

A real congrats for graduates, good Samaritan

Sir Edward Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance" has been played at graduation ceremonies for about as long as anyone can remember.

They just play it over and over and over until everyone marches in.

I went to a graduation last weekend that may not have had a lot of pomp, but the circumstance was really good.

It was the graduation for Challenged Child and Friends, the wonderful preschool that has helped so many children who face incredible obstacles in life because of physical or developmental challenges with which they were born.

The children are in the program until they turn 6. Then, they go to public schools.

Last Sunday, they held their commencement at Grace Episcopal Church. Each child, dressed in a purple cap and gown, got their own moment as they individually made their way down the center aisle of the church.

Some walked, some marched, some were pushed in wheelchairs and some were carried in the arms of a teacher. There were children who were transfixed by the high cathedral ceiling; others were into the various patterns on the carpet. One lad waved at someone on every aisle and stopped in his tracks and struck a pose if he spotted a camera.

This was their moment. Thanks to the marvels of electronic recording, they got a fresh rendition of "Pomp and Circumstance" every time a student was introduced. I don't know how many of them really understood the whole idea of graduation, but there was row after row of proud family members who took it all in.

I know that some of them have challenges that make the likelihood of living until high school graduation very unlikely. This may be the only graduation they ever have.

I walked away with a sense of gratitude to their teachers and admiration for the parents. It's not the storybook version of parenthood that they hoped for, but there was a lot of love for some beautiful children in that beautiful place.