

SIT Graduate Institute Graduation Ceremony
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Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council
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The day tastes sweet, as an Alaskan Native elder once said.

Today the day tastes sweet, as the air is thick with the flavor of joy and success.

Cherish this day as it will bring tingles up your spine decades from now, as you look back and remember.

As today marks a day of tremendous accomplishment and the clear start of the beginning of a new chapter in your lives.

As you leave here today, you will depart with a well deserved diploma, new skills, and awareness.

Most of all, you leave here with a network of new friends and professional colleagues.

You will now join a global team of alumni that can be found in every single country of the world.

You will soon learn that World Learning, the School for International Training and the Experiment in International Living are recognized and respected on every continent on this planet.

In 1992, I graduated from the Program in Intercultural Management as a PIM 47. I came to this place of peace and learning - filled with many people, from many cultures, who collectively, have an undying drive to better this world for all people. We are a group of people - committed to peace, equity and justice on this planet.

I am so honored be here.

In 1992 my PIM class, wrote a **Declaration for a Positive Future**. We labored for days until we actually did agree by consensus. The PIM 47 declaration reads, "We, the PIM 47 participants, choose a world equal to our highest potential.

We are committed to taking the actions necessary to make this world a reality. We maintain that it is possible for every individual in the world to have security and peace; an economy of abundance; sufficient shelter, clothing and health-caring food; health care that supports wellness, not illness; a healthy environment; meaningful

work; self-fulfilling education; effective and just methods to resolve conflict; access to information, enjoyment, creativity and self expression in the arts and **opportunities to explore the farthest reaches of the human spirit”**.

When I arrived on campus I came here with the intention of working with people with disabilities in Africa. I was clear at that time–(tell story of being immersed and then working with tribal environmental efforts instead.)

We can’t necessarily plan our futures with certainty, but instead we must be open to the world of possibilities that will be presented before us as time unfolds.

Over the past twenty-seven years in the non-profit sector and twenty years since I studied on campus, I have become clear that the most important aspect of all of our work is in the context or relationships. Our relationships to individuals and communities are of the greatest value. Relationships can be built in a way that will endure life challenges and be sustainable.

Example of conversation with Karen Blanchard re: Ethiopia and Mexico. **Our work is a journey of long term relationships and commitments. Our work, reflects our passions and is interwoven with profound relationships. Our work is not just a job it is adventure. (OK a quote borrowed from the Peace Corps – Thank you JFK)

“We are the ones we have been waiting for”, the Hopi elders often say. This may never have been truer- as the Mayan calendar comes to a close on December 21, 2012. Some see this day as an ending and many more see it as a new chapter in the history of the world.

As this important date approaches, it seems more and more apparent, that the dawning of a new age is upon us.

As we enter a period that maybe - a serious crossroads for humanity, it is time for all of us to step up, take responsibility for this fragile spaceship we live on, and get busy to usher in the new age that maybe unfolding as we stand here together.

We have been waiting for you to return to work, with your many new skills, insights and motivations.

President John F. Kennedy Jr. stated, “We have the power to make this the best generation in the history of the world or make it the last”.

Native American Faithkeeper Oren Lyons of the Turtle Clan of the Seneca Nation refers to this time period we are in as the “11th Hour”. If Chief Lyons and the Mayan Elders are in fact correct, then now is the time to work hard, towards the world we envision.

Stay in touch with your hearts and your intuition. Let them guide you to the work of greatest importance. Build strong families, build strong communities, create healthy watersheds, be healthy, teach health, be happy, live peacefully, smile to a stranger, love everyone, learn to forgive, be compassionate and **our world will thrive!!!!**

Thank you - to each and every one of you. Thank you to those in the kitchen, thank you to those that care for the grounds, Thank you to the faculty and everyone who plays a role in keeping this educational vortex thriving.

The Experiment is no longer an experiment. We now know - that when diverse cultures come together - that we come to know, respect and love each other. We are making peace right here on this campus right now. The ripples of what happen here reach the far corners of this earth.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all that you do, all that you have done and all that you dream of doing.

Recognize when synergy is present and go with the flow and ride the wave. The wave feels good!!

Celebrate today's success. Be joyful and have a blast celebrating this special day. I can hardly wait to hear where you are heading towards and how you will impact this precious planet filled with sacred cultures.

Remember synergy. What we think is a coincidence may not be a coincidence. Expect synergistic occurrences to happen often. Enjoy every day, work hard and don't forget to play hard.

All of you deserve to play hard for awhile. Congratulations to each and every one of you for what you have accomplished. Higher education is no small accomplishment. **You have invested in your minds and you invested in the dawning of a new age of peace, equity and fairness on this planet**, filled with those of us who wish to step lightly and leave things a little better off - then we got here.

Mother Teresa often said that, "**Our work is but a drop of water in an ocean of need**". Let's begin to turn the many little ripples of water into waves of synergy and harmony.

Welcome to the SIT and the World Learning team. Congratulations to each and every one of you. We need you, your community needs you, the world needs you.

Be bold, tenacious and respectful as you strive for peace, confront injustice, and most importantly live by example.

Stay humble. Most importantly stay humble.

Know when to step up, and know when to step back.

Go where you are invited and help when you are asked.

You are needed now more than ever as we usher in a new age together.

We are witness and active participants in a global consciousness shift. As the Mayan calendar ends, we need beacons of light to guide us into the next chapter of humanity.

Learn to forgive, fine tune your intuition, care for yourselves, build community and let the flames of hope, peace and justice burn brightly and you will be the beacons of light to usher in a new age.

So everyone, go with the flow, ride the wave and let's manifest the future we collectively envision, both in small groups and in large groups.

Follow your intuition and your heart and you will be joyous in your work, while your being smiles brightly.

John F Kennedy Jr. surely must be smiling today, on his 93th birthday, as this committed group of soon to be alumni, enters a new portal of growth and commitment.

I am honored to be here with faculty, alumni and the World Learning Graduating Class of 2010!!!

We are family now. Enjoy the celebrations ahead and our next chapter together as the World Learning family.

Have a great time and make sure to give each of your peers. a congratulatory hug or at least a high five.

“A person possessed by peace never stops smiling”, said Kundera .

I see lots of smiles here today.

Many blessings to all of you.

Thank you for the honor to be here with you. I will always cherish the memory of this day. Peace be with you.