

McCann Class of 2009 readies for the next step

[By Jennifer Huberdeau](#)

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WILLIAMSTOWN -- For the last 18 years, twins Brian and Kyle Shepard, of Clarksburg, have followed the same path -- choosing to study machine technology and serving as co-captains of the football team during their four-year tenure at C.H. McCann Technical School. And they don't plan to separate after graduation.

"We're both going to Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts," Brian Shepard said as the pair gathered with friends outside the Chandler Athletic Center at Williams College before graduation Thursday night.

"We're both majoring in business administration as well," Kyle Shepard said. "I think it's been a little easier on us to be together -- you've had someone there that understood what was going on and to help you out if you needed it."

Nearby, Carissa Hartman, of Clarksburg, was asking her fellow classmates to sign the mortar-

board of her white graduation cap.

"I was originally going to put pictures on the top like everyone else, but than I though getting signatures



would be better," she said. "I'm able to have more people sign it than just being limited to the pictures of a select few."

Nathan Samson, of Adams, and Nicholas Briggs, of Florida, were happy to accept gold ropes that signified they were members of the first class of students to graduate from the school's pre-engineering program, *Project Lead the Way*.

"It's amazing to know that it's over," Samson said. "I think it will hit me tomorrow. It wasn't easy to do -- we had the classes on top of our regular academic and shop classes. During my junior year I really wanted to quit, but I'm glad I stayed."

Briggs added, "It's quite an accomplishment for us. There are nine out of the original 20 who are graduating tonight."

Superintendent James Brosnan said the 112 members of the class of 2009 would take two things with them as they graduated, "their success and comradeship."

"You have formed an amazing bond over the last four years, not only with your classmates, but also with the truly outstanding faculty of this high school," he said. "Don't forget them, because we won't forget you."

Salutatorian Hannah Nuwallie compared the graduates' past four years at the school to climbing a mountain -- each year reaching another level of success.

"We've reached the top of the mountain we have all been climbing together for the past four years," she said. "As we look down from the peak that we all stand on tonight, we stare down into our futures outside of McCann Tech. Of course, it may seem frightening for most of us, for we know not what our futures hold in store for us, but I'd like to think of tonight as staring down at the base of a new, larger mountain that we will be able to successfully tackle as a direct result of all that we have learned at McCann Tech."

Valedictorian Alexander Segala offered his classmates a few words of advice, quoting numerous historical figures and a few classmates along the way.

"I personally feel that the Spanish saying 'Fuera del puerto, y en el mar' fits awfully well right now. It means, 'out of the harbor and into the sea,'" he said. "If you think about it, we are leaving our harbor. We are venturing forth into the vast world. We will no longer be tied off to docks, but rather free to roam. The waves will be bigger and the catches greater."

He reminded his classmates of the value of their education -- a blend of traditional academics and vocational skills.

"I know we all will do well where we are heading in the years to come. We are lucky, in this time of economic turmoil, we have a very valuable tool -- we have a trade," Segala said. "But, there is no need to rush. As Mark Twain once said, 'Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did.' So, throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

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