

## Check Against Delivery

### **Calgary and Area Child and Family Services Youth in Care Graduation June 6, 2014, Calgary Honourable Manmeet S. Bhullar, Minister, Human Services**

Thank you Mark for that kind introduction and good afternoon everyone.

Today marks the beginning of a new chapter in your life – one that is filled with great promise.

I am honoured and excited to be here to share this celebration with all of you.

Graduation is probably one of the most important milestones in our lives.

This special occasion is a result of years of hard work, determination and success.

It is your day to reflect on how far you've come.

And to think of all the steps you have taken to this point.

You should all be proud of what you have achieved.

This is a special group of young people here. You all have overcome some huge barriers and challenges in your lives to get to this point.

The road getting here hasn't been easy.

There may have been times when the challenges seemed too large to overcome or the frustrations too big to manage.

But you have found a way. You have shown strength in the face of adversity; you have proven that you want to be a success story.

And above all, you have stayed true to your goals.

All that hard work has paid off.

But this isn't the end.

Today, you stand on the threshold of your future – a future full of infinite possibilities.

Your journey doesn't stop here. It's really just the beginning.

Alberta is an amazing place to earn a living and build a life – you have grown up, gone to school, and graduated in a province where anything is possible.

I hope this inspires you all in knowing that you can make a difference – for yourselves, your community, your province and your world.

You all have a role to play in not only your future, but our future as well.

None of us succeed without the insight, knowledge and help of others along the way.

Today's ceremony is also about saying a big thank you to the many people who helped you get here, who took an interest and helped guide and support you.

Your caseworkers, foster parents, family members, mentors, friends and teachers.

I must applaud you all for your invaluable support to the grads.

Your commitment and desire to see these young people succeed are admirable.

For years to come, these grads will remember your guiding hands, your words of wisdom, and your unfailing strength.

Thank you to all of you.

I would also like to thank the staff of Calgary and Area Child and Family Services for hosting this special luncheon celebration.

And for helping create a memorable event.

For the grads in the room, there are many choices before you.

Whatever the future brings, and whatever choices you make, I encourage you to be bold, be confident, be kind and compassionate, work hard, follow your passion, and dream big.

I see a room full of tremendous role models for each other and for youth in care across the province.

I encourage you to consider becoming an adult mentor to other kids in care. Who better than to show them than you all here?

Your resilience and courage are truly an inspiration for others to follow.

By being a mentor, you can transform other kids' life by reaching out - just as others have done to you. You can be a positive role model, and help them overcome challenges so that one day, they can be following in your footsteps.

So seize this moment, appreciate what you have achieved here, remember the people with whom you achieved it with, and always be open to new possibilities and adventures.

Again, congratulations and best of luck to all of you!