

Time

My name is Samantha Thompson and I am a member of the West Coast Area in BC Girl Guides. Today I want to take a moment to talk to you about the concept of time.

Time is nothing but a means of measurement created by humans. It exists only in our minds, and in fact is nothing but a figment of our imagination.

It is what you do within time that gives time its significance. That is why the past one hundred years have been important for Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada. Not because one hundred years is not a long time – it is – but because the century becomes important when you realize the impact we have had on the lives of girls and women.

The Peace Arch Association this year chose the concept of “Past to Present” as the theme for this celebration. The Association is comprised of many different organizations, and although I will make many references to Girl Guides of Canada, I am quite sure that most of what I am going to say today is equally relevant to the other organizations, particularly the Boy Scouts of America who are also celebrating their 100th anniversary this year. Our organizations were founded on similar principles, and both Boy Scouts and Girl Guides have upheld those principles throughout the past one hundred years.

Opportunity, passion, and friendship are three things that I consider to be vitally important pillars within Girl Guides – and three things that have existed from year one right up until today. Few could’ve guessed that the storming of Crystal Palace at a Scouting rally by a group of girls would have led to an organization that now boasts numbers upwards of 100,000 members, alongside the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts reaching 10 million girls.

Although Girl Guides serves as a safe place to be yourself, and maintains its reputation as a place for girls to do their best and learn about the importance of the world around them, the means by which this is done has changed in order

to remain relevant in today's society. While Agnes Baden-Powell taught girls to bandage injuries during World War I, today leaders are teaching their girls about the importance of social responsibility and the joy of taking pride in who you are. Girl Guides will remain a strong and relevant organization because it is unafraid to remain faithful to its roots and the ideas that it was founded upon, but is still able to make modifications that keep it significant to its members today in 2010. Throughout the last century we have always celebrated our ability to say what is on our mind, and take action for a better world.

My grandparents, who are in the audience today, remember when their daughter came to Hands Across the Border thirty years ago. So even though time may only be a human construct, it still has relevance. Organizations like the ones here today give time significance, because we create experiences that connect generations. A common phrase these days, is that our youth are the future, the leaders of tomorrow. While I agree wholeheartedly with these sentiments, it is important to remember that we, the leaders of tomorrow, would be nothing if we didn't have past generations backing us up. So, as a proud member of the "youth of today", I thank the previous generations for being an active part of what I am lucky enough to have now in the present. It is because of the generations of the past one hundred years that I can stand up here in front of you and speak proudly about these organizations, and look back at how much has been accomplished over so many years. To all of you that have been supporters over the years of Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada, Scouts Canada, and the Boy and Girl Scouts of the USA – we, the youth of today, owe you a debt of gratitude, for providing us with organizations that have been so important in our development.

The influential Henry Van Dyke wrote a poem about time, that, while often recited at funerals, including Princess Diana's, captures quite eloquently what I am trying to say: "Time is too slow for those who wait, too swift for those who fear, too long for those who grieve, too short for those who rejoice, but for those who love, time is not."

July 2, 2010

So I urge you to now go out into the world and continue spreading love and friendship. One of the many things that Girl Guides has taught me over the years is that you can never underestimate the power of love and the power of friendship to get you through anything life throws your way.

Congratulations, Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada and Boy Scouts of America, for giving meaning to time and giving significance to a century. And congratulations to all of you, for being such an active part of a peaceful and positive future.

July 2, 2010