



Avery Thalheim (above) stood while being recognized by Abner Williams. Mr. Williams spoke of what each student's classmates thought of them and what he thought of them. Zac Miller (right) gave Principal Lonnie Brungardt a hug after getting his diploma. Mr. Brungardt (below) gave the graduates his tips for success during the commencement address.

— Telegram photos by Veronica Monier



Northern Valley sends 23 across graduation stage

By VERONICA MONIER

Twenty-three Northern Valley seniors walked across the stage to receive their diplomas during graduation ceremonies Saturday afternoon in Almena.

After Brian Anderson gave the opening prayer, Almena resident and assistant football coach Abner Williams presented his senior recognition.

Reading the name of each graduate, Mr. Williams told what made them special to their class and to himself. He also gave them advice on how to be the best people they could be. Mr. Williams also recognized the parents, guardians, grandparents, teachers, school staff, board of education, and clergy for their part in making each graduate what they were.

"You're high-impact educators," he said. "Had it not been for all of the people standing, these students would not be here today."

Although there were 23 graduates in the class of 2006, only 22 could make it as Sarely Salazar had to return to Mexico to prepare to attend college. The students recognized her host parents, Royce and Jean Ann Wilson, with a white rose.

A commencement address was given by Principal Lonnie Brungardt.

"Seventeen years ago I was sitting where you are now," he said.



"You're going to end your four-year high school career with 'Brungardt's Keys to Success'."

Mr. Brungardt said success should never be unexpected, that it was a state of mind.

Number two, he said, was to form a clear picture of what they will become.

"Close your eyes and picture

yourself 17 years from now," he told the graduates. "Now throw it away because it's never going to happen. Your clear picture needs to be what kind of person you want to be."

Third and fourth keys were to their Northern Valley work ethic and remember the fundamental lessons they learned there.

"There's a lot of uncertainty out there in the real world," he said.

Fifth was to embrace mistakes because it makes you stronger and sixth was not to rely on past accolades.

"You have to keep proving yourselves," he said.

Following the example of successful people was number seven, while number eight was to jump into the biggest pond with the biggest fish and learn how to swim better than everyone else.

Finally, he said, listen more than you speak.

"Listening is the skill that for most people is hardest to learn," he said.

Mr. Brungardt went on to talk about a book the class had given him their freshmen year.

"You are the future heroes," he

said in closing. "Go out and make your mark in the world."

A parent recognition was held and the senior slide-show watched.

High school counselor Monica Wilson said Serena Woodside was the salutatorian with a 3.98 grade-point-average, while both Joey Copper and Clarke Nelson were the valedictorians with 4.0 grade-point-averages.

Superintendent Bill Lowry thanked the Board of Education, parents and Northern Valley staff. He also thanked and congratulated the class of 2006.

"I'm very proud of you," he said. "I applaud your accomplishments over the past 13 years."

Board members Alan Woodside and Glenn Brands presented the

diplomas, while Ms. Wilson announced the scholarships each graduate earned and what their future plans were.

The graduating class of 2006 was Brynton Anderson, Thomas Bartley, Joseph Copper, Renier Deetlefs, Casey Dole, Patrick Hammond, Hope Hansen, Dustin Hillebrand, Chad Husted, Braden

Kersch, Cole Kinderknecht, Johannes Francois Laubscher, Cody Lowry, Zachary Miller, Clarke Nelson, Sarely Salazar, Josey Shearer, Scott Shearer, Andrew Sheley, Anthony Simants, Avery Thalheim, Serena Woodside and Emily Zillinger.

Mr. Anderson gave the closing prayer.

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