

# 'Tis the Season for Graduations!

By: Steven Nguyen

No matter where you are in your educational attainment, I congratulate you, the graduating class of 2015! For all of us, graduation is a special time to reflect on and celebrate all the goals and milestones we worked so hard to achieve, to get a piece of paper basically saying "you did it!" For someone with a disability, and his/her family, it probably feels a little more extra special. It's years of fighting through the "red tape" of a not so perfect education system to get the services and accommodations needed to level the playing field for you or your child. It's staying up later than expected because you or your child needed a little extra guidance and motivation to complete the homework and study. It's going through all the challenges, with you or your child's health, to play catch up on all those missed assignments. The list goes on and on.

I get it. I, along with my family, have been down that road. The "you did it", becomes "we did it!" Whether you're advancing on to the next grade level, seeking opportunities in post-secondary education or entering the workforce - give yourselves a pat on the back.



Be sure to thank the family members, friends, teachers, healthcare staff, advocates, and those who went above and beyond to help you get you where you are today. The saying, "It takes a village to raise a child." holds true. A strong support system is the key to achieving great things.

From a personal standpoint, I have always enjoyed this time of year. Whether I'm celebrating in person with loved ones, or seeing my Facebook and Instagram pages filled with graduation pictures and smiling faces! It brings me great joy to see people that I've connected with, over the years, achieving great things.

Whatever your next step in life is, take a moment to bask in your current accomplishments, because you've earned it! I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

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