

# The Bulletin

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## Three Rivers Middle College graduates ready to say ‘yes’ to life

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NORWICH – Graduate Abigail Ingalls said the best piece of advice she got in her two years at Three Rivers Middle College was from her mother.

“If you don’t have a solid reason to say no, say yes and see where it takes you,” Ingalls said during the 6<sup>th</sup> commencement ceremony held at Three Rivers Community College on Tuesday.

That advice is what brought her into the middle college program two years ago and, like many of her fellow graduates, led her on a pathway she would never have expected.

Three Rivers Middle College is a dual-enrollment program for students in grades 11 and 12, allowing students to follow a personalized educational path and accrue college credits while working toward their high school diploma.

This year, the 30 graduates have earned almost 900 college credits among them. Half of the class completed enough credits for a full year of college and, for the first time, two students earned two years worth of college credits, meaning they didn’t only earn their high school diploma, but also their associate’s degree.

“Class of 2018, congratulations on each of your amazing accomplishments. From the first day as a member of TRMC, your academic and career path was personalized. You created a 10-year plan, researched potential careers and developed a plan to study to reach your goal,” Program Director Brad Columbus said.

Jaeden Spitale said before enrolling in the middle college he was in an environment in which he didn’t feel comfortable and struggled to find success.

“So when the opportunity presented itself, just like all of my fellow classmates, I said one word with the power to change your life. Yes,” he said. “This word has so much power behind it.”

“We’ve had an opportunity to do something great and it all started with the word yes,” Spitale said.

Similarly, Alexi Switz said she can recall the day she decided to attend the middle college.

“I was hesitant at first but agreed to go and look at the school,” she said.

She decided to put in her application.

“I didn’t know at the time but this day was a turning point in my life,” she said.

Switz and Spitale both earned enough credits to attain their Associate in General Studies from Three Rivers Community College. They both participated in Three Rivers’ commencement ceremony last month.

Switz graduated summa cum laude from the community college, and will be attending UConn in the fall to study biomedical engineering on a pre-med track.

Other graduates will be moving on to study at Three Rivers Community College, Mitchell College, Elms College, Hampshire College, Eastern Connecticut State University and University of Rhode Island.

Graduate Joseph Corbett will be attending Charleston Southern University on an ROTC Air Force Scholarship.

“We step off the stage as graduates but this is hardly the end of our journey,” Corbett said to his classmates Tuesday.

“Graduation is merely the closing lines of a chapter and the beginnings of a new one.”