

Speaking Notes

Renfrew Educational Services 40th Anniversary Charity Gala

Hyatt Regency Hotel

Calgary, Alberta

March 14, 2014

7:30 p.m.

Honourable Manmeet S. Bhullar

Human Services

Check against delivery

Introduction

- Thank you for the kind introduction.
- On behalf of the Government of Alberta, it is my pleasure to congratulate Renfrew Educational Services on 40 years of service to children and families in the Calgary area.
- It is truly an honour to join you in celebrating this monumental achievement.
- When a group in the community of Renfrew founded a kindergarten program in 1974, they envisioned a safe, nurturing place where children with special needs could learn, make friends and have the same opportunities for an education as other children.
- I am sure they are pleased with how this small program has continued to grow and develop over the past 40 years.
- Three months ago, Premier Redford asked me to take on the important role of Minister of Human Services.
- I did not make my decision lightly, as I understand the significance of this position.

- Employment and training, homeless supports, family violence prevention, early intervention and community support, and disability services all have a significant impact on all Albertans.
- But at the centre of all of these programs are the children and families we work to support.
- How we help our most vulnerable citizens, determines how strong our communities are.
- Renfrew Education Services is an organization that has helped thousands of children to become stronger.
- In providing a wide range of early learning and specialized programs and services for children, you are helping them to learn new skills, develop positive relationships, build confidence in themselves, and become engaged and active students.
- Thank you to the team of staff, board members and volunteers who are dedicated to achieving Renfrew Educational Services' vision of creating exceptional learning experiences that open a world of possibilities for children and helps them and their families to reach their potential.

- As you celebrate tonight, we know that the generous support of Renfrew's donors and sponsors also makes this vision possible.
- Your kindness and commitment go a long way toward making children's dreams come true – thank you for your support.
- Our common goal in helping to ensure safe and healthy children and families in Alberta is one of the things that has brought us here tonight.
- We all have a role in creating hope and opportunity for children and families in our communities.
- Whether it be helping at a school, advocating for people in need, or supporting a fundraiser such as this one, we can work to create better lives for our friends, families and neighbours.
- Renfrew Educational Services is a key partner for my ministry in improving outcomes for children and families in the Calgary area.

- The programs we work together to provide include integrated services for children with motor disabilities, specialized autism services, and also the Family Advocacy Support Project.
- We know these programs make a tremendous difference in the lives of children and families and I am very proud of this collaboration.

Conclusion

- I want you to think about how much the world has changed over the last 40 years.
- Think about how our society has changed from exclusion to inclusion and how people with disabilities are essential, contributing members of our communities.
- I've been watching the Paralympics in Sochi, and am in awe of the achievements of these amazing athletes.
- Our Canadian Paralympic team has encouraged our country to see these exceptional individuals with the lens of "It's not what's missing, it's what's there."

- The lives of thousands of children and families would be very different if it were not for the courage and commitment of families and community members who believe that every child deserves a great education, and who focus on the strengths of these kids.
- They focus on what's there.
- As an organization with a strong history, there is so very much for you to be proud of.
- I truly believe that each and every day, the achievements of the children and families you work with lead to Renfrew becoming even stronger.
- Congratulations once again.
- My best wishes to you all for a wonderful event and continued success.
- Thank you.