

# Valedictorian attains a long-standing goal on eve of McCann's graduation

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NORTH ADAMS -- Kristin Euchler has had her heart set on joining the U.S. Coast Guard since her freshman year at C.H. McCann Technical School.

Twenty-four hours before graduating from McCann, the valedictorian of the class of 2010 received her appointment to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy from Cmdr. John G. Rivers, who is the son of retired McCann principal Gary Rivers.

"I knew somebody from the Coast Guard was going to be at [Class Night]. I didn't expect it to be Cmdr. Rivers," Euchler, 17, of Clarksburg said Wednesday evening. "It was pretty crazy. I didn't think it was as big a deal as it was. I saw it as just another part of the ceremony."

Euchler, who studied machine technology at McCann and was in Project Lead the Way -- the school's pre-engineering program, will report to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London,

Conn. on June 28.

"It's nerve-racking realizing that the high school part is over, and I don't have much time before I go to the Coast Guard Academy," she said.



Euchler was one of 111 McCann graduates to receive their diplomas at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Campus Center Gymnasium Wednesday night.

When the last student crossed the stage, an eruption of cheers, silly string, poppers and confetti showered the class of 2010.

"It feels good. It means I have accomplished a lot," Jordan McShane, 18, of Stamford, Vt. said.

McShane and her twin sister, Jenna, plan to attend the University of Vermont in the fall, and while they spent much of their childhood doing things together, they will continue on the paths they began in high school of pursuing their own interests.

"It will be good to have someone there, but we'll also be separate," Jenna McShane said.

Salutatorian Emily Serrano told her classmates to do the things they want to do.

"Go out every day, and do things that make you happy, take chances and make your own decisions, because in the end you're the only person who truly knows what you want in life," she said.

She said the class of 2010 has come a long way from when they entered McCann as freshmen, and will now go their separate ways.

"Some will be going to college, others will be pursuing jobs of their trade, and some may even be planning on playing XBox at their parents' house for a long period of time," she said, as classmates laughed.

Euchler, who received a standing ovation following her speech, encouraged her fellow graduates to thank those who have encouraged, supported or assisted them.

"We would be extremely foolish and naive to even consider the idea that we achieved this all on our own. There were numerous times over these four years -- and countless over these 18 years -- where we required some encouragement, support or assistance, and the simple fact that we are here wearing these funky looking gowns and square Frisbee hats is proof that you came through for us," she said.

Going out into the world after high school, it seems as if the odds are against them, but they will overcome those odds and define themselves as adults, she said.

"My biggest fear is that you will allow this frighteningly difficult experience to change who you are as people. As you face adversity, always remember the jokes and silly antics from our high school years, and try to retain that lighthearted, humorous and kind mentality I know you possess," she said.

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