

Justin Trudeau brings his leadership campaign to Vaughan

By Angela Gismondi

Federal Liberal leadership candidate Justin Trudeau made a stop in nearby Vaughan to drum up support for his campaign. Trudeau was given a warm welcome by a crowd of more than 600 supporters and fans who attended the rally at Supreme Banquet Hall in Woodbridge Feb. 28.

"We can do better, Canadians deserve more," he told the crowd.

George Takach, former leadership candidate, welcomed everyone to the rally and explained the reason why he bowed out of the race just days before.

"Over the last number of months, I have gotten to know all the candidates," said Takach. "There is one candidate that has something special. Justin's ability to reach out and touch Canadians across this country is a unique gift, it's really special. With your help we can get him to be the next leader of the Liberal Party of Canada."

While introducing the rally's guest of honour, Vaughan MPP Steven Del Duca said Trudeau is a good choice to lead the party and the country. He added Vaughan Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua has also announced he is endorsing Trudeau for the leadership.

"This is an individual who has got everyone excited to rebuild our party and take back our country," said Del Duca.

Trudeau's goal is to be chosen as the federal Liberal party leader April 14 in Ottawa. He hopes to follow in the footsteps of his father, Pierre, who was led the party from 1968 to 1984.

In his 15-minute speech, which he delivered from a raised platform in the middle of the crowd, Trudeau, 41, said change is needed in this country and unity is the key.

"We are united by a small core sense of values that shape us," Trudeau said. "Shared public values like openness, respect, compassion, equality, a desire to be there for each other, a desire to work hard for your success. Those are the things that have defined this country."

Under the current government, those values are in jeopardy, he stated.

"I recognize our country is at a point where we need builders not bullies," said Trudeau. "What Mr. Harper has proven is that once you get elected by dividing as great a country as Canada, you actually can't do a good job of then governing this country, because we are better than that."

Trudeau explained that Canadians are worried about their future and the future of their children.

"Every single generation has been able to work hard and create prosperity for their families," Trudeau stated. "But Canadians are worried . . . For the first time ever, there is a sense the next generation might not have the great opportunities that we had."

Admittedly, the Liberal party has had a tough decade, he stated, adding the party went from holding 172 seats in 2000, to 135 seats in 2004, to 103 in 2006, to 77 in 2008 and down to 34 seats in 2011, the party's worst showing in history.

"That is a straight line that leads down to one seat, because I'm not losing Papineau, no matter what," Trudeau said. "We need to understand that the trend can only be turned around if we understand what we did wrong. What went wrong is that the Liberal party focused on itself instead of Canadians when Canadians needed us."

Before leaving, Trudeau took time to shake hands and take pictures with the many people who came out to the rally to show their support.



Federal Liberal leadership hopeful Justin Trudeau addressed his supporters at a rally in Woodbridge. Photo by Angela Gismondi