

Check Against Delivery

**Key to Culture Gala
March 17, 2012, Edmonton Alberta
Honourable Dave Hancock**

Thank you to the CRC for hosting tonight's gala.

It is an honour for me to represent the Premier and the Government of Alberta at this gala.

Our Premier stands for equal opportunity for all Albertans in a province where there is NO room for racism and discrimination.

The theme on the program guide says: ELIMINATE RACISM – YOU ARE THE KEY.

YOU, refers to each one of us – it includes our businesses, our schools, our sports, our communities and all ALBERTANS.

True change and acceptance starts within each one of us.

Tonight's gala celebrates people and organizations that have made a difference.

Congratulations to the award winners.

Change does not happen overnight, and today's winners set an example.

Their work in building trust, building relations between people of diverse backgrounds is what our province is all about.

When I look around the room tonight, I see many familiar faces working hard to educate and create awareness.

Government stands side-by-side with you in creating awareness of the issues of racism – understanding them, and helping to find solutions.

Our unemployment figures show that there are many groups of people who are being left out – they include young people, aboriginal people, those with disabilities and new Canadians.

Working with our many partners including employers, educational institutions, businesses, social agencies and professional regulatory organizations we ensure that learning and employment options are available to all Albertans.

We work closely with CRC to provide diversity training to employers to help bridge the cultural gap between employers and newcomers.

The training uses questions and practical examples to help employers understand the concepts of diversity and inclusion and how to apply these concepts to the workplace and organization.

Working closely with many immigrant settlement agencies we help new Albertans settle into their new homes.

Living in Alberta means many different things to different people.

Most newcomers I talk to say that their first priority is their family.

This means having a good job so they can provide a home, food and a good education for their children.

For others it is living in a safe and secure province.

But above all – it is a sense of inclusion and belonging.

Alberta is a multi-cultural province - we celebrate our unique cultures and traditions.

Our strength lies in welcoming new people and learning to live with and celebrate together.

The work of promoting our province and its diverse people never ends.

I would like to thank the CRC for leading the month-long campaign to educate and inspire Alberta's communities to work towards eliminating racism and promoting equity across all aspects of our society.

Thank you for hosting tonight's gala.

I hope we can continue to build an Alberta where people are respected for who they are and their skills and their abilities, rather than being judged by their background, their age or the colour of their skin.

I look forward to the rest of the evening and thank you again to the team organizing this amazing event.

Thank you.