

On Thursday, September 2023, Neubauer Farms and Prairie Rose Public Schools hosted the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Her Honour, the Honourable Salma Lakhani AOE, BSc, LL.D (hon) and His Honour Dr. Zaheer Lakhani CM MBChB FRCPC FACP FACC FRCP (London), at a small gathering of local dignitaries and community organizations hosted by Neubauer Farms. The evening presentation focused on the unique programming offered at Prairie Rose Public Schools through the academy options and the Irvine School Agriculture Discovery Centre.

"Prairie Rose Public Schools and Neubauer Farms are thankful for the opportunity to share some of the unique programming options we have developed for students in southeast Alberta," says Superintendent Reagan Weeks. "These programs not only ignite minds and forge futures for our students but are designed to kindle hearts by building compassion, empathy, community and wellness - something we know is at the heart of student success and wellbeing."

In addition to creating programs that students get excited about, Weeks pointed out that there is also a strong connection between student success and inclusion, which counteracts loneliness, depression, anxiety and addiction. A 2019 study published by Johns Hopkins University found that positive childhood experiences (PCEs) were known to counteract co-occurring adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), many of which tie directly to the work happening in schools. These include students having a sense of belonging in high school, two important non-parent adults who were genuinely interested in them, feeling supported by friends and participating in community traditions outside the home.

One of the primary topics for the evening focused on the modern agriculture industry and the importance of educating youth about food sustainability. Host Nichole Neubauer shared the importance of learning where your food comes from and the challenges facing agriculture over the next 25 years. She also spoke about the partnership with Prairie Rose Public Schools with the Irvine School Agriculture Discovery Centre (ADC) and the benefits of students learning about possible career opportunities in the agriculture sector.

"The ADC is so fortunate to have incredible industry partners who support this program," says Neubauer. "Short Grass Ranches has donated two Angus steers for two years. This year, we were also able to partner with Western Tractor to provide students with an option course that focused on farm equipment and maintenance. We look to including more partners as the program grows."

The second focus of the evening was on the Dave Rozdeba South Alberta Flight Academy program, a partnership program with Super T Aviation in Medicine Hat. The flight academy is a three-year program based out of Eagle Butte High School in Dunmore, allowing students to earn their private pilot's license upon graduation. This past spring, the program was granted Collegiate status. This allows the program to add a fourth year to the program. The fourth year will operate as a dual credit option for graduated students, where they can complete additional courses in their chosen

aviation stream - something they decide in their second year of the program. The options include commercial pilot training, aircraft maintenance engineering or air traffic control and drone certification.

"Prairie Rose Public Schools is excited about how these programs are impacting youth and building capacity in our communities," says Weeks. "Adding programs, like the flight academy and the ADC, are part of our commitment to providing a one-of-a-kind education experience that ignites minds, forges futures and kindles the hearts of our students, staff and communities. We are committed to creating programming that students love, addressing deficits and building on strengths, developing programs that lead to healthy children with high self-esteem and creating skills for our students to compete and contribute as adults."

The Neubauer Farms and Prairie Rose Public Schools event was the first Her Honour will be attending in Medicine Hat, who is in town for the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Distinguished Artists awards at the Esplanade Theatre on September 16, 2023.