

Gade Belle Moun Ki Nan Sal La Asweya!

Pou Yon Belle Cohze!

Good evening everyone,

It is truly an honor to be here with you today not just as a keynote speaker, but as a proud Canadian-Haitian, a woman of action, and someone deeply committed to the power of education and the role each of us plays in this journey.

I'm a proud daughter of two Haitian natives. Though I was not born in Haiti, Haiti was born in me. Memsì Kreyòl moin pa fo- I carry its rhythm, its strength, its brilliance in every step I take. It is my deepest honor to serve, speak, and stand in this space today.

I want to first thank the wonderful organization- F.A.R.A. for their partnership with The Scholarship Plug to honor the students here today! Congratulations and thank you.

Tonight, I want to talk about education—but not just the kind we find in books or classrooms. I want to talk about education as liberation, as identity, and as community responsibility.

And I want to talk about the “misfit.”

We've all seen them. Some of us were them. The students who don't fit the mold. The ones who are told they're too much or not enough too loud, too quiet, too different. They're often overlooked, underestimated, misunderstood.

But let me be clear: a misfit is not a mistake. A misfit is often a message. A reminder that our systems must grow wider. That our communities must become more inclusive. That we, too, must evolve.

Because the world today isn't the world we grew up in.

We're living in a time of instant information, social media influence, shifting norms, and constant noise. Students aren't just learning academics, they're

learning how to survive in a digital world that often feels chaotic, overwhelming, and isolating.

That's where we come in.

We can't guide today's youth with yesterday's tools. We must meet them where they are, with empathy, flexibility, and presence. Because although the methods have changed, the mission remains: to help them see what's possible.

Now, those who know me know I'm always moving. I'm a woman of action, always building, planning, showing up. Sometimes that energy is seen as a strength. Other times, it's misunderstood as "too much." But I've learned this: movement is ministry when your mission is clear.

Being "too much" has allowed me to make room for others who feel like they're not enough. That's why I keep going for them.

And let me tell you about something I call the "Gmail Effect." You know what I mean your inbox is overflowing with spam, updates, and random notifications. Eventually, you stop looking altogether, even when something important might be in there.

That's what our students feel like. They're flooded with pressure, distractions, and expectations and often, they miss what matters most: direction. Purpose. Belief in themselves.

Our job is to help them filter through the noise.

So tonight, I leave you with this:

We were not called to watch we were called to work. Not just for ourselves, but for every young person who feels invisible in a world too loud to notice.

Let's build bridges, not barriers. Let's lead with compassion, not comparison. Let's help students rewrite what's possible especially those who feel like misfits in a system that wasn't designed with them in mind.

Education is not just a degree, it's a declaration. A declaration that every student matters. That our legacy as Haitian professionals includes lifting others as we climb.

And I challenge you to take action. Not tomorrow. Tonight.

Three simple steps you can take:

1. Adopt a Student

Be the mentor you once needed. Identify one student and walk with them. One conversation can change a life.

2. Share Your Story

Be real. Be vulnerable. Let students see that success isn't perfect, it's persistent. Your truth could be someone's breakthrough.

3. Invest Where It Matters

Whether it's your time, talent, or treasure, give. Pour into programs, scholarships, and organizations that are doing the work. Someone's future depends on it.

Together, we can clear the noise, raise the misfits, and build a generation that's not only educated but empowered.

I'm Shedly Casseus Parnther proud Canadian-Haitian, daughter of two Haitian natives, daughter in love to Icylin Parnther, proud wife to Brad Parnther, and mother to Demitre, Myah, and Nate Parnther. I am a woman who will never stop showing up for our students, for our legacy, and for the future of Haiti.

Thank you.

Mrs. Shedly Casseus Parnther, MBA.