

Hello, my name is Uriel Gonzalez Barragan, and I am a senior at Hill-Murray. Since my freshman year, Hill-Murray has been my second home, and these past four years have truly been some of the best of my life.

None of this would have been possible without all of you in this room. Your unwavering support and generosity have opened doors for me that I never imagined were possible.

I also want to take a moment to thank my parents. Their love, sacrifices, and endless encouragement have been the foundation of everything I've accomplished. Without their dedication and belief in me, I wouldn't be standing here today, sharing this moment with all of you.

Without you, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to attend this incredible school or form the meaningful relationships that have shaped me into who I am today.

Coming to Hill-Murray has changed my life in so many ways. It has opened my eyes to the world and given me experiences that have transformed how I see it—and my role within it.

I've been blessed to participate in life-changing opportunities like the Blackfeet DeLasalle mission trip to Montana. This was actually my first time on an airplane. I also completed the McLaughlin Social Justice Institute at Christian Brothers University in Memphis, where I earned college credit for the experience.

I am also in the first cohort of students who are earning a Certificate in Benedictine Formation, focusing on learning more about St Paul's Monastery and our Benedictine heritage. I am also proud to be a part of Hill-Murray's Peer Ministry team.

What have all of these experiences at Hill-Murray taught me?

These experiences taught me the importance of living with purpose, compassion, and a commitment to serving others. My faith is important to me and Hill-Murray has provided so many opportunities for me to express my faith and grow in my faith.

I thank God for placing me here at Hill-Murray and blessing me with all these opportunities that have shaped my life. I know that without Him, none of this would have been possible.

I want to take a moment to personally thank William Schram, Pioneer Partners, the benefactors of the Future Leader Program, The Rueb Family, and Mrs. Bates. Thanks to their guidance and belief in me, I've grown in ways I never thought possible.

You've all played a vital role in helping me become the person I am today, and I will forever be grateful for that.

As I look ahead to the future, I know that I'll continue to face challenges — especially financial ones. My family and I have not always had the resources to make all of my dreams a reality on our own, but I am hopeful that I will continue to meet generous and supportive people like all of you who can help me achieve my goals.

Your kindness has already changed my life, and I am inspired to keep striving, knowing that there are people, like you - who believe in me and my potential.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you've done for me.

I am truly grateful, and I promise to carry the lessons and values I've learned here at Hill-Murray with me wherever life takes me. Thank you and God Bless You...