

*Frederick Caleb Davy, recipient of the 2018 Beat the Odds® scholarship, wrote the following speech to read out loud at the Beat the Odds® celebration in March of this year. Due to COVID-19, we were unable to hear his words in person, but a copy of his powerful speech is provided below. We are pleased to share that Caleb will be attending George Mason University and majoring in English beginning fall of this year.*

“Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. As an aspiring writer, I often use words to describe emotions, but tonight I can’t find the words to describe the emotions I feel right now. However, there’s a multitude of words I can use to describe what I am and one of those words is blessed.

For those of you who don’t know, when my mother was pregnant with me, the doctors told my parents that I would not survive and that my life would be too complicated. They even went as far to advise my mother to terminate the pregnancy. I am happy to say the doctors were only half-right about my situation. My life is indeed complicated in every sense of the word, but they couldn’t have been further from the truth when they said I would not survive.

Truth be told, my survival would not have been possible without the people who supported and cared for me through my struggles. So I’m here tonight not to speak about my success, but about the people who helped me get there. I would first like to thank God himself, because without him I literally would not be standing here today. Because of him I am able to persevere and be an inspiration to others. He is also responsible for bringing the people I am about to mention into my life.

Secondly I would like to give great thanks to my parents. These shining examples of a mother and a father have been with me since the very beginning, and since then have sacrificed everything to get me here and for that I am eternally grateful. I know for a fact that having both parents in one's life is a luxury not everyone can have so I recognize that I am blessed beyond measure based on that fact alone.

Last but certainly not least I would like to thank the two most influential teachers in my high school career. My math teacher and my English teacher have been a huge support for my independence and creativity, Ms. Farrar, my math teacher, has always been an advocate for my independence in school and I thank her for helping me despite my opposition to authority at times. My English teacher, Ms. Rutherford, is my biggest fan when it comes to my creative writing. She was always so enthusiastic to get the next issue of the school magazine because she knew I had the next chapter of one of my stories in there somewhere. She's like the type of mom who would hang up all of their child's work on the wall as opposed to my parents who would either put it on a shelf in my room or in a box in the attic somewhere. So great thanks to Ms. Rutherford for recognizing my creative genius when others tend to overlook it.

Thank you all for your support.”

*Frederick Caleb Davy*

*2020 Beat the Odds Honoree*