

**60th Anniversary Celebration**  
**2021 Founders' Day Speaker: Samantha Ojeme**  
**(Grace '14; St. Andrew's Episcopal School '21)**



Hello everyone, my name is Samantha and I am a senior this year, which means graduation is approaching, fast. Thinking about graduating this spring made me think back to another graduation I had. I remember graduating from Grace like it was yesterday. I was so scared at the idea of leaving a place that had been my home since I was 5. I felt so comfortable and had so many memories. I was scared of making new friends and having new teachers, scared to go into a new place. But I realized that Grace made me ready.

I learned to love music in class with Mr. Kennedy, and how to be creative and problem solve in art with Ms. Muys. I use what I learned in art every day when I approach a problem one way and have to readjust and find a new way to solve it. Mr. Kennedy taught me an awful lot, but one of the biggest things he ever did was show me that I can do anything I set my mind to. Whether it was a solo I really wanted in Christmas chapel or learning how to play the recorder, he showed me that if I believe in myself, I can do it. He believed in us so much, he let us write our own spring musical, which was so cool. We were in charge of everything, and it taught me a lot about responsibility and taught me to love music more than I already did.

I learned how to be competitive in the Girls who Run club, P.E, and playing basketball and soccer with Ms. Rutledge. I use my competitive nature all the time when playing lacrosse, working hard with my team to win against whatever opponent we are playing. Sometimes we win, and sometimes we lose, although I definitely prefer winning! Playing lacrosse has been one of my favorite things I have been able to do in high school. Working with a team to achieve a goal is really cool, and it's also a ton of fun, even if it is a ton of running. It can be tough to lose a big game, especially when you work hard all season with the goal of winning a championship, but one thing I learned at Grace is that you learn something every time you try. This means working hard and hustling during every practice and every game, because giving it your all is the most important thing.

I learned how to be Zen in Yoga classes with Ms. Martucci, which to be honest with you, I could definitely be using more these days. I'm not sure I have ever been so Zen in my life, so thank you, Ms. Martucci. I learned hard work and perseverance in Spanish class with Senor Hymes. I was never the best at Spanish, but I stuck with it because he believed in me. I learned that it's ok if you're not the best at something, as long as you can say you worked hard. I learned how to have fun in Extended Day, playing outside on the playground with friends, jump roping, and playing magic ball. Working hard is great, but having fun is so important as well. Hanging out with friends is my favorite way to have fun.

One thing I was scared about when leaving Grace was that I wouldn't see my friends anymore. That was definitely something I didn't need to be worried about. I still see my friends that I made at Grace all of the time. It surprises a lot of people, but I am still really good friends with people from Kindergarten! I was talking about Grace when I was trying to decide what to talk about today and realized that if things were normal, my graduating class would be having our reunion this year. This is so crazy to think about because when I was at Grace, the kids who came back for the reunions always seemed so much older. It's crazy to think that I am now one of those kids.

While I have changed a lot since I went to Grace, one thing definitely hasn't: my love of science, which has influenced my life so much, I learned from Ms. Comas. She pushed me to be the best science student possible and taught me that it was ok to make mistakes because they are a part of the process. My love of science has even influenced what I want to do with my life. I am majoring in nursing, and it's because of all of the skills I learned at Grace.

It's scary when things change, and when you do things that are different than what you are used to. So whenever you get nervous that you can't do something, remember that Grace is always with you, no matter where you go. And, to the graduating class, it can be scary to leave, but just know that you are more prepared than you know and you feel, so believe in yourself and know that Grace always has your back. Grace will always be my home, no matter what, and I know that it will always be home for all of you.