

Honor Chapel Address

by
Head of School Alixe Callen

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Good morning. And welcome to the Honor Board Chapel.

As I think you all know, I'm a Harry Potter fanatic. I've read all of the books multiple times – I think they're brilliant. For the record, until about 10 years ago, I entirely identified with Hermione. But as I've aged, I think I've become a bit more McGonagle-esque. Just as long as I don't come to resemble Professor Umbridge, I think we're all ok.

But I digress...

One of the things I love about Harry Potter is that students at Hogwarts are consistently encouraged not just to be good students, but to be good people – by Dumbledore, by McGonagle, and even in the end, by Snape. They are taught to be honorable – to treat each other nicely, to fight evil, to do the right thing. There are a zillion moments in the books, quotes that I could draw on that would emphasize that point.

My favorite comes in the second book, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, when Dumbledore says to Harry, "It is **our choices, Harry**, that show what we truly are, far more than **our** abilities."

That's honor. It is one thing to be "smart," to get good grades, to achieve. It is entirely something else to choose to be honorable.

Each of you makes choices every day – little ones and big ones. Whether or not to hold the door for the person who's coming behind you, whether to make room at the dinner table for someone unable to find a seat, whether to make a snarky comment on social media, whether to stop and help when someone is hurting, whether to be honest, whether to stand up to evil.

Being honorable extends beyond simply following the rules – though doing that is also a choice. We could just ask you to follow those rules – that’s what most schools do. However, we believe that you all are capable of something more. Honor. What I am asking you to do is think about the choices you make, and to be proud of those decisions – both the little ones and the big ones.

Some people think their self-worth comes from their GPA, their test scores, how much they earn, where they went to college.

Nope, it’s all about your choices. I’m asking that we all choose honor.