

December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Earthquake. Tsunami. People and children missing, dead. This is all I heard that horrific, dark day, and I will never forget it. Firstly, I want to say thank you for attending the Tsunami benefit concert, and I would like to dedicate this benefit concert in the memory of the late Lieutenant General, Lois Hole who would have offered his kind words and invaluable support.

We have gathered here not only to enjoy the talent of the musical artists and performers that will grace us with their presence later on today, but we are also here to remember those who have died in the Tsunami disaster. Edmonton artists, organizations, and individuals have made this benefit concert happen. Here, today, together, we will raise money for all the innocent children whose lives have been tragically taken by the Tsunami disaster.

Bringing everyone together to help children and people in need makes me proud to be a part of this country. I am also proud to say that all the donations that you have generously given, the full proceeds from the concert and the silent auction will go to UNICEF in aid of the Tsunami children.

We must see this concert as more than just a fundraising event. We must see this as a chance to piece together the lives of the children that have been at a stand still since the disaster. This event is a way for us to offer our time, effort, and our hearts to make the Tsunami disaster a reality, as unreal as it still seems for many people. I hope that this benefit concert will inspire others to organize events quite like this one all over the world. If we can do that, we can truly believe that we have made an impact on other people's lives, and we can say that we made a difference.

I have pledged my utmost support to this valuable event, and the organizers, as well as myself, hope to annually hold fundraising events to support local and global children's charities. I am confident that because you are present today, we can reach this goal.

I don't think we can even begin to imagine what our lives would be like if we survived the Tsunami disaster, but I think your presence at this benefit concert, your generosity and hope will not only help the children in need, but it will also change their lives.

It is so important that we help children in need. They are our future. What happens to them affects us, and what affects them happens to us. We need to show them that we care—through our actions, not just our words. The fact that we are all here, gathered today shows the children that we care, and we are here to help.

We cannot turn back time and stop the Tsunami disaster from taking place, but what we can do is help these brave children who have survived this terrible disaster. I believe that helping the children that have been affected is the most amazing, and most profound experience that I have been a part of, and for this reason I am more than willing to help as many people in need as I humanly can.

I wish nothing more than for this benefit concert to become the stepping-stone for other countries to aid those in desperate need, without hesitation. Only then can we redefine what our society stands for. I believe that we can. Once again, I thank you for coming.