

Fatima Old Boys Association

President's Report for 2015-2016

Our 2015 – 2016 year has been an extremely challenging one. We at FOBA are but a microcosm of the society as a whole. Consequently, the contracting of the local economy has resulted in our most difficult year in a while with fundraising becoming extremely difficult.

FOBA still has debts carried forward into this year on our new wing somewhere in the vicinity of \$550K and while we are proud that we have to date paid approximately \$3.5 million towards the building more still needs to be done. We continue to fund all sporting programs within the school to the tune of approximately \$410,000 per year as well as Smartboards to the tune of approximately \$700k per year.

Our two main fundraising ventures this year in the All Inclusive fete and the Food Fest saw a decline in revenues notwithstanding us basically maintaining our numbers. The collective profit between the 2 events being approximately \$1 million. Our shortfalls occurred primarily due to much less corporate sponsorship and funding as well as in the case of the fete a significantly reduced demand for our corporate boxes. We however continue to strive on, working closely with the school administration to ensure the needs of the boys are met.

This brings me to a point that I think needs to be made since many no longer or don't understand our new realities. The facts are that the school has had to become more and more self sufficient as government funding continues decline. In fact, often what is in fact allocated out of the Ministry of Education for the school has either not been paid at all is very late or is reduced. There was a time when FOBA contributed funds for instance to

capital projects and the government would repay two thirds of our expenditure. These days appear to be over. The system implemented by the government some 8 to 10 years ago dictates that capital investment now needs to be requested through the Education Facilities Ltd (EFCL). The school's request is then processed based on need as determined by the bureaucrats at the agency. What we and other demonstrated schools have seen as a result of this approach has been that our requests are often suppressed and ranked lower because of an assumption made that we have strong alumni association and therefore are less dependent on government. Simply put the system virtually punishes you for your initiative and hard work.

Our new wing for instance has been 100 percent funded by FOBA whether through the use of our direct cash, our lobbying and soliciting of donations. Where debt, and/or liabilities exist those liabilities are the responsibility of FOBA. This new normal has forced FOBA into uncharted waters where for the first time in our existence we have been carrying loans and therefore debt on our balance sheet.

Additionally, in keeping with our schools stated goal of becoming the Boys High School of Choice in Trinidad and Tobago by 2020, Fatima College undertook to place in every classroom interactive smart boards making us the first high school in Trinidad and probably the English speaking Caribbean to do so. However, those costs which form part of a managed service arrangement with flow are also for FOBA's account.

I say all these things to you to help you all understand that the role of FOBA and even more so the responsibility has intensified. For us on the committee the bottom line has become more and more of an issue. Consequently, FOBA is now run much more so along the lines of a company as we seek to bring as much returns as possible to our clients and stakeholders.

It's not all doom and gloom though as we have very philanthropic individuals, companies and groups that continue to help the association extensively. Immediately coming to mind will be organizations such as, The Catholic Church and Archbishop of Port of Spain, Class of 75, Class of 86, The National Lotteries Control Board (NLCB), Columbus Communications, The Telecommunication Services Company of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT), The Security Zone Limited, Solo and many others not necessarily mentioned. Notwithstanding these inputs from these organizations though we remain woefully underfunded. We are not daunted though and instead see this as a challenge. We will succeed simply because we must.

My executive team made up of Ruthven Thompson Senior VP, VPs Kevin Wells , Rawle Annandsingh, Mitch DeSilva and Secretary, Hayden Alexander along with the Ariston Sutherland our Operations Manager, Karen Sandiford our administrative Assistant and the members of the management committee and sub-committees compose easily of the hardest working people I have ever been around. We once met once per month, but today some composition of us meet a minimum once per week with most of us meeting even more often that. This has become for most of us a second job for which we are not paid.

We remain one of the only associations which do not pay their members for any services whatsoever. Even when some of us use our influence with companies to which we are associated, we do so insisting that at minimum we receive whatever goods or services we request at cost or very discounted prices but in most instances for free. That sort of commitment by my team is truly appreciated and I challenge anyone to show me an association more committed and philanthropic. Gentlemen i would like to thank you all publicly.

Our fete this year in spite of several fetes being cancelled or "bussing" held its own and

from our research appears to have been the most profitable with only Prestige Fete being close. Many of us attended other school fetes which seemed to have struggled, the exceptions to those being Saints and Presentation. In spite of the challenges we made approximately 1 million dollars. This figure was down approximately \$700K from last year which was our best ever on record. Most of our losses in the fete occurred due to corporate funding drying up and the inability to sell our once oversubscribed corporate booths. This year we sold only three booths as opposed to years passed when selling up to 14 booths was typical. With the cost of each of those booths being \$50K. One can see that just in the booths alone we were unable to realize an additional \$500k in revenue that we would have typically. This along with our fete having approximately 500 persons less than our previous years, really impacted our bottom line. This year we had approximately 3,300 persons as opposed to 3,800.

SPORTS

Our sports programs cost us \$410K this year. However the rewards of that spend are evident with

FOOTBALL

We won the Form 1 League knockout title, Came second at both U14 and U16 knockout levels and we safely avoided relegation at the Intercol level. We have since continued to strengthen the football through a rigid football academy structure at ALL levels which includes, the boy's strength and conditioning and overall sport well-being.

SWIMMING

All age groups, at the end of the season Fatima placed second overall.

WATERPOLO

Form 1 - 2nd; U14 and U16 and the Open Team all placed 3rd (an improvement on the previous year).

BASKETBALL

We created a bit of history winning the national U15 knockout tournament and the league, U17 and U20 did not fare as well but were extremely competitive level.

RUGBY

U18 team brought home the TTRFU Knockout Championship trophy whilst the U14 placed 2nd in the League and Knockout competitions.

TENNIS

Fatima entered two teams in the Intercol Tennis competition. Our A team placed second overall in their division and our B team won their division.

HOCKEY

U15 A placed 2nd

U15 B placed 3rd

U19 team won both indoor and outdoor titles available (top scorer and the T&T men's U21 Player, Teague Marcano, top scored in both division).

CRICKET

We won the Secondary Schools Premier Division for the first time since 1986 and were crowned National Champions playing unbeaten throughout the league. We also won the U15 knockout. Both the U19 and U15 teams are set to tour Barbados this July in the Sir Gary Sobers and Charlie Griffith International Tournaments respectively.

In other extracurricular activities Fatima College continues to dominate such as Chess, Scrabble, Sailing (Sea Scouts) and Choir (Fatima being the reigning champs of the Secondary School Choirs - Lower Voices and National Boys Trio at the 2015 National Music Festival)

CONCLUSION

We have a plan and our plan in our humble opinion is yielding positive results. Our

challenge remains that of funding and stimulating our old boys to come of the fences and assist. We work both closely and well with the other two dominant stakeholder groups in the Parent Support Committee and the School administration. It is our hope that the coming year will see things improve by way of finances as we are at present in very delicate but extremely positive looking negotiations with the National Lottery Control Board for a multi year deal that should if it manifests itself significantly ease the financial burdens of the FOBA.

Additionally there is going to be a complete revamping of the cookout as we seek to breathe new life into it. This year the cookout will take on a unique posture as we will be merging two events that FOBA typically has or had into one event. This year we will see the merging of Musical Jazz and the cookout for a new rebranded event called Jazz meats Eats. the date will be the on the traditional day that salt and pepper took place. We hope to see you all there.

Thank you for listening, Nintendo Vines may god bless you all