

The Real World
Commencement Senior Address
by Cory Schofield '13

Hello, and welcome to my friends, family and the Class of 2013! Some of you may know me as just Cory, and others may know me as “that guy who plays the piano all the time.” Either way, I’m honored to be here with you all today.

So here we are ... we’ve had four years of memorable moments, new friends, new experiences, new knowledge and now there are countless possibilities ahead of us... and after all that, I have only one thing to say: *Thank god we’re done with Capstone!*

Though I see a lot of familiar faces, I also see plenty of classmates I haven’t actually crossed paths with yet. But then I think... even if we haven’t met, we still shared so many of the same experiences, fears, ideas, tribulations and triumphs.

We faced foggy autumns, bitterly cold winters and muddy springs together. We had to trudge through the snow and wind just to find out that the dining hall had run out of buffalo chicken. We’ve also climbed mountains and tie-dyed shirts, cheered for the Chargers, gone to plays, studied for tests, got lost in corn mazes and fought zombies together. You are just as much a part of what makes Colby-Sawyer the unique place that it is as the people I’ve come to know and love here. But now that time we’ve both anticipated and dreaded for four years has finally come. It’s time for us to pack our bags and head out into “the real world.”

... As students, we have all come across that ominous phrase, “the real world.” People use it to paint the picture of a horrible post-apocalyptic world we’re about to enter. Well, let’s debunk that myth.

I believe Colby-Sawyer *is* a part of that real world. It isn’t a magical land where you put off responsibility and hard work for four years. It’s filled with real people who put in countless hours of real work to get to where we are now. It’s filled with amazing achievements by athletes, actors, musicians, academics, teachers, preachers, philosophers and writers.

When two Colby-Sawyer women’s basketball players were selected to compete in the New England Women’s Basketball Association senior all-star game...that was real. When a sophomore wrote a screenplay for a short film that was produced by Colby-Sawyer students and alumni... that, too, was real. When an unlikely band of freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors came together to create an entirely original musical production, and we saw it go up on stage... *that was real*. And when one of our classmates, who was volunteering near the finish line of the Boston Marathon last month, rushed into that scene of pure chaos and terror, and, despite his own fear and confusion, selflessly offered his aid to anyone he could after the Boylston Street bombs went off... I can’t think of anything more real than that.

And think about all those *real* long nights we spent writing a 15-page paper due the next morning or attempting to survive on ramen noodles, coffee and fear during finals week... or those moments when we felt discouraged and lost and thought we might not be able to

continue—and then a professor or an advisor took us aside and reminded us that we have it in us to achieve great things, but we have to work for it, and we have to respect and trust our own decisions. Those mentors, those moments and those memories will stay with us long after we've moved into the next part of our lives.

Colby-Sawyer is more than just a place for students to become real people. It's a community where real people live, learn, work, play, interact, grow, flourish and test their mettle every day. It's as much a home as it is a proving ground. I think we can't help but learn a little bit about ourselves—and others!—when we've been trapped by impenetrable ice storms inside buildings with no light or heat!

And some of those people we met on those days have changed our lives in ways we couldn't have possibly imagined. When I still had all the wide-eyed, wobbly-legged innocence of a freshman, despite being a junior when I transferred here, my involvement with the CSC Players, the Philosophy Club and the Singers made me realize something about Colby-Sawyer College: No matter what activity or project or discourse we participate in, we do everything with “real-world” engagement and dedication.

And think of what we've seen together. We've seen timid, unsure first-year students blossom into leaders and creators. We've seen important friends and mentors come and go from our lives like the seasons. We've shared laughs, love and upper-respiratory infections. And we'll never forget the most important lesson we've been forced to learn together every year: MOOSE

DON'T BACK UP!

We've watched ourselves get older, wiser and smarter with every new thing we learn, whether it be in the classroom or dorm room. We've weathered some hard, lonely moments, but many of us were fortunate to have that friend or roommate, whom some of you may be sitting next to right now, who kept us going.

When you leave here today, I implore you not to think of it as an end. You aren't being released into this mad world... You are simply joining a larger community that is in desperate need of what you have to offer. Reality isn't this harsh, horrible thing that wants to drain you of the amazing experiences and skills you've gained here; reality *is* those experiences!

I truly believe that everyone sitting here today is more than capable of accomplishing great things because you've been given momentum. Don't let that go to waste. Don't let yourself forget what you were able to do here, because it was, and is, just as real as anything you'll find in the “real world.” Thank you so much, and congratulations to you all!

Cory James Schofield is a Media Studies major who was selected by the college community as the Senior Speaker for the 2013 Commencement ceremony. He delivered this address at Colby-Sawyer College on May 11, 2013 under a tent on the front lawn.