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## 'Cherish every moment'



Photos by Joseph Nadeau

Members of Woonsocket High School's Class of 2024 were ready to head on to their futures as graduation began at Barry Field on Friday. From left are Kael Hernandez, Daniel Lespinasse, Edyson Herrera, Jason Chen, Aidan Greenless, Claudia Desrosiers, Isaac Toweh, Aissatou Diallo, Natalia Cusson, and Matthew Cusson.



Photo by Isaa Camacho, Davies '25

(Bottom left) Yuliana Perez of North Providence (Top left) Debra Groves of Pawtucket, Ariana Gomes of Pawtucket, Madlen Gomes Depina of Woonsocket, Marlin Gomes Jimenez of Central Falls, Madison Guindon of Pawtucket

## Woonsocket High School celebrates 235 graduates from Class of 2024

By JOSEPH NADEAU  
Contributing Writer

WOONSOCKET – Woonsocket High School sent 235 members of the Class of 2024 on to their futures Friday afternoon with traditional ceremonies at Barry Field highlighted by praise for their help building a caring community at the school.

The soon to be graduates of the Woonsocket Education Department also gained praise for perseverance in overcoming pandemic related challenges early on in their high school career and their ability to move forward to success.

Sunny skies and comfortable temperatures made Barry Field the

right setting for another memorable commencement as Mina Antunes, Junior Class President, and Mansour Dieng, Junior Class Vice President, teamed up as masters of ceremonies and the Woonsocket Concert Band and members of the Woonsocket High Chorus did their part, too.

After thanking the high school staff and faculty for their assistance to the Class of 2024, Antunes credited the high school's outgoing class with making "many strides and sacrifices."

"Many of you have worked one job or multiple jobs after school and had to look after family...But you persevered and you should all be proud of yourselves," Antunes said.

During his remarks to the graduates and their families, School Superintendent Patrick McGee referenced a list of notable contributions class members made to their school and the community at large while helping to cultivate a "compassionate and supportive community."

"Just what does it mean to cultivate a community?" McGee asked.

"Community is defined as a feeling of fellowship with others as a result sharing common attitudes, interests and goals," McGee explained.

"It doesn't matter, how different we are. What matters in building community is the desire to live in

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## Davies Tech graduates 179 proud seniors

By JON BAKER  
jbaker@pawtuckettimes.com

WOONSOCKET – As directed, the seniors from the William M. Davies, Jr. Career & Technical High School awaited the start of their commencement exercises behind the Stadium Theatre on Friday night.

While some primped their hair, adjusted their caps and gowns or merely spread hugs around like candy, others reflected upon their journey from a freshman year of distance-learning and mask-wearing to a senior campaign full of anticipation and joy.

When someone asked Pawtucket resident Balesca Urzua what entered her mind prior to the ceremony, she replied, "I can't believe it's time. I literally want to cry; it's unreal. I'm definitely more nervous than excited about the future."

Central Falls' own Eliza Reed had a different, more humorous take on the fact it was her graduation day: "Can I believe it? Yes and no; it's surreal. I still feel like I'm back in middle school. I'm nervous to cross the stage. I mean, I want to be successful, but

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**INSIDE: ANIMALS**

**Big cat on campus**  
Cat roams university campus for 4 years, gets degree  
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Breanna A. Abac  
Kenia Acosta  
Agifatou F. Aidara  
Cheikh K. Aidara  
Emely S. Alcantara  
Derek A. Alves  
Aavin A. Anderson  
Christian Archbold  
Jacqueline N. Arevalo  
Stevan A. Arevalo  
Jadrienny Baez-Estevez  
Gabriella P. Banker  
Alannah A. Barcelos  
Ezequiel Barrera  
Evan D. Bennett  
Ryan K. Bernard  
Eli O. Berthiaume  
Carissah M. Bizzle  
Jayce Boisse  
Karl J. Bornelus  
Lauren A. Bradshaw  
Joslyn M. Brown  
Zaria-Lynn C. Campbell  
Caterin J. Cante  
River A. Carnaghan  
Firenzia N. Chace  
Katie Chamberlin  
Sara A. Chiaverini  
Victoria G. Chica  
Amber M. Church  
Ny-Elize L. Cintron  
Steven S. Clinton  
Ederickson C. Coelho Ramos  
Xavier A. Collins-Mena  
Aidan C. Comire  
Evan C. Cooke

Ozirin R. Corporan  
Jeilyn A. Cortez  
Aiden J. Cote  
Caesar I. Coteron  
Fatoumata Coulibaly  
Harych Cruz  
Luis Cruz  
Krystal Y. Cuello  
Dante J. D'Amico  
Julie H. D'Acruz  
Grazielle L. Dagraca  
Samuel F. Davis  
Ryan J. DeLeon Aguilar  
Jack C. Delgado  
Jarrel Depina  
Lauricia A. Depina  
Natalia S. Desimone  
Aissatou Diakite  
Aiyanna M. Dias  
Cristel P. Diaz  
Gabriel E. Diaz  
Aliyah C. Donahue  
Darion A. Dos Santos  
Austin Dowicki  
Jacob S. Durocher  
Haizelynn Echevarria  
Yasmin G. Elias  
Justin M. Emond  
Kelsy M. Espinal-Perez  
Jayden A. Evora  
David O. Falowo  
Samaira L. Farmer  
Diego Ferreira  
Jessica R. Flores Benitez  
Sebastian A. Forero  
Jaydian D. Fortes

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Brian R. Garcia  
Brianna Garcia  
Gyanna Y. Garcia  
Maiah E. Garcia  
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Madlen G. Gomes-DePina  
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Mia G. Joseph  
Paris M. Koule  
Ian S. Leon Guerrero  
Charlize M. Liranzo  
Cristiano Lobo  
Lizzeth A. Lopera  
Diana C. Lopez  
Sandra S. Louis  
Angela G. Mallywanga  
Destiny Marrero  
Yazmin Martinez  
Sheilyn Y. Matus  
Ahmadu M. Mbaye  
Fatima K. Mbaye  
Anthony J. McGowan

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Daniela J. Medrano  
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Veronica N. Mendez  
Victoria I. Milian Morales  
Navielys M. Miranda  
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Jessiah A. Monchery  
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Joaoantonio Monteiro  
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Jaideliz Morales  
Ethan Moreno  
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Shirah A. Paker  
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David A. Salako  
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Lariah L. Sampaio  
Alessandro Sanchez  
German Sanchez  
Jamin D. Santos  
Kila R. Santos  
Mariana V. Santos  
Paula J. Santos Hernandez  
Niko F. Saunders  
Eric A. Schenck  
Joseph C. Serpa  
Eve E. Silva  
Siyanna S. Teap  
Elizabeth J. Thibeault  
Elizabeth F. Tobon  
Jaslenn K. Torres  
Nakeisha S. Torres  
Relena S. Trudel  
Doyinsola D. Umarudeen  
Balesca Urzua  
Ariana A. Valle  
Anthony Varela  
Gabriel J. Vargas  
Alexandra M. Vasquez  
Andrew W. Vasquez  
Casanova K. Vasquez  
Milagros N. Velez  
Cindy C. Ventura  
Mia K. Victorino  
Eduardo Villasenor  
Kurtis J. Waters  
Alexis S. Watson  
Jamelia L. Whitley

Davies

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there's always the fear I won't be."

Reed confided that she plans on attending the Community College of Rhode Island for initial courses that will help her become, eventually, a trauma nurse.

"I love the idea of working in the health care field and helping people who can't help themselves," she said. "I know it's stressful, but I think it will be rewarding, too."

Niko Saunders, another Patriot from Pawtucket, explained the fact his four years at Davies was coming to a close this way: "It really hasn't settled in yet. Honestly, right now, I'm impatient and antsy. I'm nervous for the future because everyone says, 'It only gets worse from here.'"

"But I do feel confident," he added. "I got into the Talent Development Program at the University of Rhode Island, and I want to dual-major in Mechanical Engineering and Italian. My shop at Davies inspired me to continue a future on mechanical engineering, and I'm excited to connect and learn more about my Italian culture."

Not long after, this most recent batch of Patriots strode down the aisles of the Stadium Theatre to Edward Elgar's classic "Pomp and Circumstance" to hoots and hollers from loved ones, and then-senior Rachel Jean-Baptista sang the National Anthem.

Davies' Principal/Associate Director Jose Libano immediately followed with a welcome address before veteran physical education/health teacher Henry Cabral took to the microphone as the keynote speaker.

He initially joked about Director Mary Watkins asking him to deliver the primary speech, and he said he was stunned but excited. The soft-spoken Cabral said he turned to family members and friends for advice, and "I was greeted by 'Really? You?'" Some laughed and thought it was a joke and others were genuinely concerned for what I might say or do."

The fact is, it's no surprise Watkins asked Cabral to address the throngs — as the varsity head football coach, he paced the Patri-



Rae Chiaverini of Pawtucket.

ots to a perfect Division 4 regular-season before they lost to North Providence in the state divisional Super Bowl last December.

"The truth is, I'm honored to be here with all of you," he said. "The Class of 2024 is a special group; over the past four years, many of you have been a part of my everyday job, my life, making it enjoyable and easy to come to work every day."

"I feel it is important to thank you all for the great times and memories you have provided me. I have seen many of you come into Davies as young kids and now I see you about to leave as young adults. I will truly miss many of you, and I know you will be successful in your future endeavors. I hope that I have been a part of your everyday lives as you have been with mine."

"I wish you the very best."

Valedictorian Ryan De Leon Aguilar took the podium and thanked his mom and dad, who both were born in Guatemala but came to the United States when they were teens to help their parents with work. He told the audience they had immigrated to Los Angeles, but then drove to Rhode Island.

He also thanked his friends for all of their support, as he said he struggled academically at times, especially during his stint in the New England Tech

"Running Start" program. He now hopes to become a cardiologist, and he said both Davies and New England Tech played integral roles.

"The world right now is going through so many difficult times; it can be hard to stay positive and joyful," he told his classmates. "We must learn to enjoy the small gifts life gives us, such as being able to breathe, having a roof over our heads, having food on our tables and being with the people we love."

"Even though things are difficult, I can see all of us succeeding in life," he continued. "With hard work, positive thought and determination, we can achieve anything. Class of 2024, live in the present, and let's put in that hard work, give it our all!"

Salutatorian Brianna Garcia congratulated all of her classmates for a job well done, telling them that this feat is a "triumph like no other."

"It shows grit, consistency and resiliency," she said. "I would not be speaking to you here as the salutatorian if not for the endless sup-



Photos by Isaa Camacho, Davies '25

Alexis Ramirez Alvarado of Pawtucket, Lizzy Tobon of Central Falls, Daniela Montoya of Pawtucket, and Veronica Mendez of Pawtucket

port I've received throughout my journey. Thank you to my wonderful academic teacher who refused to settle for my quiet personality and sought to find more in me. Thank you to my shop teachers who helped me not only discover but kindle my passions for engineering."

"Thank you to my peers in my shop who never failed to put a smile on my face ... With that, I'd like to ask you all not to be afraid if your journey isn't the same as everybody else's or doesn't follow a traditional path. Maybe you're still unsure of who you want to be or you're questioning whether you're following the right path, and that's completely OK."

"As long as you put in the work, everything will fall into place, even in the most unexpected ways. I'd say, 'Good luck, everyone,' but, honestly, I'm sure you will all find success and meaning in your lives."

the senior who gave all she had to be here," she said. "To the Class of 2024, it was a pleasure being your senior class president."

"We made it!"

Before Watkins and Libano began handing out diplomas to the 179 graduates, Class School Counselor Amie Mello and Advisor Kristin SanBento delivered their passionate remarks to their former students.

"I cannot believe you are all graduating!" Mello said. "The last four years together have been a whirlwind of laughs, cries and a whole lot of interesting experiences. It has been an amazing journey watching you all grow up into outstanding young adults."

"I am so proud of your ability to overcome so many obstacles, and I am excited to see what the future holds for you all. Remember, every stage in your life is a new chapter, and things always happen for a reason."

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