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Salem Academy Graduates 63 Last Friday Night

Salem Academy hosted graduation Friday evening with remarks from Rep. Tucker & actor, Alex Newell

SALEM, MA, June 12, 2022 — Salem Academy hosted its 2022 Graduation Ceremony on June 10, 2022 in front of family and friends in the Norman H. Read Gymnasium. The celebration featured remarks from school leadership, students, Rep. Paul Tucker and distinguished guest speaker, actor/singer Alex Newell.

In addition to the aforementioned speakers, elected class speaker, Sabrina Zemlyansky addressed the nearly 400 person crowd with a prepared speech on her time at Salem Academy, her views of the current socio political climate, and what graduation meant to her.

“There are 3,044 students that should have graduated this year but are not able to, because they fell victim to gun violence,” remarked class speaker, Sabrina. She reminded her classmates of the challenges ahead and how important it is for everyone who can to get involved and speak up. “We must be the ones to make change. As bold citizens who are making history, I beg of you when you see something concerning, say something, register to vote, talk to your senators, your governors, your state representatives” she implored.

A co-valedictorian speech given by Addie Cutler & Franjezk Cayco, echoed similar sentiments and added how there was reason for optimism ahead in part due to the classmates' impacts on one another. “There’s this theory called the Butterfly Effect. It suggests that even the smallest changes in our timelines have consequences; they impact how our lives turn out” said co- Valedictorian Fanjezk Cayco. [...] you have all been part of the complex dynamic system that was our lives up to this point. All of you will have profound and widely divergent effects on all our outcomes.”

The class of 2022 was recognized throughout the evening for academic achievement, Service-Learning honors, and collective successes including earning 100% acceptance to college. Salem Academy leaders also handed out graduation prizes to seven deserving seniors, including a new prize, the **Linda St. Pierre Perseverance Prize** in recognition of resiliency, fortitude, and perseverance in overcoming adversity that gives promise to future success and achievement, which was awarded to Yarlene Abreu-Espinal.

Guest speaker, actor, Alex offered inspiring words of wisdom on overcoming self doubt. “Instead of fearing uncertainty, I challenge you to embrace it. In those moments when you’ve lost sight of the big picture or your dreams are so ambitious that you can’t map out the entire journey, just figure out what the first step is and faithfully follow that path with the understanding that some of the best opportunities in life come from experiences we never could’ve predicted.” Alex stated.

To close, Executive Director, Stephanie Callahan borrowed a Ralph Waldo Emerson quote that states “what lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us.” She emphasized that the class of 2022’s journey throughout high school was non-traditional but that each graduate has “strength, courage and perseverance” and that they have the “opportunity to embrace what comes next.”

ABOUT ALEX NEWELL

Salem Academy is pleased to announce north shore native, Alex Newell, as its featured guest speaker at this year's graduation ceremony. Alex is best known for their recurring role as "Wade "Unique" Adams" on the hit FOX tv show, "Glee", and as a finalist on "The Glee Project". More recently, they have appeared on Broadway and in several television shows including Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist which aired on NBC until 2021. Newell, an accomplished vocalist has released several EP's and has been featured on several chart topping hits alongside performers such as Clean Bandit, Blonde & VINCINT. Alex was born and raised in Lynn, MA and graduated from Bishop Fenwick in 2012.

ABOUT SALEM ACADEMY: Salem Academy Charter School opened its doors to sixth and seventh graders in September 2004 with the promise to serve the diverse population of Salem. Through a unique integration of college preparatory classes with service to the community, Salem Academy's mission is to graduate informed, articulate, and proactive individuals of strong character. Today, Salem Academy serves over 480 students in grades six through twelve. For more information, please visit salemacademycs.org and follow us on social media via our handle, @salemacademycs.

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