have grown my vocabulary. By learning new vocabulary and summarizing the whole book in a paragraph or more, I am able to process the stories better and help with my reading challenges.

One of my teachers at a boarding high school called Maplebrook School located in Amenia, New York named Dominick Ferrusi who was the Academic Dean/Principal of that school has helped me. He helped me clean up my room at my dorm when it was messy, brought me to a quieter room to work so I would get less distracted, and improved time management.

Sometimes when there is a lot of noise in the background and when I think about other topics unrelated to the class, I get distracted easily and cannot focus on the work I am doing, so I went to a quieter room to do it.

My hopes and goals for the future are to do well in college and find the right job for me. Right now I don't know what I want to do for a job. I want to do well in college and try different classes, so I can figure out my future career. Another hope I have is to live in my own house and have a pet.



JOSIAH ZUMOT

My journey to Stanbridge was a welcomed change because the teachers actually listened and were able to help me. At my other school, I didn't get much attention from the teachers. They didn't care what I was going through; plus, they didn't have a counselor to talk about my troubles.

At Stanbridge, I was given time to talk to counselors and teachers such as Emma, Mary, James, Adam, and Jamie about my troubles and struggles. At my other school I made a few friends, where at Stanbridge I made a lot more friends.

I have grown at Stanbridge in many ways. I have made good friends, and became more mature. I have learned to focus more in class and am able to finish my work on time. I have enjoyed being more helpful towards the teachers and Peter, the handyman.

For the past two years I have served on Student Government and been a big part in helping the school to raise money by running the Snack Shack, Bake Sales, and Pizza Sales every Friday at lunch. I think my biggest area of growth though is that I am now more social and less shy with other people.

The person who has helped me the most at Stanbridge is Adam, because when I got stressed, he helped me by giving me choices like taking a break outside or listening to music while I work on my assignments. He also encouraged me and gave me a lot of support, which challenged me to move beyond my limits. Adam has been a very kind and awesome teacher. He helped me how to do things on my own like writing my own goal for my STAR sheets.

Finally, my parents helped me by using their money to put me in this school to give me a good education. Another person who helped me the most is my beautiful girlfriend Gabby, because she helped me by getting rid of my stress by always being there beside me and making me smile a lot.

My hopes and goals for the future are that I would like to attend College of San Mateo and study music and sports. I would also like to play basketball. I hope to find a job so I can earn some money. My goal is to succeed in college and have a job that I enjoy.



**STANBRIDGE
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