

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Students gather for inspiring self-advocacy seminar

(Lac La Biche, Alberta – May 9, 2018) Over 70 students in Grades 5 to 12, from communities and schools across the entire Northern Lights Public Schools area, met at the Bold Center in Lac La Biche on Wednesday for Northern Lights' My Voice Matters - Student Voice event. Eager and ambitious students heard from speakers Kelly Lovell and Maurice Fritze about the importance of passion, persistence, and finding your voice.

Lovell, a Youth Mobilizer, Marketing Consumer Engagement Consultant, Social Entrepreneur, and Media Producer from Waterloo, Ontario, spoke to the students first about her experiences in high school and ways that youth today can feel empowered and be successful.

"To create change and influence, you have to find your voice by taking action," Lovell said. "Every great change starts with action . . . but at the end of the day, if you're not confident enough to share your story, it really doesn't matter. Be confident that your voice deserves to be heard, that your ideas are worthy, and that your 'why' really matters. Your confidence is the most important thing. It's what sets leaders apart. It's what makes you strong. If you stand up and be proud, people will rally around you."



Lovell set aside time after her address to speak one-on-one with students, to take photos, and to write personal notes of inspiration and encouragement.

Kelly Lovell gave students her secrets to success and spoke about the importance of passion, persistence, and confidence.

Following a lunch and activities geared towards Northern Lights Public Schools' goal of supporting programs that promote a healthy lifestyle, the students were then addressed by Fritze.

Fritze's involvement in the field of communications is extensive. He is a registered lobbyist and specializes in presenting seminars surrounding negotiation and conducting difficult conversations.

"You wouldn't talk to Drake the same way you'd talk to Taylor Swift," he said. "And it's the same when you're finding your voice and acting as an advocate for yourself or for other people. Knowing the character and personality of your audience is so important."

He also illustrated the importance of keeping an open mind during discussion by asking groups of students to debate whether or not a hot dog is technically a sandwich.



Is a hot dog a sandwich? This question, posed by Maurice Fritze, illustrated that keeping an open mind is critical during debate.

The Student Voice event was conducted by Northern Lights in partnership with Lac La Biche County and Britton's Your Independent Grocer. Northern Lights Board Chairperson Arlene Hrynyk and Trustee Mandi Skogen were in attendance to represent the Board of Trustees.

"The students were engaged and felt confident that they acquired a bunch of new tools to help them in their advocacy efforts," Board Chair Hrynyk said. "Both Kelly and Maurice have unique perspectives and ways of interacting with students, and they complemented each other perfectly."

One student from Nelson Heights School in Cold Lake said at the conclusion of the day, "I think that if we had more meetings like this, our school would just be a better place. I think that it's really good to help people learn to speak for themselves and to have passion and to take care of other people."

Northern Lights Public Schools provides a quality public education program with enhanced learning opportunities to approximately 6,000 students in 27 schools in northeastern Alberta.

- 30 -

For more information:
Nicole Garner, Communications Officer
780-826-3145 ext. 199 or 780-207-7646
nicole.garner@nlsd.ab.ca