Greetings Idyllwild Community,

Last year, when the class of 2020 returned to campus for their senior year, they had normal teenage aspirations. They looked forward to art exhibits and recitals. They signed up for activities like IdyTalks and the Art In Society Symposium, and they raised funds and awareness for causes in which they believed, such as Autism Awareness and Clowns Without Borders. They anticipated school dances and coffeehouses and seeing their friends perform throughout the year. And, of course, they counted on participating in the extraordinarily beautiful commencement ceremony of Idyllwild Arts Academy. In March, our students left campus much too soon, as the global pandemic forced them to leave their friends, teachers, and culminating art exhibits behind.

This week we will bid farewell to the class of 2020. They will join graduates all over the world who have been forced to celebrate their accomplishments differently than those who graduated before them. While I know this is disappointing for every high school graduate, I think it is particularly disappointing to boarding students who have lived away from their families, sometimes for as long as four years; to the parents who supported their children’s dreams; and to the students who chose to go beyond a traditional high school curriculum in order to immerse themselves in pre-professional training in the arts. However, this class, like those before them, must now turn their attention to the fall and what is next to come.

Idyllwild Arts graduates are not children. They are young adults, equipped to think critically, challenge the status quo, and make a difference in the communities in which they will live and serve. At Idyllwild Arts, we believe that art is the greatest teacher of humanity and that our graduates are now prepared to step forward more attuned, aware, and ready to contribute to humankind.

This class will join alum Elora Hardy, who returned to Bali to create sustainable housing for families; alum Shepard Fairey, whose Hope and We the People artwork spoke for many who have felt voiceless for generations; and they join hundreds of Idyllwild Arts graduates who bring joy and hope through their different art forms in professional companies every day.

The Class of 2020 has left their indelible mark on Idyllwild Arts. As they move into an uncertain world at an uncertain time, we wish them godspeed and look forward to the difference they will make for the good of us all.

Warmly,

Pamela Jordan
President and Head of School