

# The Excalibur

The Online Nazareth RHS Student Newspaper



Graduation 2025 at Christian Cultural Center

## Graduation 2025 – Let's Celebrate!

By: Teresa Gaston

Every June, Nazareth Regional High School comes alive with celebration as faculty, family, and students gather to honor the graduating class. This year, I had the opportunity to attend the commencement for the Class of 2025—a moment that, for them, marked both an ending and a beginning.

The ceremony was nothing short of beautiful. As I arrived, I took in the atmosphere—the neatly dressed guests, the quiet excitement filling the air. Seated with a clear view of everything, I found myself imagining what it would be like to sit here next year, not as a junior reporter, but as a graduate. A surreal thought, yet one that made me appreciate the present even more.

Then, the graduates walked in. Their personalities shone through their decorated caps and confident smiles.

Some caps had messages, some had intricate designs—I mentally bookmarked a few ideas to steal for next year. Their energy was contagious, a mix of nostalgia and joy, proof that high school is more than just classes and grades—it's a place where people grow into themselves.

Principal DiRe opened the ceremony after Melody Lebron's breathtaking rendition of the national anthem. His speech reflected on the journey of his first four-year graduating class—a group he described as strong, independent, and accomplished. Seeing their hard work recognized, not just in their diplomas, but in the words of someone who truly believes in them, was powerful.

The speeches that followed carried similar themes. Co-Salutatorians

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June 2025 – Issue 2

Graduation Edition



### - Special Events -

- 3/9-13 XBSS Retreat
- 4/1 Science Fair
- 4/9 Career Day
- 4/16 Stations of the Cross
- 4/20 Easter Sunday
- 5/1 Field Day
- 5/9 Last Day of Senior Classes
- 5/12 Film Festival
- 5/21 Senior Prom
- 5/26 Memorial Day
- 6/6 Graduation
- 6/16-25 Exams

## Graduation 2025 (cont.)

Kino Vitet and Zariya Edwards shared their insights – Kino on perseverance and willpower, Zariya on living in the moment and letting go of unnecessary worries. Valedictorian Robert King reflected on his challenging yet unforgettable screenwriting class experience (which, trust me, I can vouch for). He admitted how difficult it was but emphasized that pushing through was always worth it in the end.

Watching the ceremony unfold, I realized it wasn't just about celebrating achievements. It was about embracing growth, leadership, and the ability to persevere even when things get tough. Moving forward means letting go – not of memories, but of doubts, fear, and hesitation. The Class of 2025 proved that learning isn't just about academics but also about shaping the way we face life beyond high school.

As the event wrapped up, I congratulated as many people as I could. There was something special about sharing the moment, even just in passing – an unspoken understanding that this day meant something big. And soon, it will be our turn – the Class of 2026!



## Class of 2025 Senior Trip





# My Years at Naz – A Reflection

By: Jazmyn Leger

To the Class of 2025 – We did it! 🎓 We are stronger, smarter and more capable than we give ourselves credit for. During the next four years in college, we will continue to lay the foundation for a future where we can work together toward a better world for everyone.

Nazareth has given me the opportunities and connections that I needed to flow into adulthood smoothly and begin a new chapter in my life. I have learned so much from the administrators, my teachers, and my classmates. I have gained wisdom, friends, and so much more. My previous school was bigger, so I did not have many opportunities to truly connect with my teachers. At Nazareth, I have been able build a good relationship with each one of my teachers. In this way my classmates and I have been able to go further in our personal and group development.

Speaking of group development, our class has improved significantly. The Class of 2025 has shown leadership and strong development from our freshman year to our senior year. We have grown not just academically but also in courage and spirituality. We have become a group that embodies the values our school stands for. Many of the students in our class have managed to keep an average above 90%, and others above 85% or 80%. These aren't just numbers—it's proof of our hard work, dedication and support for each other.

But our success goes beyond grades. Many of us have built bonds that have played a big part in our development in and outside of school. We have stepped up as leaders in our school community through the student council, girl scouts, sports, organizing events, and other clubs and activities. We have also grown spiritually, finding meaning and purpose not just in what we learn, but in how we live our values every day. We have learned that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). Our class is more than just a group of students – we are now officially alumni who carry the spirit of our school and who can build a future filled with excellence, compassion, and integrity.



Jazmyn is the recipient of this year's NRHS Excalibur Journalism Award.

Some of us started our senior year with goals, good habits, and a strong commitment to reach the finish line. Others found their turning point later, but we all pushed through and finished well. We have pushed ourselves academically, physically, mentally, and spiritually. We have learned how to navigate stress, setbacks, and the pressure of preparing for life beyond high school. We have deepened our sense of purpose and our understanding of ourselves and others. This year has been one of transformation on every level.

Along with our fellow graduates in our country and around the world, we represent the diversity, creativity, and potential of our generation. We can shape the future. Getting to this point has not been easy, but the journey has been incredibly eye-opening and powerful. We have shown that strength isn't just about how you start—it's about how you grow, how you adapt, and how you finish. As we move into the next chapter of our

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## Reflection (cont.)

lives, we should always carry with us the lessons and the memories of our four years at Naz, knowing that we are not just a graduating class ... We are the future!

Before I close, I would like to honor my favorite teacher, Mrs. Leatha Recio. She is more than a teacher. She is a role model and a mother, and she cares deeply for her students. Mrs. Recio is one of the main reasons why my high school years were so memorable and transforming, and I know that many other students feel the same way. She puts so much effort into what she does for each class. She is our number one supporter in everything, and having a teacher like her has comforted me greatly. With the support of Mrs. Recio and my friends, I was able to overcome the anxiety I had about participating in and helping to lead various events and activities at Naz. Thank you, Mrs. Recio, for the countless opportunities you have given me to grow and mature. Because you believed in me, I continued to strive. You will always be my favorite teacher and an amazing person at heart.

Finally, I would like to conclude with a quote I heard during the XBSS retreat in March 2024: "You can't change the past, but you can always make a better future." We have overcome the difficulties of the past four years, and now we can keep our heads held high with hope, purpose, and ambition. A better future is something we strive for together, and our future starts now.

CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS OF 2025! 🎓🎓



## Broadway – Here We Come!

Editor's Note: On Wednesday, March 19th, students from the Nazareth Film Program had the incredible opportunity to attend Broadway's highly acclaimed Tony winning revival production of *Sunset Boulevard*. Sitting in prime center orchestra seats for the matinee performance, the students experienced this unforgettable show up close.

This special outing was made possible thanks to a GoFundMe campaign led by Mr. Gando, our Spanish and Film teacher. Before the show, the students enjoyed lunch in Times Square, and after the performance, they indulged in delicious desserts at the iconic Junior's.





## Prom 2025 – Dinner & Dancing at El Caribe!



# Rome: A City That Brings Us Together

By: Bianca Deceus

At the end of the school year, I traveled to Rome, Italy, for the first time with my best friend, Alani. The trip was a special experience that allowed us to explore a new city and meet students from New York and Los Angeles. Our shared adventures in Rome highlighted the power of travel to bring people together. Our journey began at the airport, where Alani and I met fellow students from New York. Despite this being our first meeting, we quickly connected over our shared interests and became fast friends. This immediate bond set the tone for the rest of our trip, demonstrating how travel can create lasting friendships.



## Exploring Rome's Historic Sites

On our first day, we visited the Colosseum, an ancient amphitheater that left us in awe. As we walked through Rome's cobblestone streets, we discovered the city's rich history and beauty. We also visited the Vittoriano, a grand monument dedicated to Victor Emmanuel II, the first king of a unified Italy. The monument's impressive architecture and recent restoration made it a memorable stop for us. Before our trip, Mr. Trama recommended a local restaurant called Café Martini. True to his word, the pizza there was exceptional – crispy crust, flavorful toppings, and a perfect balance of ingredients. It was, without a doubt, the best meal we had all week, and we made it a point to return before leaving Rome.



## Connecting with Students from around the World

Over the next few days, we met students from various parts of the world, including South America, Israel, and Europe. Despite language barriers, we found common ground through shared activities and open communication. These interactions highlighted the importance of cultural exchange and the universal desire for peace and understanding. Reflecting on this transformative experience, I realize how much it has shaped my perspective. Traveling to Rome with Alani and meeting like-minded individuals from around the globe deepened my appreciation for cultural diversity and the significance of unity. This trip was more than just a vacation; it was a transformative journey that broadened my horizons and inspired me to continue exploring the world with an open heart and mind.





# A Memorable Trip to Washington, D.C.

By: Jacqueline Calle-Garay and Joycee Calle-Garay



The Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center was a huge building that had many different stores inside. But the outside was more astonishing, with a big water fountain and a duck swimming in the water as if the fountain were its home. The outside of the White House had fences all around it and red flowers in the front. Across from the White House there was a public park where many people were protesting, holding posters that declared their cause.

The Washington Monument is the tallest building they have in Washington, D.C. It is placed in the center of an open space where many people go with their families to spend time. While we were there, a helicopter passed right above the monument. After seeing all these wonderful places, we went back to the bus for our return trip to Nazareth Regional High School.

On May 1, 2025, we went on a school trip to Washington, D.C., leaving on a coach bus early in the morning and arriving several hours later after a long but pleasant trip. Our first destination was the National Washington Cathedral, which was beautiful both inside and outside. The beauty of the stained-glass windows was amazing. In one room a replica of the Cathedral is being built by using over 500,000 Lego pieces! They also had a beautiful gift shop. After visiting the Cathedral, we went to the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, the outside of the White House, and the Washington Monument.



We hope to return someday to explore even more and to learn many new things. But this first visit will always hold a special place in our memories.

## XBSS Student Retreat 2025

By: Lizmarie Recio

The XBSS retreat was an experience that touched me emotionally, spiritually, and personally in ways I hadn't expected. Not only did I grow in faith and self-awareness, but I also grew as a person, becoming more open to new people, ideas, and perspectives from the other schools represented there.

From the moment I arrived, my small group made me feel incredibly welcome and at ease; their warmth and openness created a safe space where I could be myself without fear of judgment. Through the different activities and conversations, I found myself becoming more social, especially during the recreational time, which gave us the opportunity to connect, laugh, and bond in a fun and relaxed environment.

The retreat was beautifully balanced – every moment of joy, play, and laughter was matched with meaningful spiritual opportunities that allowed me to reflect, reconnect, and grow. Experiences like confession and leading a prayer service gave me the space to deepen my relationship with God and helped me find a sense of peace I didn't know I needed. The insights and guidance from the adult and senior leaders added even more depth to the experience, especially on service day, which ended up being one of the most impactful moments of the entire retreat.

During our service at an elementary school, I was placed in a second-grade classroom where I met a little girl who reminded me so much of myself at that age. She bravely confided in me, sharing that she was being teased because of her ethnicity. Hearing her story hit me deeply, as I had gone through something very similar when I was a child. I offered her advice and comfort, and I gave her a big hug, hoping she felt seen and supported. It was at that moment that I realized just how powerful it is to connect with others through shared experiences. Throughout the day, I met many other children, and in each of them, I saw the pure, unconditional love of God. Their joy, curiosity, and kindness helped me heal a part of my inner child that I didn't even realize still needed healing.



This retreat was more than just a few days away but was a transformational experience that I will carry with me forever. There were so many opportunities to connect – with God, with others, and with ourselves. Whether we were gathered around the dinner table, walking to prayer, or playing silly games in the common room, every moment created space for something bigger than just a retreat, building a community rooted in love, reflection, and trust. And the best part? I get to return next year as a Senior Leader and guide my own small group. I can't wait to help others experience the same transformation I did!

I am also looking forward to working together with our XBSS Leadership team to bring the spirit of the retreat to Nazareth, creating experiences that help others grow in the same way. We would like to increase student participation in Campus Ministry by making events more interactive, creative, and student-driven. We would like to connect Nazareth students with younger children through a literacy buddy program, where we can help them with reading and writing. We would also like to develop Peer Connection Circles that provide a safe space for students to talk, reflect, and grow with each other in the spirit of trust and community. Let us work together to evangelize not just through words, but through the way we live every day.



## Photo Gallery 2024–2025



Homeroom 304 – Awarded 3<sup>rd</sup> Place in National Anti-Bullying Poster Contest



Stations of the Cross – April 2025



Film Festival Production Team - Presenting "Trapped" and "Extra-Credit" – May 2025



## Naz: A Great Choice

By: Imheer Isaac

I transferred to Nazareth Regional High School in 2024 as a Junior from Martin Luther High School in Maspeth, Queens. I have been playing football since I was eight years old as a quarterback. My first and overall best coach is my dad, Gregory Isaac, who is truly amazing. He has coached me my entire life - not just in football but in life. I love you, Dad!

One thing my father taught me that I will always remember is that the “the only way to the Endzone is through Education.” My family and I wholeheartedly believe in education. Education is a necessary step in achieving “S.M.A.R.T.” goals – you can look up the meaning of this acronym if you don’t know it already!

Our football and track coaches at Nazareth - Coach Gooden, Coach George, and Coach Korey - all have the same vision for the powerful role that sports can have in our education. I admire their patience and the way that they bring out the best in the students they are coaching. I also play baseball at Naz under the leadership of Coach Reid. I also admire his coaching ability and the way he connects with his players.

The community at Naz – faculty, staff and students - sets forth a strong sense of strength, motivation, and determination. I believe that I will carry that with me forever. Nazareth Regional High School is a wonderful school, and I am proud to be a part of the Nazareth family. The atmosphere is welcoming and supportive of my needs as a student.

My teachers are all great, my classes are challenging, and I especially appreciate my counselor, Ms. Davis. The principal, Mr. DiRe, is also amazing and supportive of the students. Naz is the best high school I have attended and provides the most supportive environment for education that I have experienced. The choice to transfer to Nazareth Regional High School was a great choice!

## Field Day – May 2025





# Becoming State Champions – Together!

By: Tierra Hendricks (in photo at right)

My four years of playing with the girls' varsity basketball program have been a rollercoaster, full of ups and downs. I came to Nazareth not knowing what to expect, especially since my freshman year was 2021, which was the year after Covid. I was concerned about making friends, but I didn't come to Nazareth alone. I came with my teammates who are really like my sisters, Jojo Tatum and Makylah Moore. These two girls are the ones who really understood me and were there for me throughout my time here at Naz.

I was so nervous about meeting the other girls on the team and about being on the varsity team my very first year of high school. I had been around the same group of girls since fifth grade, and I had just come back from a whole year of missing basketball due to Covid. I was also concerned about the new environment, since I had never been to a Catholic school before. Incorporating Religion into my schoolwork was a new thing that I was unsure of but also excited about.

Freshman year was a transitional year for me. Growing up I was one of the biggest girls on the court, so I played as the center or a forward. I am only 5'3" now, but when I was younger, I grew faster than all the other girls my age. My coaches knew that I wasn't going to be the tallest girl on the court in high school or college, so they started to make me play the guard position. If you know the game of basketball you know how difficult it is to jump from center/forward to point guard - two very different positions. Coach Ron, Coach Shaw, and Coach Tremaine told me that my only option was to play point guard, so I knew I had to step up and really focus on my game.

I knew that I would fit in with my new teammates and click well with my coaches because I know the type of player I am. But I didn't expect to get much playing time because I was only in the ninth grade, and I had a lot of learning to do. We had three seniors that led us throughout that whole season - they were my mentors, and they always motivated me to really challenge myself. As players were injured and had to sit out, I was



the next person up. I really had to mature fast because now I had a bigger role to play. We made it to the championship game, but we ended up losing by 3 points off a last-minute play. It hurt so bad to not finish what we started but it only made me and my teammates hungry to try to get back on that stage again. That's when our whole mindset changed.

Sophomore year was my most challenging year of basketball ever. Two key players for that season ended up transferring in the beginning of that year, and later in the season my teammate had a bad injury which led to her missing the second half of the season. We were all struggling, and we were losing a lot of games that we should have won. I became Captain that year and that gave me confidence that my coaches believed that I could lead my team by example and be that player they trust. However, I was not playing well, and my confidence was shaken. I even began to dread playing games and started to hate the sport that used to make me so happy. We lost the first round in the playoffs that year. After that tough season, some people tried to convince my parents that another school would be better for me. I told my parents that I wasn't done yet - I had hope, and I believed in my coaches who assured us that things would get better. I felt it.

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## Becoming State Champions – Together (cont.)

During my Junior year, my teammate that transferred the year before ended up coming back, and we added a new key player who was a freshman that helped our team so much. We had a solid team. A championship team. The team was much better than it was sophomore year, but we weren't clicking the way a true championship team should have. We would argue, and some players had egos that would ultimately be our downfall as we didn't get the championship that we all wanted. Our team was so good - everyone always told our Coach how good we were, but we didn't know that for ourselves. This time we made it to the Quarterfinals but lost to Xaverian, which stopped us from our goal - a championship.

Senior year had finally come, and we all had one thing on our mind, and nothing was going to get in the way of that this year. At this time, I was the "leader" of the team. I knew I had to be a player my teammates could confide in and that I had to be on their backs when I saw they were slacking. We had a strong team full of talent. We clicked so well, and we bonded on and off the court – that bonding is probably why we played so well together. Everybody knew their role and played their part this entire season. From the beginning of the season Coach Ron was constantly saying how he had been envisioning a championship and how we could do it but only if we put the work in and were consistent. We believed him but I don't think that we really pictured that we could win it all. We ended up beating teams that had beaten us multiple times during the previous seasons. We had a great record and a great season. We ended up beating Xaverian and St. Joseph by the Sea at the end of the season. We had lost to those teams earlier in the season so for us to win put us in a good position in the playoffs. We ended up facing Xaverian five times which seemed crazy, but after the first loss to them we beat them four times in a row.

So now we made it to the Brooklyn/Queens Borough Championship Game facing Christ the King. We spent countless hours in the gym preparing for this moment. To finally be back was a dream come true. The game was close the entire

time and we ended up being down the last five minutes of the game. I didn't have my best game but when it was time to play my part I stepped up. My teammate hit two clutch shots to put us up in the game. We won. We finally won!

We lost in the city semifinals, but we still had a chance to win a state championship! We were going to face a tough St. Mary's team who had beaten us in a scrimmage and a non-league game. This game was also close the entire time. With 1:30 left in the game, I was at the free throw line. We were up by one and the opposing team's coach called a timeout before I could shoot. I shot my first free throw and missed. I was nervous and the game was on the line. But I took a deep breath and told myself this is the moment I have been dreaming about. I shot my second free throw and made it. The next play I fouled the best shooter at the 3- point line and I was so mad at myself. But she missed her free throws. My teammate got fouled again and she made her free throws which sealed the game. WE DID IT! We were STATE CHAMPIONS! I would do anything to relive that moment again. We didn't just win - we won TWO championships. I am forever grateful for my time here on the Girls Basketball team. I can't thank Coach Ron, Coach Shaw, and Coach Tremaine enough for their constant support and belief in us. Thank you, Nazareth for everything!





# Valedictorian Address

By: Robert King, Jr.



Good morning, everyone - faculty, friends, family and of course the graduating class of 2025. Before I start, I want to thank our teachers, who gave their time, energy, and patience for our education, my family and friends who supported me at my best and my worst, and God for making it all possible.

Now, I was asked to talk about the future and about everything waiting for us beyond Naz. And we'll get there. I promise the speech isn't that long. But I can't talk about the future without talking about the past. So, I wanted to recall one of my most memorable and probably one of my least favorite memories at Nazareth.

Some of my friends might remember that I took a screenwriting class Junior year. It was an elective, so you'd think it would have been an easy class. I kid you not when I say it was harder than AP Calc. I think it was over Christmas break that we were assigned to write our second screenplay, which we would get to film. 10-15 pages. Not a scene. Not an outline. The full script. I spent New Year's Eve stressing about my blank screenplay. I just couldn't think of anything that "worked." Every line of dialogue was "corny," and everything felt too cliché and I thought this wouldn't work and that wouldn't work. I think I only had one page the day it was due. We needed at least 10. I know my parents are mortified hearing this.

But I remember something Ms. Roberts told me – that it's good when there is a challenge, when I can't just breeze through something ... that it would take challenges and it would take failure to grow. As much as I wanted this Oscar-worthy script, what I really needed was to fail a little. To sit in that discomfort of not knowing what I was doing or where I was going with the story but to keep writing anyway.

Speaking of screenwriting, I don't know how many people know Steven Spielberg (maybe not the students but hopefully some parents), but he's probably one of the most famous directors out there. He was rejected from film school three times. Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team and ended up becoming the second greatest basketball player of all time (the greatest being LeBron).

The future is unknown – there will be twists and turns and trials and tribulations, and challenge after challenge. But we don't get to the finish line by playing it safe. We get there by trying, by failing, and by trying again. And there will be failure. And there will be mistakes. Like showing up after the senior prank and having to clean up anyway. Or like waiting until the night before to write a graduation speech. Or getting a zero on an assignment because even though you did the whole thing, you forgot to highlight your answers. But don't be afraid of failure. Be afraid of not changing. Not growing. The only true failure is not trying to begin with.

Remember that throughout the past four years, you've done hard things. And you can do hard things. And we didn't grow because it was easy; we grew because it wasn't. So, if the future feels overwhelming, good. That means it's worth something. That means you care. You don't have to be fearless to face uncertainty. But you must be willing. Willing to try. Willing to fail. And willing to try again. That's how we keep moving forward and that's how we shape the future. Each of us has a blank screenplay in front of us, and it's up to us to make a story worth telling!

# Co-Salutatorian Address

By: Zariya Edwards and Kino Vitet, Jr.

**Zariya starts:** Good morning, honored guests, faculty, staff, family, friends, and class of 2025! My name is Zariya Edwards ... *and I am Kino Vitet, Jr.* Together we are the Salutatorians of the Class of 2025. First and foremost, we want to express our heartfelt thanks to all the people who have helped us reach this point in our lives. We thank God as without Him none of this would be possible, and we thank our families, friends, teachers, coaches, staff, and administrators for supporting us these past four years.

**Kino continues:** First, I'd like to congratulate my fellow scholars that have gotten to this point. We were able to make it through those four years together and finally walk this stage.

In those four years, God, willpower, and purpose have each played an important role in shaping me into the person I am today. These past four years involved much more than just completing assignments and exams. They also involved many hardships and obstacles. But thanks to God and our willpower we were able to push past all those things and reach our goal. The reason God woke us up today and every day since we were born is because He isn't done with us yet. We still have a purpose to fulfill in this world.

There were times when my willpower was low and I didn't want to get out of bed for school, go to track practice, attend an XBSS or Media Arts club meeting or complete a certain assignment. But I ended up doing it anyway and each time I did it, I felt my willpower grow a little bit more. An example of a moment like this was during Sophomore year, when my advanced English class was assigned an important project, but we all did it wrong. So, our teacher gave everyone one more chance to correct it. It had to be fixed by the next day, and I remember staying up all night to work on it and only getting one hour of sleep. Some may

wonder why I didn't just go to sleep if I was tired. But if I had just gone to sleep, I wouldn't have realized how strong my willpower was.

... Reflecting on the past four years, would I say all the hard work, sleepless nights, and emotional turmoil was worth it? Yes, I would. Even though the end goal was this diploma that gives us the key to college, I want you to know that this is just the beginning. Outside of that diploma, remember all the bonds we've built, memories made, and moments shared.

... No matter what your opinion on the past four years is, they were undeniably important. And I hope some of the bonds made here can last into the future. Also, I'd like to leave you with this quote from Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV), "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." If you trust in God, you will find the purpose He has for you, and you will prosper.

Now it is my pleasure to introduce one of my closest friends, Zariya Edwards, who will be presenting her co-salutatorian speech.

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# Co-Salutatorian Address (cont.)

By: Zariya Edwards and Kino Vitet, Jr.



**Zariya:** Thank you, Kino. And congratulations again to the Class of 2025 for this major accomplishment!

We've crossed off days on calendars, counted hours, minutes, and seconds, and now the big day is finally here. A well-deserved celebration ... We faced many challenges, but we also created countless memories, cracked one too many jokes, and built lifelong bonds.

As I reflected on these last four years at Nazareth, there were so many memories I could talk about. Like the countless apples slipped into people's bags. Or my one-day experience running the hotdog stand. But instead, I want to share one of the best pieces of advice I've ever heard: "Let time pass."

For those of you who may not know, the quote comes from *Loki* Season 2. There's a moment where Mobius, played by Owen Wilson, is asked what he's going to do after all that's happened. And he simply replies: "I might just wait here for a little bit and let time pass."

Now, if you know me, you know I'm a very meticulous person. I like plans. I like structure. I like knowing what's going to happen – when, where, and why. So, when I made mistakes, I'd replay them in my head over and over. When I

heard "let time pass," I realized I had been constantly waiting for every moment except the one I was actually in.

My point in sharing this quote is a reminder that the present is just as important as the past and future. It is easy to lose sight of today ... We get so wrapped up in what's next – the next test, the next game, the next step after graduation – that sometimes we forget to truly live in the moments we have.

From freshman to senior year, time has given us something special: the chance to change. We grew – not just in height, but in mindset, beliefs, and perspectives. Of course, that change was inevitable. But sometimes, it takes a quiet moment for us to stop and realize just how far we've come. And as I look out at all of you, Class of 2025, I see young men and women who have accomplished so much – socially, academically, athletically, and beyond. And if we had, even for a second, let the late assignments, awkward comments, or missed deadlines define us, many of us, including myself, wouldn't be here today. So instead of getting caught up in past mistakes, let us look more at the present.

If high school has taught me anything, it's that the best moments often come from things out of our control. Some of our best conversations happened when we were supposed to be quiet while doing a "Do Now." The funniest memories came from the most unexpected outbursts and silly niche catch phrases.

So, as we cross the stage today and step into the next chapter of our lives, I hope the words of Mobius have resonated with you as they have with me. We should never let the past or the future stop us from being present in each moment. We shouldn't let life slowly slip by unnoticed or unappreciated. Pause. Breathe. The future will come. The past will stay. But the present is yours – so live in it! Congratulations again to the Class of 2025!



## The Excalibur Staff



2024-25 Writers:

Jacqueline Calle-Garay

Joycee Calle-Garay

Bianca Deceus

Teresa Gaston

Tierra Hendricks

Imheer Isaac

Robert King, Jr.

Jazmyn Leger

Analiz Ortiz

Lizmarie Recio

Advisor: Mr. Meyerend