

Festival of Trees Reading Event

Friday May 27th Essar Centre 9:30 A.M. (Speak at 10:15)

[AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY]

Good morning everyone. I'm very happy to be here today to help open the Forest of Reading and Festival of Trees in Sault Ste. Marie.

We're fortunate to have some terrific Canadian authors joining us today. I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank them for participating. They are:

- Elly MacKay;
- Alma Fullerton;
- Eric Walters;
- Janet Wilson;
- Wesley King;
- Daphne Greer;
- David Skuy;
- Kevin Sylvester;
- Natalie Hyde, and,
- Joel Sutherland.

Thank you very much for making the trip up here to Northern Ontario. We're glad to have you with us and we hope you enjoy your stay.

As you can see, this is a really **BIG** event. I would like to thank all of the organizers, volunteers, sponsors and staff who have worked so hard to make it happen.

Finally, it's great to see so many students with us today from throughout the Algoma District and Sault Ste. Marie. I'd like to thank all of you for being here and also your teachers and schools for supporting this awesome event.

Today is an important day because it is a celebration of literacy. And literacy skills are among the most important ones to have. You need them in order to be successful in school, in work and in life.

But reading and writing are not just important skills; they are also enjoyable activities that let you fire up your imagination and creativity. And if you have a love for reading, writing and books, you'll always have a doorway to new worlds, new knowledge and new discoveries.

So once again, thank you for having me. Before I go, I'd like to wish everyone a happy festival and a great day together here at the Essar Centre.

Thank you.