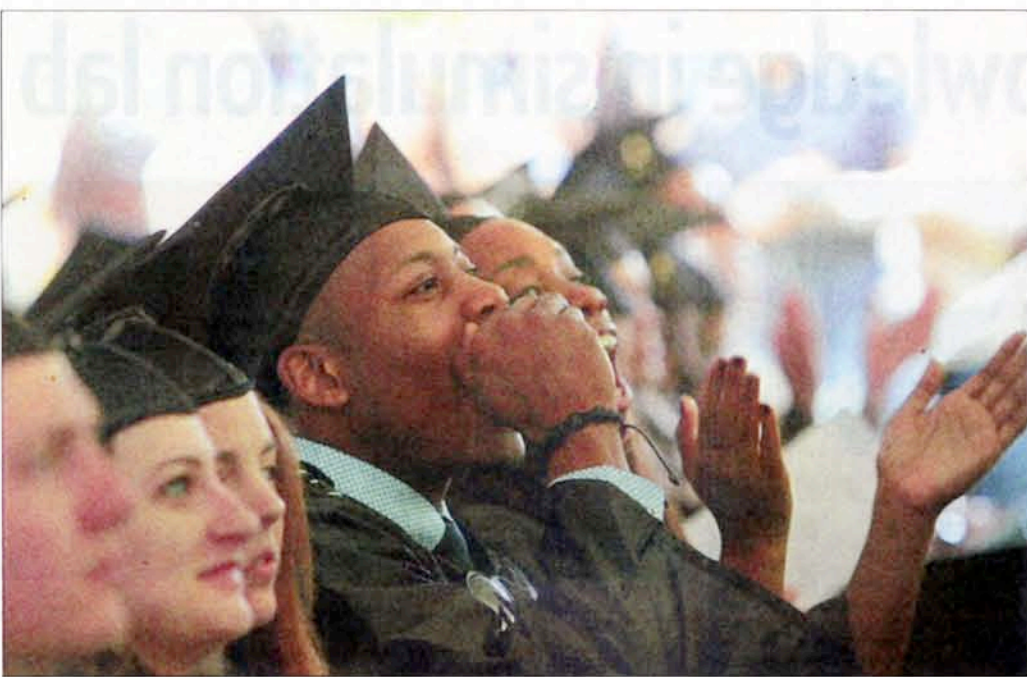
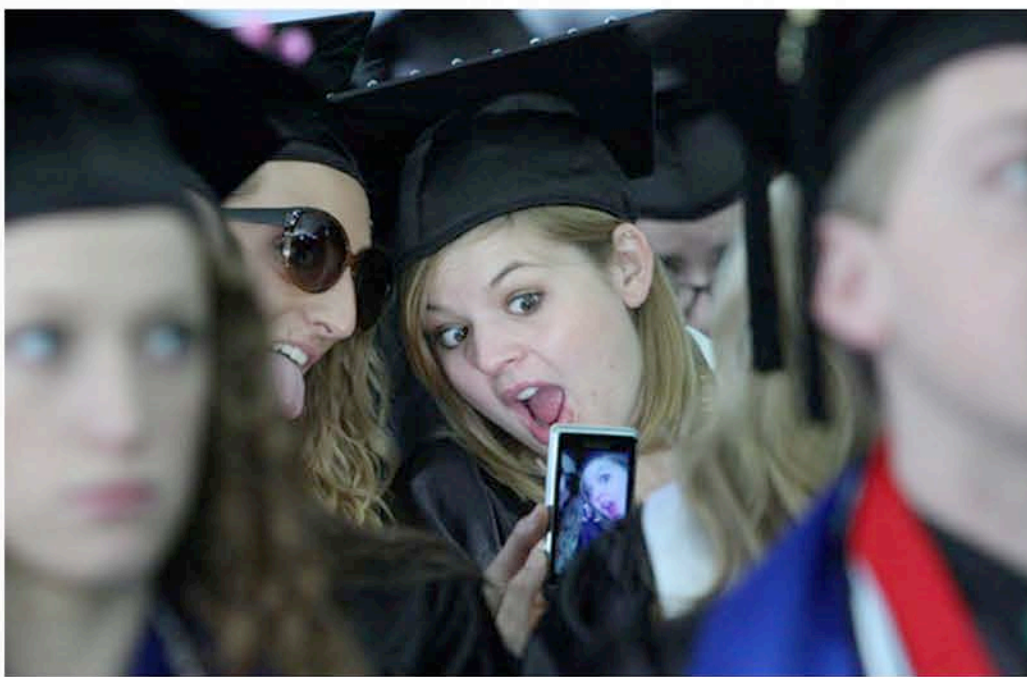


LOCAL NEWS



The graduates cheer for each other as they are called to the podium to accept their degrees.



Excited graduates takes photos of themselves before the start of the ceremony.



Melanie Valencia, at left, and Violeta Capric were the student speakers at the 125th commencement exercise.

# Wagner grads told to mark life's moments

Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel encourages students to never lose sight of their humanity

By FRANK DONNELLY  
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE



"We made it."  
Those three simple words which Melanie Valencia proclaimed to her fellow Wagner College graduates summed up perfectly the crush of emotions many felt yesterday on their graduation day — an amalgam of joy, relief, anxiety, trepidation and accomplishment — as they venture into the next phase of their lives.  
"Your dreams have encompassed the impossible," said Ms. Valencia, an honors graduate who received the college's community service award.

And while the Grymes Hill school's 125th commencement exercise was a day for celebration, Ms. Valencia urged her fellow graduates to not rest on their laurels. Their skills, knowledge and compassion are tools to make a difference in a world that's not kind to all.

"I am proud of you, [but] what will you do with this privilege you have?" she challenged her classmates. "We need people who want to participate, just being a civil neighbor or raising your voice for those who cannot be heard. Too many times I've heard people saying that there's no point in speaking up, but if you do not speak up, nothing will change."

Dr. Richard Guarasci, the school president, said the 664 graduates represent an outstanding mix of students, scholars and athletes.

Many are headed to prestigious graduate schools or internships to pursue their quest for knowledge, he said. Others have jobs lined up; three — Quintin Anderson, Jeremiah Brown and Julian Stanford — have signed with National Football League teams.

"All of you are well-prepared for the next step," he said. "You face a time of great challenges. We have confidence that your learning and compassion for others will thaw the chill of these global challenges."

Those challenges confront each of us every day, said commencement speaker Elie Wiesel, a Nobel Peace Prize-winner.

Wiesel, a Nazi concentration camp survivor and acclaimed author and humanitarian, reminded graduates that the world isn't rife of racism, hatred and suffering. Children still die every minute from hunger and oppres-

**GUARASCI:** The 664 graduates represent an outstanding mix of students, scholars and athletes

sion, he said.  
"Can we stop that?" he asked. "How is it possible that today there are still wars? Don't we know that wars always lead to slaughter?"

Wiesel implored students to never lose sight of their humanity and empathy for others and to keep striving to right the world's wrongs.

"Remember that despair is never the solution. Remember, hatred is never an option," he said. "Remember that hope is not a gift given to us, hope is a gift that we give to others."

Each hour, each second, counts, he said.

"Life is not made in years, but in moments," Wiesel said.

Westerleigh resident William Rivera was moved by Wiesel's words.

"I thought it was awesome. He was simple, yet effective," said the 21-year-old microbiology major, who's set his sights on dental school. "His speech had a really good impact."

"He was great," said Robert Cornell, 28, of upstate Hamilton, who earned his master's degree in education.

Graduate speaker Violeta Capric reminded students that learning is a lifelong pursuit.

"Have the same passion for knowledge that you had when you first walked into Wagner," she told them. "We were all meant to succeed, and we were all meant to be great."

Some students' pursuits will take them across the city. Others will venture across the state or country.

Chris Martin is headed overseas. The 23-year-old New Jersey native and guard on Wagner's 25-6 men's basketball team plans to continue his hoops career abroad.

He hasn't latched onto a team yet, but yesterday wasn't a day to fret.

The sky was sun-swept and blue, the breeze was soft, and new horizons beckoned. "I feel wonderful," said Martin.



STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE PHOTOS/IAN SOMMA-HAMMEL

Commencement speaker, Nobel Peace Prize-winner Elie Wiesel, tells the graduates to "keep striving to right the world's wrongs."

# The 2012 Wagner College graduates

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Eileen Archer of Westerleigh waves to family and friends in the audience after receiving her diploma.

Krista Lynn Carbonara, Philip J. Carnavas, Adriana B. Castillo, Lirie Cekalniku, Diana Chacko, Amanda Chartier, Deeksha Chawla, Yan Yi Chen, Svetlana Alexei Chirokikh, Charles M. Cino, Steven N. Ciocci, Maria Civille, Carolyn Clark, Erin Elizabeth Clark, Kelly A. Clark, Kayla Elizabeth Colin, Erin Collier-Hartman, Matthew Connelly, Lauren Tiffany Corbett, Biagio Franco Costanza, Shane P. Courtney, James John Cuzzupe, Leyla A. Dabbali, Emily R. Darveau, Tiffany K. Dawson, Jeffrey R. Deerr, Lauren DeFilippis, Alexandra Joan deLeon, Atthe Demhasaj, Leonid Denisenko, Matthew J. DeZarzo, Dafina Dika, John DiLeo, Sabrina Marie DiLeo, Lawrence Robert Dillon III, Michael Di-omede, Lauren Marie DiSchiaivi, Robin Dolan, Alessandra D'Onofrio, Terence Downing, Melanie Droz, Lainey Taylor Dubinsky, Alexander Dubrovsky, Alma Duka, Lisa Duncan, Griffin Dunne, Elsie Ekpo, Justin N. Engelbert, Kyle Estelle, Francyna Ewins, Lauren C. Falco, Carmen J. Falco III, Alyssa Fassolino, Victoria Anne Felix, Richard Fenimore, Chrystina Ferington, Kathryn Fernandez, Karen Findley-Chukwuocha, Daniel Fitzpatrick, Tara R. Flanagan, Halimattu Foday-Kakpa, Chelsea Fodero, Kaitlyn Joan Freire, Richard Funaro, Melanie Garces, Laura Garofalo, Patricia A. Gavin, Victoria Ashley Geressy, Salvatore A. Gigante, Gina Marie Giglia, Leonard Giordano Jr., Lauren Goldstein-Narvaez, Christine Marie Gomez, Mark Gonsalves, Lauren Goodhue, Dian Patricia Grandison, Christopher J. Grossmann, Jakkii Tia Guenther, Jivko Gueorguiev, Erica Guidici-pietro, Joseph R. Guinta, Alina Guseynova, Kristen Haggerty, Mackenzie Halpin, Chloé Jeannette Hansen, Ashraf Hasham, Elizabeth Rae Hawley, William J. Hedges, Jennifer Lynne Herbach, Marcela Hernandez, Lana R. Herzog, Thomas Higgins, Anja J. Hombberger, Hayden Christopher Hunter, Michael Hurley, Rosanna E. Iamiro, Thomas E. Iannaccone, Michael Imburgia, Brownson Okey Ironi, Nicholas P. James, Kim Javin, Julie Jebran, Lueson Johnson, Cynthia Lee Jones, Jasmine Jusufi, Alexander Paul Kazanek, Caitlyn E. Kempf, Bora Kim, Jonathan J. Kim, Anna Marley Kivela, Ashley Adrena Korbey, Ethan Warren Kraft, Joseph Kritzer, Andrea Lamella, Michelle Nicole Lesperance, Robert J. Liberto, Nicholas J. Linehan, Kaitlyn Tara Llewellyn, Lauren Rae Loesch, Michelle Marie LoFaso, Mark Edward Lopes, Lisette Susie Lorenzi, Maximilian Lucchi, Kathrine Glenn MacPherson, Colleen Madden, Jessica Magnicari, Megan Mahoney, Gina A. Manfredi, Terry Marette, Megan Marin, William Frances Marsh, Teuta Marsic, Allen Maryasis, Marilyn Blaire Massaroni, Victoria Lee Mauro, Sasha May, Kate McAvoy, Denieda McCulloch, Micaela Adams McDonald, Nicole Michele McErean, Caitlin Marie McEgan, Jennifer R. McGourty, Maleeha A. Memon, Lauren Meyer, Tyrrik LaMarr Miller, Dina Jolene Miller, Morgan Frazier Mizell, Catherine Montello, Christina Marie Moore, Richard C. Morgan, Rachel Moser, Dylan Henry Moutton, Engiel Muca, Emily Jean

Mulholland, Julia E. Mullins, Tyler Miles Murray, Kohel Steven Nakajima, Marielle Rose Nasta, Ashley A. Nati, Esta Neyman, Erin E. Nihill, Naile Nikovic, Frank Nonnenmacher, Shannon E. O'Neill, Anthony M. Parenti, John Passantino, Zaneta Paulousa, Andrew J. Peana, Brent A. Peltz, Diana G. Perez, Lauren Petrik, Lauren Pet-tinatato, Kelsey Ann Elizabeth Pierce, Elina Pinskier, Princess P. Poku, Ashley Poliz-zotto, John Daniel Prato, Martha Louise Price, Jessica Karen Ramirez, Kristen Grace Reilly, Nancy Ricciardi, Christopher L. Riccio, Kathleen Richards, Kyle Richardson, William A. Rivera, Christine Nicole Rizzolo, Molly Robinson, Peter Rubin, John Rushton, Stephanie L. Ryan, Christopher Sabol, Jessica Lynn Salvaggio, Brianna Paige Samson, Miguel Santiago, Troy D. Savino, Cara Gayle Scarnati, Jennifer Schneck, Lisa Nicole Schneider, Donald Ryan Schroteboer, Michael Schultz, Michael M. Schwartz, Erika Semidey, Mary Sophia Anastasia Sergiadis, Janine Serio, Mary Shannon, Edgar Sheppard, Zoe Sier-gel, Melissa Skop-Bualuay, Zachary D. Spector, Melissa Rose Speranza, Alyssa Sperrazza, Alyssa Gabrielle Spivak, Raven A. Sprewell, Zachary Standish, Julian J. Stanford, Senada Steinman, Elena Stekol-chik, Iliana Suarez, Nicholas M. Suppes, David L. Szilezy, Blerta Tagani, Dorothy May Taylor, Joshua Israel Thompson, Brit-ney Thorpe, Nicole Marie Todisco, Arvee Kristle Torno, Alexandra Torres, Vincent Tortorella, Jaclyn M. Toscano, Lisa Toth, Rachel Tripp, Priyanka J. Trivedi, Elissa Troisi, Monika Tyminski, Anna Ulyanova, Anna Wagner, Melanie D. Valencia, Michelle Van Schyndel, Ryan J. Van Spron-sen, Seida Velija, Richard F. Vellucci, Mil-ton Felix Vera, Kelly Ann Villar, Atixhe Vlashi, Kate Wagner, Briana Weiner, Kathryn Ann Welch, Karen L. Wilson, Arielle Courtney Wine, Lon R. Woods, Car-oline Krestine Young, Rachel Zampelli, Victoria Marie Zawisny, Arianna Zizza.

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For additional photos from the graduation, go to [silive.com/photos](http://silive.com/photos).

Marin, Casey C. Martin, Thomas Patrick McCafferty Jr., Kevin J. McDonnell, Jenni-fer S. Merezio, Allison L. Micheletti, Joseph C. Modafferi, Pasquale G. Morea, Kyle Muir, Kiely J. Nagle, Robert Perretta, Omar Reyes, Kevin J. Rush, Johanna Sam-bucini, Anthony Scacco, Nicholas Siragusa, Victoria Smith, Lloyd J. Sykes, Roder-ick A. Thomas Jr., Ervin Torko, Sean M. Travis, Danielle Nicole Wagoner.

## MASTER OF SCIENCE

Minos Abraham, Frank Akiva, Caterina Amato, Kathleen Anderson, Erica Bar-toloni, ReneeBasile, Deepthi Borugadda, Lea Brenner, Margaret M. Canjura, Jessica Ann Cerulli, Kristy Cognetta, Benedetta De-ucande, Steven P. Composto, Vincent De-ucanda, Christina DeMartino, Alexandra De-Meglio, Justin DeNardo, Maria A. DeSan-tis, Michael DiTommaso, Brian Don-ald, Terence B. Downing, Kirsten Elfefera-kis, Diana Fernandez, Debra Anne Fibikar, Ryan A. Fitzpatrick, Dianna L. Florida, Lana Flotteron, Rosemarie Fusco-Amato-re, Adam Ganzman, Zhanna Gelman, Amanda Gidlog, Bedrije Goga, Michael Gutkin, Victoria E. Hall, Doris Hansen, Carole Harte, Benedette E. Ibenegbu, Donna Ildige, Tatyana Ilyev, Amanda B. Jenkins, Clara Kalika, Kimberlea Karper, Dmitriy Katev, Kristin Ann Ketter, Michael Zakaria Kolta, Matthew Koss, Marina Ku-perman-Pokras, Magda Labib, Valerie Le-Cureux, Nicholas Lepore, Julia Livshits, Sameh Louka, Linda Luciano, George Medbat Naguib Luka, Natalia Maidenco, Laura A. Mancusi, Michelle Mazzei, Robyn D. McLaughlin, Eileen Mary McPartlan, Giovanna Miller, Kevin Murphy, Christina Napoli, Jeremy Naylor, Philip Nelson, Kenna Nkemakolam, Jennifer Joan Pallister, Dana Paternoster, Caprice Yo-landa Peele, Anna T. Pullaro, Joanna M. Reccio, Jennifer Reinhardt, Alexandra Ricci-ardi, Michelle McFee Romano, Cella Rossi, Maryanne Russo, Tricia Sanabria, Jason R. Scaglioli, Patricia Schierenbeck, Arlan Sela, Margery Ann Shane, Almira Shats, Michael Stanton, Sandra Stewart, Kristine Szczepanski, Sabina E. Szetela, Mallory Zaaffe, Kelly Ann Taranto, Shannon Taugher, Noreen Patricia Taylor, Francis A. Tiripicchio Jr., Ernest Tomczyk, Jennifer A. Trumutola, Renata Tuchowska, Jebin Mary Varghese, Michelle Vega, Andrew Warner, Laura Marie Zuffante.

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## POST-MASTER'S CERTIFICATE

Diana Elizabeth Coseglia-Danna, Kath-leen Francis.