

The Mico Alumni Association General Meeting

Annual Report of the Education Committee

The Education Committee of our association maintained a very busy schedule throughout the past year as the committee did its best to at least maintain the important programmes that have been in place over the past years. We continued to focus on our primary task of granting scholarships to teacher candidates studying at various universities in Ontario. Our next focus (which is tied to the scholarship programme and which the committee regards as extremely important and indispensable) was on mentoring the scholarship awardees as well as other teachers who were trained outside of Ontario but are desirous of entering the teaching profession.

At our last annual banquet where scholarships were awarded to four teacher candidates, the attendees were treated to a most dynamic presentation by Ms. Thando Hyman who has functioned in a wide array of roles for the Toronto District School Board. She was well received as her message of encouragement to youth and their parents struck a familiar note. The community was reminded of its responsibilities to its members just as its members were reminded of their role as part of a larger community. The new teachers should see themselves as embarking on a significant endeavour as educators to serve and prepare children for their future role as important contributors to society.

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The Mentoring program, led by stalwarts like Inez Johnson, Lona Freemantle, Olive Satchel among many others, devoted at least six sessions at different times throughout the year preparing prospective teachers for the multitude of interviews which they must face in order to be hired. Most of those candidates were successful in either obtaining contract positions or placed on

teacher supply lists. This was very hard work in view of the fact that teaching positions have not been very plentiful in the past few years! The Executive and the Education Committee firmly believe that it is crucial to provide support for teachers who are members of our community on an on-going basis to help them weather the many challenges that they will of necessity have to face in dealing with school administration, other staff, children and yes, the public, some of whom are parents of the children in the classes!

Finally, a hearty thank-you must be extended to the public at large who have been faithful in supporting us in different ways. Some types of support have been in attending the annual banquet, in making monetary donations, in offering scholarships and other methods which will be reported by other committees. We must make mention of our fairly latest outreach project which is to offer scholarships on an annual basis to financially-strapped students who would otherwise not be able to fulfill their dream of becoming a teacher. For the last year, our contribution for scholarships in Jamaica was ten at \$50,000 each. The Association could not function without these means of support and we must applaud our supporters, be they large establishments or individuals, some of whom we expect are Mico alumni.

We ask all members and friends of the committee to continue supporting our endeavours as we are all aware of the need to help others. We need new members to sit on committees who will bring fresh ideas as well as help to keep the flame burning, a flame which was lit by wise committee members of yesteryear.