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Rise to Bloom speech destined for the USJ community, ghostwritten to Nadine Labaki.

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It is only in solidarity that we are able to succeed. For no one has ever been able to reform an outdated system on their own. But it is also in personal and individual effort that change takes place, for every rock put in place contributes to the construction of a fort. And this fort represents us: USJ students, USJ community, and the Lebanese community as a whole. We are all one and the same, and we have to put our hands together to build what will be a new, reinvented society. One that is able to withstand any difficulty it faces, any obstacle put in its way, and any setback it may endure. In the end, we are only human, and as humans, we feel; we feel deeply, and intensely. And it is because, and not despite of, this ability to feel and understand one another and ourselves, that we are able to advance. To create. And to bloom.

Blooming takes time, and effort, and persistence. A caterpillar, before transforming into a butterfly able to rise and fly over its cocoon, probably thinks it's dead. But this perceived death is nothing but the beginning of an extraordinary path towards greatness, towards a new and improved future. This future is the one that awaits us, USJ community and Lebanese citizens. This future is the one that we will thrive in, and rise over every attempt at diminishing our huge impact on the people and the country that rise, time and time again, like the legendary phoenix. The emotional death that we suffered, after the disaster that overtook our beautiful capital, will only serve to give birth to us again. We were born again, as more aware, more conscious individuals. We were born again as Lebanese citizens that will not accept the injustice that had to take away some of our loved ones, and the places that we used to frequent, and the port that puts us in contact with the rest of the world.

The heart of the Mediterranean Sea that lays under and beyond the port is still beating, and the waves are still crashing against the shore, reminding us that we are not dead. Our hearts are still beating and our love for life and ambitions are still our motors, driving us to the peaks of success. We are very much alive. And we will live, more and more every day, no matter what. That is why we should all stick together and decide, once and for all, that we will not stand to see anything like this happen again. We will choose better. Do better. And be better. We will propagate our spirit and values into the world, and we will inspire as well as be inspired, to finally paint the picture of the students, the community, and the country that we represent. A picture of the fire of love, passion and determination, that will never cease to burn.