

Give Oscar An 'A': ODLH Gives Back

Written by TSS Press
Monday, 25 June 2007 19:00

Last week, Oscar De La Hoya stood before the graduating class of the high school that bears his name.

On June 21, ODLH talked to the seniors at Oscar De La Hoya Animo Charter High School, which opened in 2003. The school is ranked among the top 10% of high schools in the state of California that serve similar communities, and will graduate 98% of its inaugural senior class. 108 out of 113 graduates, or 96%, will attend college, with 88 graduates (78%) admitted to four-year universities. Oscar De La Hoya Animo Charter High School is temporarily located in downtown Los Angeles, construction will commence this summer for a permanent facility at the site of De La Hoya's boxing gym in East Los Angeles. And they say boxing is good for nothing, and so frequently, boxers are dismissed as brain-dead thugs with no redeeming qualities. From TSS, congrats senior class, and to Oscar, keep up the philanthropic efforts!

I want to thank first of all, Steve Barr (founder and CEO of Green Dot Public Schools). Your vision is changing a person's life. Because that is what you have done, changed these kids' life. To have a better future, to have more opportunities, the hope you've given, the hope you've instilled in every single person here. There is no money that can buy that and not enough thank you, and from the bottom of my heart I want to say thank you for making our community, the future of our communities a better one. Thank you very much.

Class of 2007 how does that feel? Wow, unbelievable I was class of 1991, I wasn't what do you say over the hill?

I wasn't the best student I maintained a 2.1, right Steve? Combined we hit a 4.0, but I understood what graduation can bring me. Although I didn't go on to college which I deeply regret, although I didn't go on to get a degree or I wasn't a 3.0 student or 4.0 student, I believed I could do something because when I graduated it meant that I finished round 1 in the 12 round fight and I am ahead 1-0. Because that is what life is, life is 12 rounds and it is not an easy fight and you guys have made it through the first step which is the most important step, okay? Whether you get a 2.0 average, whether you get a 3.0 average, whether you get a 4.0 average and this is where life begins and it is in your hands... it is in your hands to do good with it or not do anything at all. And I think from the look of it you do want to do some good and you do want to make your family proud, you do want to make yourself proud, you want to make your community proud and this country proud. And I think this is what life is about.

Because I can win so many world titles, I can go and get a gold medal and yes I am extremely proud of that, but to have my life, and control my destiny through education there is nothing that can beat that. Nobody can ever take that away from you. So go out there try your hardest because as long as you can sleep good at night, as long as you can say to yourself, you know what, I tried. If somebody said to me, oh you're not going to do it, oh, that's impossible. You don't have to listen to them. Yeah, you can listen, okay that is fine. Prove them wrong, go out there and go out there and try harder. That is what makes a better person, a better human

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being.

I'll tell you one thing, life is not easy. I mean, ask your parents... I ask my father all the time, I talk to my father all the time and I tell him how was life for you? Working 16 hours a day? I can see the tears coming out of his eyes. And one thing he will tell me is yeah, I do wish I received my education the way you guys have today and the way you guys are going to receive and continue to receive it for years to come.

Life is not easy and you can make it easier. Life can be very difficult if you don't want to control it because you can control it through education. And education is by far the most important vehicle to be successful in life. People will say yes, oh, well you're a champion and you've done this and that and oh, it's probably easy for you huh? Ha. Life is not easy, I grew up in East LA from very humble beginnings and I am very extremely proud of it because wherever I go in the world and make speeches I never forget where I come from. And I'll never stop eating King Taco, I don't care who, I don't care what they say, they're good tacos.

You can make life easier for you, you can make life fun for you. Get involved with something you really have a passion for. I didn't have a passion for boxing, my story was different because my father was a fighter and my grandfather was a fighter, so they made me a fighter they wanted me to be a fighter but I grew to love boxing and that's what I knew and that's how I became successful. That's how I said to myself, you know what, I am going to use this vehicle and be a successful person so I can make a change, so I can better my surrounding, so I can help my family, so I can make my family proud.

And now you guys have that vehicle that educational vehicle, okay? To make this country proud, because this is our country.. let's make our country proud and show our country that we are the future, that we are going to be doctors and lawyers, anything we want to be!

I showed my country I can be a world champion and I am making my country very proud. And I am never forgetting where I come from. I am extremely proud of my roots, extremely proud, you can never ever forget about that, okay? But remember that this country, there are so many opportunities to change our life and use me as an example, please, use me as an example. Because I grew up the same way as you guys grew up, where you grew up, the same exact way. It takes a lot of years, a lot of hard work a lot of people telling you, you are not going to do it but I believed in myself and I made it happen. I put in the hard work I never gave up and I made it happen.

So, class of 2007 make Steve Barr, make your parents, make your community proud. Because I know you can do it. What do they say? Si se puede, si se puede.