

You The Soo

May 11, 2017

[AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY]

Good afternoon everyone. I'm thrilled to be here for the second-ever You the Soo youth empowerment event.

It just takes a quick look around the building to realize that it has taken a lot of energy and effort to make today happen. I would like to offer my thanks to the partnering organizations behind You The Soo: the Huron Superior Catholic District School Board; the Algoma District School Board, and the Algoma Arts Festival Association.

I'd also like to thank the volunteers who have assisted with the organization and set-up for today's event. In particular, I'd like to recognize Donna Hilsinger. Donna has tremendous community spirit and she is the driving force behind You The Soo. Thank you Donna and thank you to your team for all of their great work.

To all of the youths in attendance, thank you for being here and thank you to your teachers for supporting this amazing event. Today is truly about you and I know you will leave it feeling inspired and motivated.

I know better than to try and compete with the speakers we have already seen and those yet to come. However, there are a few thoughts I would like to share with you.

The first is that you are important. You count. You have a stake in your community and in the region of Northern Ontario. We need your help to build a prosperous future here.

The second thing is that whatever age you may be, you are never too young to make a positive impact. And it is never too soon to start creating the change that you want to see.

However old you are right now, whatever experiences you have, whatever skills you possess – you already have a lot to offer. And you can start contributing right now if you want to—and I hope that you will.

One of the most rewarding things I've been able to do in my time as Mayor has been working with our Mayor's Youth Advisory Council. I have some of the members of the Council accompanying me on stage today, and we'll show you a video in a moment of some of their activities.

They're a great group, and to me it has really been inspiring to see how they can come up with ambitious ideas and then work together to make those ideas become reality.

What is clear to me is that when we give youth the opportunity to make a difference, they will. So it is important, for those of us who are community leaders, to find the ways to create those opportunities.

So thank you again to You The Soo for having us, and thank you to one and all for being here. Please enjoy the rest of the day.