

VALEDICTORIAN SPEECH

Good morning parents, staff, alumni, fellow classmates, and organizations. My name is Oscar Amaya I would like to welcome you to the Toronto Sport Leadership Program Year 11 Graduation!

First of all, a huge congratulation goes out to all of the graduates sitting in this room today. We've all dedicated months of our time, from early mornings to late nights, in order to better ourselves and work towards achieving the goals we have each set out for ourselves.. That is something that we should all be extremely proud of. I would like to take a moment to thank all of our instructors, as well as all of the staff involved in the Toronto Sport Leadership Program. They worked tirelessly to create a friendly learning environment for us, and did all they could to make sure that we succeeded, and for that I think it goes without mentioning that we are all extremely thankful.

My personal impact with the Toronto Sport Leadership Program was through experiences in the lifeguarding and instructing courses. My first thought was that it's going to be a really long program taking up all my Friday nights and Saturdays which means I can't hang out with my friends anymore on the weekend. I also thought throughout the program I wasn't going to make any friends because we are all competing for the same position. I couldn't have been more wrong. The environment I was placed in with the people surrounding me was incredible. Everybody got along sharing food, notes, and homework. We all had each other's backs telling one another what we did correct and what needs improvement in terms of situations that will possibly occur in the pool.

The friendships I have established in the program are the friends that I will continue to talk to as they have helped me develop a sense of comfort and trust. Knowing that, I can easily share my thoughts and feelings without judgement...well maybe only a bit of judgment Meeting a lot of new faces, witnessing each other's skills, and having the best teachers -Stephanie and Tamara have both been great promoting teamwork and good feedback throughout their courses.

On the final day of screening for the instructors course, I was hesitant and worried. The instructors were marking us on our strokes and I remember the people evaluating us told everyone we have 5 min to practice anything we want before the final round of testing. That moment, my heart rate went from 0-100 real quick because I knew I needed to practice my back crawl. I remember swimming on my back and seeing the evaluators face looking disappointed and in my head I thought damn, game over...Immediately after, I slammed my head against the wall and heard everyone, including my friends, laughing. I was pleasantly surprised that, not only did better than I expected, but I made it into the program!

My expectations of the program was to gain knowledge and valuable skills that I can use in my everyday life. After completing the lifeguarding and instructors courses, I have obtained my National Lifeguard, both lifesaving and swim instructors certification, as well as my First Aid with CPR C certification. I have to thank this program for giving me this wonderful opportunity and long lasting memories that I will cherish forever. In the future, we should all continue breaking those barriers and doubts that we set up for ourselves so that we can seize each and every opportunity that comes our way.

Honestly, the people you meet at TSLP are some of the most supportive and genuinely caring people you could possibly imagine. Along with the main objectives of the TSLP program, there are so many other experiences that we've all gone through within each of our respective streams that are not listed under the outlines and agendas of the different courses we attended. We've met others who share the same interests and with whom we have made strong connections with, and hope to continue to keep in touch with in the future. We've learned more about ourselves and our own capabilities as well as the different ways to challenge our bodies in order to become more physically and mentally fit. Speaking on behalf of all of the participants who have been a part of TSLP this year, as well as over the past 11 years, we would like to express how grateful we are to the organizations and people who help fund the Toronto Sport Leadership Program. Thanks to you, those students are here today and have what they need to make their dreams, a reality.

Congratulations to each and every one of you, and all the best.