

# RITE NOW @ ROP



Rite of Passage emphasizes the importance of academic excellence, recognizing the doors that a high school diploma can open for the youth in our programs. Recently, four young men were honored for their commitment to their education in the first ever Hillcrest Academy High School Graduation Ceremony.

Student Athletes Hodge, Hodges, Pena and Williams worked hard to earn their diplomas, overcoming credit deficiencies with independent study and online credit recovery in addition to their full academic schedule during the school day. Two of the students extended their placement in order to complete their high school coursework at Hillcrest. All of the students felt accomplished and shocked that they had reached this milestone. Student Athlete Hodges stated the he had no intention of graduating if he had returned to his home community. "It was never a real possibility for me," he said, and is now considering going to college.

To prepare for Graduation, the young men took the ACT, toured Miami University, University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati State College. They also had senior portraits taken, and were gifted personalized Class of 2017 t-shirts and pens.

All Hillcrest Academy students, faculty and staff attended the ceremony along with many important community stakeholders including Guest Speaker and University of Cincinnati Board Member, Devoe Sherman. Most importantly, all of the students had their families in attendance, even those that had to travel more than four hours to attend the event.

Hillcrest Academy is dedicated to re-engaging students in the educational process and providing credit recovery opportunities. The 2016-2017 school year has marked an important milestone for Hillcrest Academy, which has issued not just its first diploma, but a total of six. This is a milestone we hope to continue to grow.