

# 58 Graduates Advised 'Make a Difference in Life' in LaSalle's Class of 2008



The LaSalle High School Class of 2008 poses for family and friends for one last class photograph Friday, May 23, before members receive their diplomas.

**By Karen Gould**

Fifty-eight LaSalle High School seniors walked across the school's stage Friday evening, May 23, making the passage from high school students to graduates, as they received their diplomas amid cheers, applause, and flashes from cameras as families in the audience sought to capture the moment.

Teachers, parents, and relatives watched with mixed emotions as they celebrated the graduates' accomplishments and wondered

what the future will hold for the students as they become young adults.

"Life is an adventure series," said Mike Springsteen, school superintendent, who offered his last words of advice to the St. Ignace students. "Whether you realize it or not, you all have the starring role. Life can be full and rewarding for you, no matter what you do or where you go, if you take the following four steps. Take 'can't' out of your vocabulary, find something to be thankful about every day,

maintain your faith, and never, ever give up."

Through the years, said Mr. Springsteen, their education has been a collaborative effort of parents and family. School staff members also have played an important role in the education of graduating seniors, including those retiring this year, high school secretary Lorraine Graham with 35 years of service, school psychologist John Miller with 31 years of service, elementary and middle school principal Bonnie

Ledy with 35 years of service, and teachers Kathy Everson with 35 years of service, Carol Miller with 28 years of service, and Mary Pope with 38 years of service.

Earning applause from the nearly filled gymnasium, the retirees, said Mr. Springsteen, leave with a total of 202 combined years of service.

In their messages to classmates, valedictorian Brendon Steiner, the son of Laurie and Dean Steiner, and salutatorian Audrey Wyers, the daughter of Ann Wyers and Dan Wyers, also focused on giving credit to those who supported them and helped prepare them for the future, including friends and family.

"They have been my backbone throughout my life," said Mr. Steiner of his parents. "I could never begin to express my gratitude I have for them, and I am certain some of you feel the same way I do. We need that drive from our parents. They push us to go the extra mile, to give our 110%. They have taught us to never give up, no matter what the opposition is like. And worst of all, they are way under thanked, along with our friends."

His advice to his fellow students was to make sure they let their parents know their efforts are appreciated.

"...we must look toward the future now, so I guess my goal will be to thank my parents more for everything that they do for me, a lot of which goes unnoticed," he said, "and I deeply hope that all of you will do the same."

Miss Wyers spoke of the sacrifices of time and money her mother has made through the years. Through those sacrifices, Miss Wyers has been able to achieve some of her dreams.

"She is one amazing woman," said Miss Wyers, "and I love her. Thank you, Mom."

Her father, she said, has offered her support and guidance.

"Although it has always been



Good friends since the second grade, Samantha Peters (left) helps Jodie Langstaff position her honor cords before the two head into the gymnasium to receive their diplomas at LaSalle High School.



At left: A member of the National Honor Society and of the LaSalle High School senior class of 2009, Shelbie Peters holds up one end of a flowered arch as she waits the graduating seniors to walk through.

presentations. Class president Shane Spring welcomed students and families. Miss Wyers performed an original piece, "On Our Way," singing and playing the piano. She wrote the song especially for the class. Senior Erika Swirsky prepared a slide show that featured photographs of her classmates. With Jason Byma directing, the high school band performed "Do You Call My Name?" by Ra, featuring graduating seniors.

Student members of the Prentiss M. Brown Chapter of the National Honor Society made and held flowered arches the graduating seniors walked under when they entered the gymnasium and at the conclusion of the ceremony.

Before presenting the Class of 2008 their diplomas, High School Principal Don Gustafson offered his yearly statistics.

Twelve outstanding students maintained a 3.5 grade point average through all four years of high school. Seniors wearing a gold cord earned at least a 3.0 grade point average throughout high school. They totaled 43% of the class. Nearly a fourth of the class volunteered for 120 hours of community service, earning a white cord. About 67% of the class will be attending college, while other students will be

tough to see him because of my busy schedule," she said, "the time spent with my father is golden. He has always been there to encourage me as I follow my dreams."

Her advice to classmates as they travel through life, is to help others.

"When you are out there," she said, "take some time out of your day to help someone else, even if it's a complete stranger. If you help others achieve their dreams, you will in turn achieve yours."

Miss Wyers and Mr. Steiner both were graduated Friday night with a more than 4.0 grade point average and only six hundredths of a point separating their averages. Mr. Steiner earned a 4.114 average and Miss Wyers a 4.08.

The evening included several

\*Turn to page 9: LaSalle

## Class of High Achievers Graduated at Cedarville



The Cedarville High School Class of 2008 pauses for a group photograph in the minutes before commencement ceremonies Sunday, May 25.

**By Amy Polk**

As Cedarville High School's Class of 2008 graduates move on to their next adventure, they will carry the advice of this year's class motto, a quote by Albert Einstein: "The important thing is to never stop questioning."

They will need that advice where they are headed. With 90% registered for college or technical training programs, most are planning to continue their education at places like Michigan State University, Lake Superior State University, Olivet College, Ferris State University, Kalamazoo College, Saginaw Valley State, Central Michigan University, and cosmetology and automotive schools. The black graduation caps of students heading to college were decorated with the names and colors of universities, painted on in whimsical letters and glitter.

"These graduates are going to leave a big hole," Mr. Schaedig said, speaking of the group's leadership and accomplishments at the school. "Every class leaves its mark on our school. This group has left an especially positive influence through academics, athletics, and community involvement."

In Mr. Schaedig's last address as Cedarville's principal, he summarized the class accomplishments in an annual commencement tradition he started. Ten of the graduating seniors were Eastern Upper Peninsula Principal Award winners, 20 are wearing Honor Cords, and 13 qualified for a Michigan Competitive Scholarship by scoring in the 90th percentile on the American College Test, he said as an indication of their academic strengths.

Outside the classroom, the seniors led basketball, football, cross country, and track teams to conference and state championships. The boys basketball team has



Carissa Sudol (left) and Emily Pieri deliver their commencement address Sunday, May 25.

been to the state finals three times, including this year, and won the Class D Championship in 2007. The girls basketball team won its first Upper Peninsula Championship in school history and was a state semi-finalist this year. The seniors have also been part of the football team that won the school's first Mid-Eastern Conference Championship, the track team that won Upper Peninsula championships, and track teams that won regional track championships.

The school's Quiz Bowl team was a state finalist this year, and 12 of the seniors were members of the Cedarville High School Band that earned the highest scores possible at State Band Festival this year.

Members of the class have been youth mentors, camp counselors, and performed in this year's production of "Oklahoma," which staff and audience members are calling the best high

school play they have ever seen, Mr. Schaedig said Sunday.

They are also involved in their community, Mr. Schaedig said, volunteering for projects, church activities, and holding down jobs "while balancing the demands of school and other activities." Ten in this class went on a mission trip to Puerto Rico three years ago. One is an Eagle Scout and four earned Girl Scout Gold Awards, all scouting awards that require community service projects.

Class co-valedictorian Emily Pieri and salutatorian Carissa Sudol thanked the community, in fact, during their graduation speech. They gave the address together since they were designated "Most Pessimistic" and "Most Optimistic," respectively, by their classmates in school mock elections. The dialogue was a humorous back-and-forth exchange of the good times, described by Miss

\*Turn to page 11: Cedarville

## 35 Earn Diplomas in Pickford's Class of 2008

**By Amy Polk**

"When you consider the so-called 'real world,' don't expect to step through some sort of portal into another dimension or parallel universe," Pickford Public Schools Superintendent Keith Krahnke advised 35 high school graduates at commencement Saturday, May 24. "That which exists in your world, that which is real, depends upon you. The next phase of your life will be different. There's no doubt about that. Your approach, your preparation, and your attitude will determine just what kind of world lies ahead, just as it has determined what kind of world it has been so far."

Mr. Krahnke told students the world they will encounter is not so bad, and how they perceive it is ultimately up to them.

"Unfortunately, when someone says something like, 'Welcome to the real world,' the connotation is clearly negative. It's a reference to the fact that the world can be unfair, competitive, crazy, unforgiving, challenging, and even cruel," he said. "I'd just ask you to never forget that the world has another side to it, just as real. Instead of unfair, the world can be equitable and inspiring. Instead of competitive, it can be cooperative. Instead of crazy, it can be quite rational. Instead of unforgiving, it can be caring and considerate. Instead of being challenging, it can be motivating, and instead of cruel, the world can be kind."

Salutatorian Matt Rose talked about super heroes, and advised his classmates to use their own powers, cultivated by 13 years of school, and "put them to use against the bad guys."

"Just like our powers are unique, the enemies we face will be one of a kind," Mr. Rose said. "We might not have battles with the Green Goblin

\*Turn to page 10: Pickford



Derrick Leese (left) and Kyle Barry watch family, friends, and graduation guests arrive in the moments before Pickford High School's commencement exercises Saturday, May 24.



The caps of (back to front) Preston Hunter, Richard Gibson, and Joseph Morrow bear the statements "I'd rather be fishing!" and "Kiss my class goodbye!" at Pickford High School's commencement ceremonies Saturday, May 24.