



## Owen's Senior Speech

When I first transferred to GSLC in 2018, I was scared. I thought no one would like me because I convinced myself that I was unlovable and the scum of the earth. However, I couldn't have been more wrong.

Because of my experiences here at Good-Will Hinckley, I have learned what true friendship looks and feels like. I have finally felt how it feels to belong somewhere. I have finally felt acceptance for who I am and for who I want to be. I can finally walk down a hallway without staring down at the floor for the first time in my life.

Today, I have grown and healed substantially. And as we all know, life isn't perfect. I have come to accept that. There are moments where we feel unbelievable joy and others when we're in the depths of despair, and that is okay.

I have learned that there's people who will hurt you without a second thought, but there are also people who will love you no matter what. Those are the people you have to hold on to.

I would like to thank all of the staff who knew me well and never gave up on me, even when it seemed impossible. I would like to thank my partner for being himself, and for sticking with me through the toughest of times. Lastly, I would like to thank my mother and grandmother for being the bravest women I have ever known.

Even though I have been angry and stubborn, I have never felt more understood in my life. All of you truly care. You want us to be here; you want us to be okay. It means the world to me knowing that people as kind as everyone here at MEANS truly do exist. Maybe, the world isn't as bleak as it seems.

Moving forward in the game of life, I hope to continue spreading kindness and laughter everywhere I go. I hope to continue to better myself as a person, and I hope to make an impact on our world. Thank you all for listening, and have a good evening, everybody.