

STRIVE AVA Awards Gala

Saturday, January 13

[AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY]

Good evening everyone. It is my pleasure to be here with all of you.

I would like to recognize Councillor Paul Christian, along with Councillor Shoemaker.

I would also like to thank and recognize the platinum sponsor for this event: the OLG.

I came back to Sault Ste. Marie in 2002 to article with what is now my law firm. When I did so, I did not have very many colleagues near my age. There were a couple guys a year or two ahead of me and a few that followed a few years after.

I don't think anyone else articulated the year that I did but in any event, we were certainly not populous and Strive did not exist.

We did not have an organization, like this, where we could readily connect with other young professionals, business people or entrepreneurs to network, develop friendships and learn from one another.

So I would like to recognize the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber Board and the leaders who started Strive for addressing a very significant need within our community and on a job very well done.

Tonight we are recognizing leaders in our community.

On behalf of my office, City Council and the City of Sault Ste. Marie, I congratulate all of the nominees and the award winners and thank you for the contributions that you have made to the betterment of our community at large.

There are a number of ways to lead. Most people agree, and I certainly do, that the best is by example. We hear this truism a number of different ways: be the change that you want to see, treat other people how you want to be treated, actions speak louder than words. At the heart of all of these sentiments is the same basic idea: lead by example.

When you care about what you do, when you take pride in it and you make an effort to do it well, you make a difference. Not: you can make a difference, or you will make a difference.

You make a difference.

You make a difference in your immediate circle, to the people you are working with and working for. You make a difference to the larger group or industry to which you belong, by raising the quality of work and the standard of measure. That in turn makes a difference to the larger community beyond your specific group or industry. To rely on another incontrovertible truism, a rising tide lifts all boats.

In that spirit, we are here tonight to recognize those of you, nominees and winners alike, that have and are making a positive difference. As the Mayor of your community, I recognize and respect your leadership. It is not only critical to our present, it is a condition precedent to a successful future.

I have seen your leadership in City Hall. Most people who are there arrived there before Councillor Shoemaker and I, but Tessa Vecchio didn't. She arrived after. I was there on Tessa's first day and I have had the privilege of watching her positive attitude and positive effort improve the attitude and effort of those in and around her in City Hall.

Councillor Shoemaker himself is a case study in leading by example. He challenges the status quo, does what he thinks is the right thing to do with conviction and applies himself to his job with an admirable commitment.

Jeff Greco's company and its efforts have been front and centre across Northern Ontario but also in some recent City Hall projects. Those efforts have helped us do our job better and have made the City look good while doing so.

I could go on. One of the great benefits of the Mayoralty is that you see a lot of great work across the community and you meet the great people doing that work. Tonight and this room being a prime example.

So let me end with an observation and a thought: Each of you here could lay claim to successes similar to those of Tessa, and Matt and Jeff and that is the tremendous thing about success. It is not finite. Many can find it and when many do, it often grows.

Each of your successes piles up one on the other. Each moves us forward. Each enriches and improves our community.

You are our current and future leaders. You are building a better community. You are making a difference.

Keep doing what you are doing and keep doing it well.

On behalf of your community at large, I recognize your tremendous contribution and thank you for it.

Enjoy your evening.