

Welcome to the Roseville Secondary Class of '89

Good evening and welcome to all you wonderful friends! We made it here ... this in itself is a fantastic achievement! I'm so glad I can hold my speech in front of me instead of memorizing it for Mr K P Reddy! That would have been painful indeed

Since first contact on the WhatsApp group, it has taken us 7 and a half months to get to the Big Bash. We could not have done it without the support and encouragement of each of you sitting in this room.

Everyone here will surely remember this night for the rest of their lives. Your presence makes this reunion a success; especially given the extraordinary time we find ourselves in globally. For those who have decided not to attend, we hope to have them at our next gathering. I'm sure the news and pics from tonight will be added motivation not to miss the next bash.

It's been 30 years dear friends ... 30 years since we all left the gates at Roseville Secondary for the last time, for parts and futures unknown; hope shimmering in our eyes and pulses racing in expectation of what the world had to offer. In our all-important formative, teenage years, Roseville was a source of role models, solid educational frameworks, philosophies of life ... our roots can never be forgotten. Many branches have sprung from the trees that took root, all our stories are testimonies to amazing growth and resilience. Now that we've found each other again after 30 years, my hope is that we will always remain connected ... such special bonds of friendship are priceless.

I especially want to thank everyone who made this event a reality. The sponsors and everyone who shared their time, money, effort and talents in making this gathering a possibility.

Throughout the process of getting to this night, there's been a total Rockstar in our midst. He's been utterly committed to the cause of this reunion and fostering friendships for the long term. So much so, I thought he might have a heart attack when the party seemed doomed to cancellation! Where do I start he's registered a Class of'89 website, populated it magnificently, got his company Lantech and MTN to sponsor our amazing banner, assisted with various admin and finance matters, became certified as a preparedness and response manager for the COVID-19 pandemic, our esteemed MC, all round the most generous and willing contributor, our very own Nilesh! ! Listen carefully, this will be the first and last time you hear me say ... Singh is King (round of applause).

To the Reunion Planning Committee ... I couldn't have asked for a better team to work with in this endeavor. As chairperson, I honestly didn't really do much, the team made everything fall into place seamlessly, and in many instances, investing their own personal resources.

My right-hand woman, head of event affairs and energizer bunny, Saloshnie So much of the admin and alumni communications would not have been as effective without her diehard efforts. Due to family considerations, she can't be with us this evening. I'm certain that missing the reunion was a heartbreaking decision for her, but one that she had to make. Thank you dear Salosh, you have been a star in the truest sense.

Our deep gratitude also goes to:

Shaun ... for arranging to have the banner made and organizing all matters with the DJ

Devan ... for putting together and facilitating a slide presentation on our alma mater

Nasa ... for being our treasurer and handling the money matters

Barry ... for finding us a photographer at short notice and I'm sure countless other behind the scenes efforts that I knew nothing about

Eric M ... for assisting with profile appeals and processing ... and for the surprise performance coming up later

Lucy ... for putting together the ice-breaker and being our PR consultant

Selvi ... for being our Roseville liaison and gathering much needed stats

To each of you, your attendance this evening speaks volumes about your appreciation of friendship thank you for making the circle bigger.

May we stay sane, at peace and trust the bigger picture of what is playing out on the macro and micro levels. May we learn to love, give, share, and connect more with one another during this time of change. I'd like to end with a poem called True Friend by Beau Taplin, an Instagram account that I follow ...

Let this now be a time, To give thanks to those true friends in your life, Those who applaud your successes and soften your falls, Those who join you in joy through the highs and tears through the downs, Those who point out the way when you lose sight of your path, Those who accept you without judgement and help you know your own light; Those true friends who, above all else, inspire you to be a kinder friend to yourself.

I think I've said quite enough ... have a fabulous night dear friends ... eat, drink and be merry!!

Thea Gounden