

L: Congratulations to the class of 2021!

B: Congratulations for persevering through a long education, a seemingly longer pandemic and on a well-deserved day to celebrate each of you for who you are and who you'll continue to be.

L: We've been asked to present the Faculty Award which is given annually at commencement to that graduating senior who, in the collective opinion of the teaching faculty, best represents, in practice and intent, spirit, unselfishness, service, leadership and accomplishment.

B: There was no shortage of stories, quotes, and commendations shared by the faculty about this outstanding student.

L: The only thing more difficult than choosing which quotes to include in this speech was figuring out which our names should go first in the program.

B: As you can see, she's first. *wink*

L: The student selected for this year's faculty award has been known to serve in a wide variety of roles:

B:

- Leader
- Scholar
- President

L:

- Volunteer
- Director
- Friend

B: They were also described using the following words:

- Integrity
- Perseverance
- Calming

- Engaged

L:

- Inclusive
- Remarkable
- Empathetic
- Selfless
- And, my personal favorite, “Perfectly Nice”

B: This student would never recognize herself in the list above-

L: Except for maybe the last one.

B: which is exactly why she was chosen to receive this year’s award.

L: We are proud and honored to be able to present this distinction to Abby Theberge.

(Hand her the box)

B: You’ve contributed so much to the culture of ConVal. You’ve been a leader with honors through the performing arts and educational excellence. You’ve represented the culture and community of ConVal honorably as a member of the ConVal 2025 committee, and many others.

L: Abby, the faculty had a wealth of compliments to shower upon you, but we’ll have time to share only a few. One teacher remarked that you can see through complex situations to get to the heart of them.

B: Another noted, “Abby wants to make sure all of her peers have a voice and make sure everyone’s thoughts and feelings are included. I’m excited to see what her future holds!”

L: Ironically one teacher remembered meeting Abby when they were interviewing – they taught a summer academy class and Abby was one of

the incoming students in the class. “Her calming presence in the class as I was a nervous wreck has stayed with me, even now.”

B: Her band director, Mr. Wickham, remarked, “In the spirit of this award, Abby is a person who truly works hard to her fullest ability and potential and then some more. It is amazing how much time and work she puts into everything. She never gives up.”

L: If there were a student that could be a poster child for loving ConVal and what it represents, it’s Abby.

B: One vital part of Abby’s character is her ability to develop relationships through mutual caring which requires kindness and patience, tolerance, optimism, joy in the other’s achievements, confidence in oneself, and the ability to give without undue thought of gain. She is one who never fears the truth, but rather boldly seeks it. Not only the truth in her pursuit of academia, artistic craft and of the world around her, but in the way I think is hardest for us humans: seeking truth in her relationships with those she learns from, looks up to and loves.

L: I met Abby the summer before her freshman year, and knew immediately she would make a huge impact. She takes more notes than I do, is more organized than I am, and was always a step ahead of me any time I had a need. While she has the same hills and valleys as any other teenager, Abby responds to these situations with an impressively mature ability to reflect and to use any situation as an opportunity to grow. I, personally, have become a better teacher, director, and mentor from having known and worked with you.

B: For all the students I’ve met through my years of teaching, Abby is one of the most successful because I see the sheer delight she takes in what she does. Her success is not dependent upon worldly success as defined by moments like these, but rather because she simply *loves* what she *does*, and she *loves it in front* of others. The incomparable Mister Fred Rogers

once shared: "As human beings, our job in life is to help people realize how rare and valuable each one of us really is, that each of us has something that no one else has- or ever will have- something inside that is unique to all time. It's our job to encourage each other to discover that uniqueness and to provide ways of developing its expression."

As a teacher I believe this is our highest priority. It's why we do what we do. Abby- I hope that your community here at ConVal has shown you that you, and every student, are indeed rare, valued, unique, loved and cared for, just as you are.

L: We wish you every great success in your next adventure at Suffolk.

B: Thank you for all you've brought to ConVal and the legacy you leave with us. Congratulations!