

Gala 2017 Speech by Melanie

....Middle school of course was new for everyone. I was very shy and I would always sit in the back because that's where I was most comfortable. I wouldn't raise my hand that much and I felt as though no would listen to me. I was even once called invisible because this person didn't know I was there.

In the Seventh grade it actually hit me hard. I felt as if I was a nobody and that I had no friends. I felt as though no one would listen to me when I talked. Everyone would ignore me. I would feel lonely and that no one was there for me. And also, the bullying from the 4th grade continued. I knew that I would just have to be strong. And I knew that I had to be open because I could just talk to teachers or my parents about things that were going on. I would always shy away from talking to someone. I've realized that being an introvert is quite difficult, but it is a part of who I am. It's horrifying for me to talk to adults and even public speaking is quite difficult for me too. I know that being lonely isn't the the best feeling and that I have to overcome it. The head of the middle school noticed that I wasn't myself and we were able to talk about what was going on. She then recommended me to Belen from BlueSkies. Blueskies staff helped me to understand what was happening and how to deal with it. Talking to her made me feel better because I was then able to talk to someone about the whole situation and I would like to thank her for that.

In the 8th grade, I've had become even more mature than I already was. Personally, I just want to avoid being friends with the wrong people and I should be

more careful when choosing them. But I just want to acknowledge that through those dark times, there is always light. As Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "When it is dark enough, you can see the stars." When times get tough just know that there are people who you can talk to and care about you. Trust me, there are and that things will get better.

In the 7th grade I received an award called the "Youth Leadership Award", and I also received an award called "Model of Success." At the end of the 8th grade, I had an awards night at school. I received "High Honor Roll", "Student Ambassador" and the "Excellence in All Subjects Award." I was keynote speaker for my graduation and it was such a huge accomplishment because never in a million years would I have ever thought about becoming the class speaker. I then took home an award which I'm most proud of which is the "Presidential Award" for being an excellent student in all of my classes.

In the future I want to be the same hardworking person that I am today and just become more confident with myself. I want to be open and just be comfortable around people. Everyday I'm growing physically and mentally, but I will never change who I am. Therefore, you should be confident in yourself and don't be afraid to talk to others about what is going on because when you do, things will get better. Thank you.