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Hearts and Minds

Friday, May 14, 2004

TV's all-time favorite Mom, Phylicia Rashad of "The Cosby Show" fame, gave a brief, yet timeless speech at Syracuse University's graduation ceremonies Sunday that fit both Mother's Day and graduation day for all.

Live with a mother's heart, she told the 3,500-plus graduates of Syracuse University and the State University College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

That means being brave, resourceful, flexible, keenly intelligent and living to see the human family through. It means encouraging each family member by embracing their diversity and their individual personality. And it means embracing the family as a whole with love and respect.

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Congratulations to all the graduates from Central New York colleges and universities. Take pride in your accomplishments. And take stock of your responsibility to create the world you want to live in, as Rashad, who starred in the diverse and groundbreaking "Cosby Show," so aptly told her audience.

But also take some heart in the fact that the prospects of finding a job in your career path are better than you may think, according to a survey of managers. Central New York is a good place to start.

Managers surveyed by various groups this year say they expect to hire more new college grads than in 2003. About 71 percent of hiring managers surveyed in February said they will hire new graduates, up from 65 percent last year.

It's hopeful news in a job market that yielded some of its worst times in 2002 and 2003. Twelve area colleges in all are graduating fresh minds into that market, including, SU and ESF; State University Colleges at Oswego and Cortland and Onondaga Community College on Saturday; Ithaca College, Le



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Moyne College, SU's College of Law Upstate Medical University and Colgate, all on Sunday; Cazenovia College and Morrisville State College on May 22; Cayuga Community College and Cornell University on May 29; and Wells College on May 30.

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It's clear these graduates have placed themselves in a fine position to be tomorrow's leaders. SU Chancellor Kenneth Shaw reminded them to give back. "I strongly encourage you to find ways to serve others," he said.

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As Rashad said, there's hardly a better way to do so than to embrace the world with a mother's heart.

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