

**Shania Chua – Salutatorian Remarks - June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016**  
**Archbishop Molloy High School – Class of 2016**

1998. The year many of us took our first breath as newly born infants, opened our eyes for the first time to a world of fascinating sights, and shed the first tears of life. Fast forward not even a year, and out comes our first mumble of “dada” or “momma.” And before our parents can even celebrate this huge milestone, we take our first steps, stumbling into the first stages of independence.

Just like infancy, high school brings a whole new array of “firsts.” For the first time, we leave the nests of grammar school and take our first strides as true adults. No more handholding and no more spoon feeding. Wide eyed freshman, we entered Molloy on September 5, 2012 and realized that for the first time, we were alone. It was the first time many of us were no longer surrounded by the familiar faces we knew since kindergarten, let alone the first time we even changed schools. Like a baby cries when it falls, I cried when I fell from the “glory” of grammar school. Many of us left high school as the smartest students – the go to person when the new topic was too difficult to grasp in one day. However, high school forced me to take a step back and acknowledge that there will always be things to learn. Most importantly,

we must acknowledge our weaknesses because reaching out for help is not a sign a failure.

Gradually, I became accustomed to the life of a high schooler – a life where time management is your best friend. Long nights attempting to balance athletics and academics led to tears of feeling incapable. How was I supposed to study for a 4 chapter test after a 2 hour practice? These were the times when I realized the importance of friends. Friends are the ones who are there to keep you sane during the excruciatingly long school day. Friends are there for you when you feel alone. Friends are there to lift you up when you feel like you've reached your lowest point. In a school like Molloy, it's easy to be bogged down by the hours of homework and difficult classes. Thanks to Molloy, I've been shown that friends are supposed to be your #1 fans because there will always be people who try to undercut your success. Never ever take friendship for granted.

Remember: academics are important, but they aren't everything. No number on a paper is capable of indicating your potential. It is what you take from the experience. It is how you are affected. It is how you have changed as a result of the experience that shows your true maturity because the only person stopping you from success is yourself.

Thank you, Molloy. Thank you for placing me amongst such a bright group of students that challenged me on a daily basis and showed me the true meaning of friendship.

Feeble steps as freshman have led to huge leaps as seniors. Like a baby experiences his first, we have experienced our firsts of adulthood. Firsts are what force us into uncomfortable situations. Firsts are what change us and develop us into the people that we are today. So my fellow graduates, I ask you to never stop experiencing your firsts.