



Good evening, faculty, staff, and benefactors of Saint Ignatius School. My name is Britney Ron, and I graduated from St. Ignatius School in 2013. I am currently a senior at Notre Dame High School, and I am looking forward to beginning a fully funded four-year program at Middlebury College next year, with the support of the Posse Scholarship Foundation.

My mother is my inspiration for selflessness and hard work, and my three years at SIS gave me the tools I needed to convert that inspiration into action. Throughout my years at SIS, and into high school, my mother has sacrificed so much. She worked double shifts, often starting around 8a.m., and wouldn't get home until 1 a.m. She had longed to stay home with my brother and me, but ended up missing most of our childhoods. That forced me to take charge. I became a mother to my brother. On most weeknights, my responsibilities included making my brother's dinner and helping him with his homework. I couldn't do my own homework until I put him to bed and was often still up when my mother returned home, exhausted.

My carefree teen years had always been tangled with adult responsibilities. I learned at a young age all about our family finances, including when our rent was due each month. But one night last summer, a phone call made it clear I would have to grow up even faster. I was away at the Kenyon College Writing Program, and I was having the best week of my life; while back home, my mother was having the worst week of hers.

There I was, sitting in my dorm room reading Gabriel Garcia Marquez when my mom facetedimed me. She asked about my day and I babbled for five minutes. Although she kept smiling, I could see her trying to fight back tears. But she couldn't. They streamed down like lines on her face. My mom had lost her job. She tried to cushion the blow. "Forget it, it is not a big deal," she said before sending me a goodbye kiss. "Have fun."

I reflected on the sacrifices I had made for my brother in the past few years and somehow, I felt I hadn't done enough. I was still a kid living off my mother. I hadn't contributed financially to the family. Although I had helped, I was still a burden. I knew I had to change that. I saw that I had to stop asking for unnecessary things. I realized that either I had to help pay the bills or cut down on the amount of money spent on me.

In many ways, the phone call transformed me from a child into an adult. But the loss has been matched by the rewards. Since my mother lost her job, I've become more motivated, even more determined to succeed and I have been able to see her more often.

I have received honor awards at school, and it always makes my mom smile because she is proud, but it makes me smile because it gives her a reason to keep fighting and keep pushing through those long work hours. And even though I haven't been able to contribute financially to my family, I can say I have been able to contribute hope.

I am proud to say that my little brother will be attending SIS in the fall as a sixth grader. I know I can speak on behalf of myself, my mother, and my brother, when I say thank you, every one of you, for making SIS the school it is.