



## COLLEGE CAPTAIN 2023 Rahel Abraham, Opening Speech



Good morning, Sr Mary, Mr Di Camillo, Ms Neil, Staff, Students and special guests.

A very warm welcome especially to our year sevens who have made it through their first few days. We are thrilled to have you here as part of our community and can't wait for what the future holds at Academy for each of you. Your first ever assembly and first week of high school and I am sure you are having different feelings and that is totally okay! We are all here to support you while you get settled in.

I hope everyone has had a very relaxing and enjoyable break and is feeling ready for the year ahead. I know that this year might be daunting for a lot of us, but I am certain that we will all conquer 2023.

I am so excited to be sharing this year alongside my College Vice Captain, Krissy. There are many goals and visions we share for this school that we can't wait to fulfil. I know the whole student leadership team has many great ideas for this school year and am excited to see them all shine.

As we shared last year, our College theme is "Many voices, One Community" this theme inspires all of us to be united. We can't wait to work alongside you, connect our amazing community with different activities and help you all find, have, and share your voice.

So, just like our theme, we are many different, diverse voices. This brings to mind a story about a student from this school whose voice was not heard. A girl in our school library was sitting alone, I'd often seen her sit alone before, and I saw a group of girls who were making fun of her. The look I saw on her face is a type of pain you can't understand unless you've experienced it. A type of helplessness and emptiness, a stronger pain than a hammer hitting your hand. Then one of the girls walked up to her with a big smile and talked to her. She stood up for her. The other girls stopped gossiping when they saw her.

What we normally take from these types of stories is the Good Samaritan. Although they are great and all, if I am being honest there are countless times I regret when I stayed quiet while others suffered. The more relatable person is the person who is not seen or heard, many of us face this kind of burden of pain, in secret. So, I challenge you all including myself to take the spotlight off ourselves and put it onto those who have none. Not for a week, a month or even a year but for your entire life. Because one kind word is like a Band-Aid over a wound only useful once, but hundreds of chain cycles of kind actions are the deep root healing of this entire world.

So, with that, I hope this year we don't just focus on ourselves and our own lives, but that we take responsibility for those around us. The year of supporting our peers. The year of being many voices, yet one community. Thank you all for listening and I can't wait to hear Justice Captain, Akos, with her amazing energetic speech. Thank you