

VIEW FROM QUEEN'S PARK: Words of wisdom from a Major cadet booster

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About 25 years ago, author Robert Fulghum wrote a best seller called ?All I really need to know I learned in kindergarten.? It was full of homespun advice like ?Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Flush. Clean up your own mess.?

I was reminded of Mr. Fulghum's book at the annual Queen's York Rangers Cadet Corps' Christmas Mess Dinner at the Aurora Legion. This formal event sees the young members of the corps served dinner by their officers, receive awards and promotions, and enjoy the words of a keynote speaker.

On this particular night, with stomachs full of turkey dinner, we sat back to hear Major L.G. Sainsbury, CD, Former Commanding Officer of the Corps, London Detachment Commander, speak. Crisply dressed in his red, formal military attire and looking every bit the senior military commander, I wasn't sure what to expect.

It turned out to be a somewhat emotional farewell for a man who has given much of his life to the cadet organization in Canada, starting in his youth as a member of the Queen's York Rangers (QYR) Cadet Corps, and the past 25 years full-time, in key leadership positions with the cadets.

The Major had just retired a day or two before attending the dinner.

Major Sainsbury spoke of his good fortune of being a cadet in Aurora and how it led him to success, not only in private industry, but eventually to 25 years of exciting full-time work with cadets. Besides preparing him for success in life, it's where he met his wife, a fellow cadet.

Major Sainsbury thanked the corps for allowing his last event as CO to be where his cadet career began ? with the QYR Cadet Corps in Aurora.

His address to the young people could have been titled ?All I really need to know I learned in cadets.? But you don't have to be a cadet, or young, to learn from the Major. Here, just in time for 2016 and edited for length by me, are the lessons the Major learned as a cadet:

Do something today that your future self will say ?thank you.?

Figure out your goals in life and work toward them. Make informed career choices based on your interests and strengths, and to remember the only limits in life are those you impose on yourself.

Have good friends to help you out. Be with people who make you happy and ditch the ones who don't. Build a group of supportive friends who can help you succeed in life. Have a best friend who knows you are ?crazy,? but still wants to be seen with you in public.

Do well in school. No matter how boring it is now, education will help you reach your goals. Strive for excellence to do your best ? this will enable you to pursue your career and be on the right track. Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change your world.

Don't get in trouble ? legal or otherwise. This, obviously, can ruin your future plans. If you think you are being pressured into anything illegal or immoral ? walk away. It is much easier to stay out of trouble now than to get out of trouble later.

Be nice to your parents, teachers and officers. They are here to help you be the best you can be. The Major said ?even though they seem to work hard at annoying you, they do the things they do because they care about you and want you to succeed.? You don't get to choose your family, officers or teachers ? but you do have to put up with them. Learn how to deal with people now, because when you're an adult you don't get to choose your boss or co-workers.

Help out in your community. Volunteering not only improves your community, it helps build your happiness. The cadet corps will show you many ways to support your community. We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

Get active. Take the dog for a walk. Play street hockey. Get outside. Participate in sports. People who are active as teens are active as adults. Being healthy and fit isn't a fad ? it's a lifestyle.

The core principles of the cadet program are leadership, citizenship and physical fitness. From where I stand, the young men and women of the Queen's York Rangers Army Cadet Corps consistently demonstrate these principles. Thank you to the officers who show strong leadership and dedication, especially Commanding Officer, Captain Phil J. Lusk and Deputy Commanding Officer, Captain Sue Lusk. And thank you to the parents who are instrumental in making the Corps a success. Finally, thank you to the cadets

for their dedication and hard work. I look forward to next December's event!

I invite you to contact me on any issue. Please call my community office at 905-750-0019, or visit my website at www.ChrisBallardMPP.ca. I look forward to hearing from you.