I’m Sydney Choi, the senior class president, and I was tasked with saying farewell to York on behalf of my class.

I know many of us have been waiting for this day with breathless anticipation for a while now, but I’d like to invite you all to pause and remember all of the small moments that brought us together as a class and as a community. All of us here are products of our loved ones’ hard work, and many of us wouldn’t be here today if it weren’t for the support systems that our family and friends have provided us, so I’d like to extend a heartfelt thank you to those attending today.

Our four years at York were really only two and a half because of distance learning, but I’m still grateful that I was able to spend my high school years with you all. I’ll miss the feeling of knowing everyone’s names as I walk into a classroom or as I walk on the wood chips to and from the Science Building. I’ll especially miss the eggs that we drew on the whiteboards, and the movies we watched during lunch. Even though we only got to stand on the Senior Balcony a handful of times, those moments were definitely a highlight.

Of course, the time we spent learning inside the various classrooms was just as memorable. I always get hit with nostalgia when I walk into Mr. B’s room, and I can never be bored in Ms. Kiest’s room with her desk of toys and disease collection. I know all of the teachers are genuinely passionate about what they teach, and it shows in the way they never fail to offer help during tutorials or free periods. I regret not being able to take more classes in my time here, and that’s a testament to just how interesting the classes here are. Although I’m excited for college, I know the classes just won’t be the same because I won’t have the opportunity to get to know my professors as well as I’ve gotten to know my teachers here at York. I know I speak for everyone when I say thank you for all of your support and encouragement.

When I think about the Class of 2022, one word that comes to mind is “supportive.” Any time someone achieves something, our class will break out into enthusiastic applause. I’ve felt this sense of encouraging support from my friends, and from my classmates as well. We aren’t a competitive class, and we are always there to cheer each other on, whether it’s in a sports game or right before an AP exam. It’s nice to know that the people in your class have your back, and I’ll definitely miss that sense of camaraderie when I head off to college.

Another word I would use to describe our class is “friendly.” I especially felt this during my freshman year when I found my group of friends. I hadn’t lived in the Monterey area for very
long, so I didn’t really have a chance to get involved in sports programs or youth camps from a young age. To me, it seemed as though everyone knew at least somebody coming to York with them. Despite the fact that I didn’t know anyone in my grade as a freshman, I was still able to form lasting friendships and make so many good memories with everyone in my class. Even when people in our class who normally don’t interact come together, it doesn’t feel awkward or forced, which is something that I noticed in class retreats or our campout.

York is definitely unique in a lot of ways, from the way we have Fred and Rosie out by Day Hall to all of the fun traditions we have such as how the Executive Student Council passes their positions down to the next generation of leaders. The people here make it so easy to branch out and try new things, which was incredibly appealing to me as a shy underclassman. I was able to help out backstage with theater, join sports teams, and be a part of clubs that focus on a wide variety of subjects from marine science to social justice. I was even able to run for Student Council and have the opportunity to stand here today and give this speech. I’ve had the opportunity to watch my friends pursue their passions and accomplish so many unbelievable things in sports and academics. I think some of the best parts of attending such a small school is that I’ve had the chance to learn more about what everyone wants to achieve in the future, and watch as they put in the hard work to reach those goals.

I remember being so intimidated by everyone at the New Family Potluck back in August 2018, and I wasn’t sure if I would be able to make any friends or if I would be able to be successful at all. But four years later, we’re all here, and I’m proud to say that I am a part of the York Class of 2022. As this is the last time I’ll be able to address you all, I just want to let you know that I’m proud of and grateful for each and every one of you. Congratulations again!