

Check Against Delivery

International Day of the Girl Leadership Panel Discussion October 9, 2014, Edmonton Honourable Heather Klimchuk, Minister, Human Services

Hello and thank you for joining us as we celebrate International Day of the Girl.

This week, we are joining countries across the worlds that are reaffirming their commitment to improving opportunities for girls and young women.

I want to thank my fellow panellists for being here to share their stories.

And for allowing us an insight into their journey to leadership.

To our audience of girls and young women, I am so pleased you could join us today.

I hope you find our discussion interesting and informative.

And I hope you will gain some valuable insights and ideas today. .

Whether it's advice, encouragement or a vision of what you want your future to be, today is all about you and the possibilities before you.

When I was on my journey to leadership, I was fortunate to have amazing women in my life to look up to.

What I saw in my mentors was a future for myself where I could achieve what I set out to do.

And that's what I try to pass on to others.

Alberta already has many strong, smart women who use their talents and skills to make a difference.

And who understand the importance of taking what they have learned and sharing it with the next generation.

Now is the time for all of us to reach out and open a door for a young girl.

In my role as a Cabinet Minister and a member of the Legislative Assembly, I have had the opportunity to work on a variety of issues.

Some of those issues are reflected in the infographic you find at your table.

Many girls today are dealing with assault, dating violence or sexual exploitation.

I wish I could tell you there are easy answers.

The truth is these are complex problems that don't always have simple solutions.

But by being here today, we are taking a positive step forward.

Talking together, encouraging one another and planning together for a safer, more respectful community in the future, these are the things that make a real difference.

I hope today is the start of something big.

If everyone who views our infographic or Public Service Announcement reaches out to a girl or young woman they know and provides encouragement, we will witness an incredible shift in our communities.

Everyone has something to share, especially our audience here this morning.

I am excited to hear some of your ideas in our small group discussion.

This is how we solve difficult problems.

Thank you.