

FATIMA OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENTS REPORT JUNE 15, 2010

Introduction

As President, it is now my honour to provide you with an overview of the operations of FOBA for past year. We had another successful year, as FOBA continued to grow, through the great efforts of committee members and others.

Fund-raising Activities Held During the Year

There are a few areas that I would like to cover today and, as we would not be able to achieve much without sufficient funding, I would first like to start with a summary of the fund-raising activities we held.

In October, we had our annual Salt and Pepper Cookout. We used the success of the Karaoke the previous year and built on it, and with a wonderful décor and setting, the Cookout was great. Normally, most persons attending would enjoy their dinner, and lime for a short time, leaving by 9.30, 10 latest. But with the success of the Karaoke, the excellent food on offer, and the lovely décor and setting, the event was still going strong at 11pm. It was an enchanting evening!

Our very popular all-inclusive Carnival fete followed, this year titled "Rave". Our reputation of throwing one of the best carnival fetes was enhanced as expectations may have even been exceeded. I cannot tell you how many times I have been told "Best Fete of the Year." And as the financials show, this continues to be our biggest fund-raiser by far, and the profit made continues to grow.

In May, we held a Jazz concert, titled Musical Blends, for the first time. Our goal was to at least break even but primarily ensure that we had a quality concert that can develop and grow. And this we did.....the concert was very well-received by the patrons.

We also used this concert to highlight the quality of artistes coming out of Fatima College. All the artistes bar one were Fatima Alumni, with the one exception being Mr. Ray Holman, a former teacher. The performances received excellent reviews and we expect this event to continue to grow.

The final major fund-raising activity that we manage is the revenue from the wall-signs on the field. This continues to be a very useful source of funds for us.

Assisting the College

One of our major responsibilities is to provide assistance and guidance as necessary to the College. And we continue to do so in many ways.

Firstly, I would like to quickly review the areas where we provided financial assistance to the College during the past year:

1. Infrastructure – We supported the College in a number of infrastructure projects that were undertaken during the year, and in particular during the August holidays. This included improvements to the basket ball and tennis courts and its fencing, repairs to desks, and painting of class rooms. In addition, FOBA assumed responsibility for making repairs to the pavilion (in particular the roof and seating), and for relaying of the cricket pitch.

For your information, the two major projects being considered for the upcoming year are (1) a mezzanine floor for the hall and (2) an upgrade of the library.

2. Sport – the Old Boys continue to play an important role in providing compensation and support to the coaches of a few of the sporting disciplines, and in providing uniforms and other items to the teams.
3. Other extra-curricular activities – During the past year, we purchased instruments for the college's music band and provided assistance to the choir's Christmas concert. In addition, the Old Boys continue to support the college when it hosts functions on special occasions, and there were one or two very special ones this year.

So that is support from the financial perspective. The other means of supporting the school is through advice and guidance when needed to Fr. Gregory and to the College. We continue to be key members of the stakeholders committee, and this past year, in particular, we took part in a stakeholders workshop in July where representatives from the Ministry of Education, the staff, the Parents Support Group and FOBA met to discuss the major issues affecting Fatima and the way forward. And plans are afoot for a repeat session this year.

Networking and Camaraderie Amongst Old Boys

As a Committee, we have heard the view expressed that more should be done on building the networking and camaraderie amongst the Old Boys. Though we will continue to focus much of our attention on the needs of the students, staff and the College as a whole, we have identified the need to build the network amongst us Old Boys as being important.

To facilitate this, we undertook the following:

1. Firstly, after listening to requests of many, the 7-a-side football competition was re-introduced for the first time in 6 years in September, with the objective of bringing together the Old Boys of the College for a day of fun and for some exercise. A great day was had by all, and we are looking forward to the event being larger in September this year.
2. Secondly, in August, FOBA was invited and agreed to take part in a Dragon Boat Regatta where approximately 20 of our Old Boys trained and eventually competed against CIC Old Boys. What was pleasing to me was that CIC struggled to get Old Boys to participate and used mostly current school boys, while our team was filled with proud Old Boys.

The race was officially called a tie but those who were there knew better. The togetherness of the group of Old Boys (rowers and spectators alike) on that day was very special.

3. Thirdly, developing a database of our alumni. We have documented the records of all students who have passed through the school in the last 10 years, and will be verifying this information over the upcoming holidays. We have maintained our current database of alumni, and had

started communicating with everyone in the database during the past year.

4. Fourthly, continuing to publish the FOBA Newsletter “Beyond the Grey Shirt” (Issue no. 4 being issued in April)
5. And finally, using technology. We are investing significantly in the FOBA website and continue to manage our Facebook page. Also, we are planning to introduce some interesting initiatives on our website. In addition to keeping Old Boys up to date on developments, we are introducing an e-store for merchandise with Fatima’s logo, creating the opportunity for Old Boys to make pledges and donations on-line, and creating photo galleries and class listings by year.

Work and Sacrifice Made by Committee Members and Others

I have so far been highlighting what has been done over the past year. None of this would have been possible without the extraordinary efforts, and I should add sacrifice, of our Committee members.

Being a member of this committee is not easy. Being a part of this is definitely not about attending one meeting a month. There is a lot, lot more to it. Growing and expanding the work of FOBA, though very rewarding, requires significant effort and sacrifice.

For example, during January and February in preparation for our fete, between weekly fete meetings, sub-committee meetings, meetings and discussions with suppliers, working the weekend of the fete, and sale of tickets, much of a committee member’s time is spent on FOBA matters.

But saying that, it is highly rewarding work....the excitement and sense of accomplishment that is felt when we achieve our goals and objectives justify the effort that we put in. And knowing that ultimately we are doing this for the College and all its students (current, future and past) keeps us motivated.

For the great efforts required to achieve what we did this year, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the members of this committee. The efforts of Ruthven Thompson (who also serves as Treasurer), Roger d’Abadie, Trevor De Landro, Derek De Gannes, James Camacho, Newman George

and Hayden Alexander for their continuous service and ever presence at all our events and activities is much appreciated.

Kenny Young, amongst other things, has continued to do a great job with our wall-signs. Keith Simpson, my appreciation for your work as historian and driving FOBA's participation in other Past Pupil Association's events. Wendell Mc Collin, who has diligently served us over the years, had asked for a leave of absence during the second half of the year but did a tremendous job in creating that décor for the Cookout.

Regular and extremely worthwhile contributions from Graeme Ottley (including functioning as Secretary) & Dwight Andrews (who also provides our security services and guidance) have made a positive impact on the Association's operations. And I must personally say a special thanks to Stafford Yorke who as Vice President was always willing to listen, provide his advice and valuable guidance, and share his extensive experience with me and with the committee.

And there are two committee members I would like to single out for special mention: Noel Aming and Kevin Crosby. These are two guys who give 200% to everything that FOBA is involved in, and I can tell you, they would usually be the first to arrive and last to leave when we are busy working on an event or activity.

This year in particular, their involvement was instrumental in some of our major achievements. As mentioned, we had two new events this year, the 7-a-side football and the Musical Blends concert, and they were organized and run primarily by these two gentlemen. The events were advertised as Fatima Old Boys Association's, but should have been Aming's and Crosby's because both of them took full responsibility, and managed and produced both with limited involvement of the other committee members (though that may be unfair to Newman, whose involvement in the Musical Blends concert was also very valuable). To Noel and Kevin, well done, we could not have done it without you and thank you for your efforts.

I have obviously not been able to list all the contributions made by the committee members during the year, but my appreciation is for all that you have done.

And it will be remiss of me not to say a special thanks to James Camacho, who is leaving the committee after 10 years serving in many positions including two years as President. Thanks, James for your sterling service and contribution.

The work put out by the committee has been tremendous, but we would not be able to survive without the work of so many Old Boys who are not officially on the committee. The spirit and willingness exhibited by these persons to assist the Association and their alma mater is heart-warming.

There are so many who help with our events, I would not be able to mention most. But as a representation of the efforts of these Old Boys I would just like to mention a few:

I would start with the members of the Alumni Committee. This is the committee responsible for our database, newsletter, website and other internet initiatives. They are responsible for most of the communication we have with members, and have continued to work diligently and effectively this year. A special thanks to Stephen Harris, Raymond Samms, Wayne Agostini and Everard Mc Bain, who are four key persons amongst a large team of approximately 20 members.

And I would like to thank George Lee Shee who was solely responsible for pulling together our Dragon Boat racing team and in getting some busy Old Boys to practice and come out to represent FOBA well.

Then there is Robert Solomon, the person responsible for the theme and décor of our fete which always wins rave reviews, and has been instrumental in distinguishing our fete from others.

To the many former committee members who continue to be closely involved with the Association; and to the many persons who regularly pledge their services and resources (especially for example the 75+ persons who cook for or contribute towards our cookout), I would like you to know that we cannot do it without you.

And lastly, there are persons who are not Old Boys who are still always there for us during any period of need, with our office assistant, Karen, and her team of volunteers, easily coming to mind. A huge thank you they deserve from the Committee.

More to Do

FOBA is not stopping here. We are always focused on improving what we do and know that there is more for us to accomplish.

For this purpose we have sub-committees to address these objectives. Examples being the Alumni Committee (that I mentioned earlier), and the Social and Cultural Committee (that determines and drives our social activities for the year).

In addition, Fatima is celebrating its 65th anniversary this year, and we have begun appointing a team to be in charge of an anniversary dinner towards the end of this year. As part of this dinner, we are looking at launching our Hall of Fame.

And there are a host of other initiatives that we will continue to look at.

Summary

In summary, our committee continues to host very successful fund-raising events and activities, from our regular events like the Cookout, and All-inclusive Fete; to the new Musical Blends concert; to continuing activities like wall signs and sponsorships. In addition, we are trying to make some strides towards developing and improving the networking and camaraderie amongst the Old Boys, with events like the 7 a side football and with developments like the web-site, database and the Facebook page.

This will be for nothing if we are not contributing to the development and improvement of Fatima College which we do through financially supporting major projects and investments, and providing our advice and guidance where necessary.

And this could not be done without the hard work and sacrifice of our committee and many others who help us through out the year.

Conclusion

In conclusion, though FOBA has grown significantly in the past 10 years, we now have greater responsibilities to the school and its staff, and to the Alumni. A lot has been done but there is a lot more to do. I would like to take this opportunity to urge you to make a contribution to FOBA by volunteering your time, services or resources, if not as a committee member, as a member of a sub-committee, or through a project that we should undertake.

We want to assist Fr. Gregory and the staff in putting Fatima College up at the very top of the heap of secondary schools in this country. We want to build the communication, camaraderie and relationship amongst us Old Boys of this fine College. We want every person who has ever walked through the corridors of this College as a student, to quickly and proudly say, whenever the opportunity arises, that “I went to Fatima College.” The Fatima Old Boys Association can help do this....but we won't be able to do it without you. Please join us on this journey.

Thank you