

THE RENAMING OF OUR SCHOOL AND NELSON MANDELA'S VISIT...

On Saturday, November 17, 2001 at 9:35AM Nelson Mandela, one of the most important fighters for democracy, freedom and justice in the 20th century attended a ceremony in which Park Jr. and Sr. Public School was renamed in his honour.

Nelson Mandela's Speech --November 17, 2001

Ladies and gentleman, and young people, who are here, my wife, Graca Machel and myself, are greatly honoured to be here this morning, and to meet all of you. We know that you are the future leaders, not only of Toronto, not only of Canada, but of the entire world. When you are old, many of you are going to be members of Parliament, you are going to be ambassadors and represent your country in foreign lands, you are going to be members of the cabinet, you are going to be Prime Ministers! You are the future leaders of the world, and it is an honour for us to be here to interact with you.

Both my wife and I were once as young as you are. When we see you, we think of those beautiful days when we had no problems, when we played the whole day whenever we had opportunities. We were here in 1998, it was one of the most of unforgettable occasions, because we met thousands of children who inspired us a great deal. We now know there are children all over the world as young as you are, that these children in other countries are very poor and need help, and we are pleased to know that the children of this school have identified themselves with the children of South Africa and have raised funds and continue to raise funds in order to help our children. When you do that, you help those children not only to be able to go to school, to buy books, but even to help them feed themselves, but to inspire them. You make them feel that they are not alone.

Toronto is a place where you have our Children's Fund and where various people have contributed generously to make sure that this fund has sufficient resources to tackle questions of poverty, of disease, of HIV, which is wiping out large populations. That amount of money that you have raised is going to encourage children elsewhere to do the same thing to help the children of South Africa who are very poor. Now we are here today to launch your new school name, and it is a great privilege for me and my wife to do so.

In the meantime, I want you to know I love each and every one of you not as my children, not even as my grandchildren, but as my great-grandchildren. I have 29 grandchildren and I have 6 great-grandchildren. You are younger than my great-grandchildren, but I love you from the bottom of my heart. My wife and I will not forget the beautiful and innocent faces that we are looking at now. Thank you very much.