

SPEAKING NOTES FOR
HIS HONOUR, COLONEL (RET'D) THE HONOURABLE DONALD S. ETHELL
CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION ALBERTA DIVISION AGM
HOLIDAY INN , 4485 GATEWAY BLVD
EDMONTON, ALBERTA
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2012

HER HONOUR MY WIFE LINDA AND I ARE PLEASED TO JOIN YOU FOR THIS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING...AND I'M VERY HONOURED TO ACCEPT THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD FROM CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, ALBERTA DIVISION.

FIRST OF ALL, I'D LIKE TO THANK CMHA BOARD CHAIR, WILLIAM BONE, FOR PUTTING MY NAME FORWARD AS THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENT. IT'S A PLEASURE TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH SUCH AN OUTSTANDING ORGANIZATION THAT DOES SO MUCH TO SERVE THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF ALBERTANS.

ABOVE ALL, IN ACCEPTING THIS AWARD I'D LIKE TO THANK AND ACKNOWLEDGE ALL OF THE PEOPLE WHO CAME BEFORE ME...WHO STEPPED UP TO TALK PUBLICLY ABOUT THEIR OWN MENTAL HEALTH EXPERIENCES AND WHO MADE IT INCREASINGLY OK FOR PEOPLE LIKE ME TO DO THE SAME.

IN MY CASE, THE ROAD I'VE TRAVELLED AS A VETERAN WITH PTSD WAS MADE EASIER BY THE OPENNESS AND HONESTY OF GENERAL (RETIRED) ROMEO DALLAIRE. GENERAL DALLAIRE WAS A PIONEER IN ENCOURAGING PUBLIC DISCUSSION ABOUT PTSD...AND REDUCING STIGMA RELATED TO MENTAL ILLNESS AS A WHOLE.

IT'S BEEN AN HONOUR AND A PRIVILEGE TO BE ABLE TO USE MY VICE-REGAL OFFICE TO FURTHER THE PUBLIC DEBATE ON MENTAL HEALTH, AND I CERTAINLY HOPE THAT I'LL ALSO BE SUCCESSFUL IN MOVING THINGS FORWARD SOMEWHAT DURING MY TIME IN OFFICE.

IF I AM SUCCESSFUL IN THAT REGARD THEN IT WILL BE THANKS, IN NO SMALL WAY, TO THE LEADERS WHO HAVE BEEN HELPING TO GET THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S CIRCLE ON MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION UP AND RUNNING. THAT INCLUDES CMHA ALBERTA DIVISION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TOM SHAND, WHO IS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE INITIATIVE.

I HAVE A GREAT TEAM OF PEOPLE WORKING ON THE CIRCLE, AND FOR THAT I'M VERY THANKFUL.

LINDA AND I HAVE ALSO MET MANY OTHER VALUED MEMBERS OF THE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES COMMUNITY IN ALBERTA AS WE TRAVEL FROM PLACE TO PLACE TO ATTEND VARIOUS COMMUNITY EVENTS. WE'VE BOTH BEEN TRULY IMPRESSED BY THE SKILL, COMPASSION AND SHEER STAMINA OF THOSE WHO ARE WORKING TO TREAT MENTAL ILLNESS AND BUILD STRONGER FUTURES FOR ALL THOSE AFFECTED.

I'LL ADMIT THAT IT'S BEEN A STEEP LEARNING CURVE AS I'VE WORKED TO BROADEN BY KNOWLEDGE OF ALL FORMS OF MENTAL ILLNESS...AND TO LEARN ABOUT THE GREAT WORK BEING DONE ON THE FRONT LINES ACROSS OUR PROVINCE.

I'VE LEARNED THAT MENTAL ILLNESS AND ADDICTION ARE COMPLEX ISSUES AND THERE ARE NO EASY ANSWERS OR QUICK FIXES, AS MUCH AS WE ALL WISH THERE WERE.

ABOVE ALL, I'VE DISCOVERED THAT THERE IS REAL HOPE FOR ALL WHO ARE LIVING WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS. THERE IS HOPE AND THE PROMISE OF A FULL AND PRODUCTIVE LIFE, AND NOTHING COULD BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THAT.

AS HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN'S REPRESENTATIVE, I'D LIKE TO OFFER SINCERE THANKS TO EVERYONE HERE TODAY WHO IS WORKING TO CREATE A STRONGER FUTURE FOR YOUR FELLOW ALBERTANS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

AND, AGAIN, I THANK YOU MOST SINCERELY FOR OFFERING ME THIS SPECIAL HONOUR AND I WISH EACH OF YOU CONTINUED SUCCESS IN YOUR VERY IMPORTANT WORK.

GOD BLESS, GOD SAVE THE QUEEN AND ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR AFTERNOON.