Class of 2023, I am so excited to welcome you into the Trinity Upper School. Looking at all of you now, I can vividly remember when I sat in your seats, awaiting the start of a new year at what was, for me, a new school. Being new to Trinity in ninth grade, I worried about making new friends. I remember sitting in the chapel after the first day of school, filling out an application to audition for the fall musical. I felt a tap on my shoulder and turned around to see a girl, whom I vaguely recognized, smiling at me. She introduced herself and I realized that I remembered sitting across from her during my biology class earlier that day. As a new student in a grade full of unfamiliar faces, her simple “hi” meant a lot to me. From that moment on, we sat next to each other during biology—and we became close friends. After almost three years, she is still one of my best friends.

What I mean to say though this story is that friendliness goes a long way, especially when starting high school with a new class. Say hi to people, as you never know where this simple word may take you. A “hi” may be the start of a strong friendship, or it may just turn an unfamiliar face into one that you can smile at when passing by in the hallway. Either way, challenging yourself to say hi to someone you don’t know will make your big new grade feel a little smaller. Even after the first few months of school, checking in with people you haven't spoken to in a while or initiating conversation with someone you haven't gotten to know much will strengthen the community within your grade. You may even end up with a new best friend.

Class of 2023, I encourage you to say hi to someone new. I hope that you all get to know each other well and I wish you an amazing year.