

Graduation Goals

June 2016

Someone once said, “The trouble with not having a goal is that you can spend your entire life running up and down the field and never score.”

During the past week, more than 1,000 young people in Whitfield County reached a milestone in their lives by achieving a goal that was set either for them or by them. They earned their high school diploma. For many, it was a matter of reaching a goal set for them by their parents. They always knew they were expected to complete their high school education; there were no other options offered to them.

For others, earning their high school diploma was a very personal goal. Their road to an education was long and often bumpy. Completing high school was something they knew would be the key to a financially successful future. Many may have considered dropping out of school, then thought better of it and kept their eyes on the prize. No matter who set the goal, the important thing is they made it. They graduated from high school.

Now is the time for graduates to set new goals. Will they enter the military, go directly into the workforce, or continue their education at either a technical or a four-year university? Their success in life largely depends on the decisions they make during the next few months and the goals they set for themselves.

After working so hard for at least 12 years to graduate, setting goals may seem unnecessary. The truth is, it has never been more important. Writing down goals and setting dates to meet them provides a roadmap to the future. It is a constant reminder to graduates about what they can accomplish after high school and can help them focus on moving forward. This timeline can provide a guide to stay on track and encourage them to stay on the path they have set for themselves.

Graduates need to remember to set both short-term and long-term goals. If a long-term goal requires years of preparation, it helps to break it into smaller goals that are easier to obtain. This will make it easier to create a definite plan of action and see results almost immediately. Research indicates that breaking a major goal into smaller steps provides motivation to reach the greater goal. These small victories can provide the inspiration to aim for goals that may have seemed impossible before. Some goals seem out of reach until people break them down and tackle them one step at a time.

With that said, it is important to recognize progress on the way to reaching goals. Without goals, people may wander through life without knowing what they really want or if they have accomplished everything they could. Too many people dream about where they want to go, but don't have a map to get there. When taking the time to set goals, graduates can ensure they are working toward getting the most out of their lives.

Recent graduates who only see that commencement is behind them must remember that commencement means a beginning, not the end. High school graduation is just the beginning for these young adults. Each one of them must now determine what comes next. Teachers and administrators have prepared them well, but individuals must set their own goals to take them into the next phase of their lives.

Choose your goals wisely graduates! Choose goals that will provide financial security. Perhaps more importantly, choose goals that make you happy. As you think about your hopes and dreams, remember the choices you make today impact your future tomorrow.