

MESSAGE FROM THE JELMS PRESIDENT AT BBQ FUNDRAISER – AUGUST 16, 2013

It is my pleasure to see you all here and to welcome you to our first annual barbeque fundraiser. I take this opportunity to tell you a bit of history of the scholarship. The idea was born many years ago, but I did not dare to think it could be possible. My dear friend and mentor Patricia Grunauer Spinner said one day: sometimes we have what we think it is a great idea and we share it with others, and it depends on their reaction and action that the idea will dissipate or it will become a reality. In 2008 I shared this idea with Patricia Alvarez and she knew about Cesar Rodriguez who had a similar idea. She connected us in 2009; we talked and found a commonality in our vision, to support the efforts of Latino youth pursuing a post-secondary education with scholarships, while honoring the memory of Jose Eduardo Lopez, whose story I am not going to repeat because I am sure most of you know it, since I have been telling it since the day I left Honduras in 1985. After our meeting Cesar and I invited Osiris to join, then came Thayra, Sofia, Olivier, Natalia (our scholarship winner in 2010 and now a graduate from Mohawk and working as a journalist). This year we welcome a new board member, Spencer Charters who is the marketing director. Anne Hogan volunteered her time and set up our website and she is in charge of updating it.

Here we are today...four years later, the scholarships is a reality. In 2012, thanks to the work and efforts of the members of the board, we acquired charitable status. Since 2009 we have granted 8 scholarships ranging from \$2000 to \$500. We have acquired charitable status, thanks to the hard work and efforts of this team. So far we have granted eight scholarships to students who now give testimony of the impact it had on them.

I encourage you to visit our donation table, remember the more funds we raise the more scholarships we will be able to grant. It is our hope to expand this project and provide grants and bursaries to support adults who want to go to school and acquire a trade.

I also invite to enjoy the delicious foods and drinks we have for you to invite to donate, visit you and enjoy.

I must say that it is overwhelming but not surprising to see our Hamilton community coming together to support causes dealing with social justice.

I want to acknowledge the presence of Ana Maria Olivares, winner of \$ 2000 scholarship the first year 2009.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all board members and the volunteers who have worked so hard to make this evening possible.

Last but not least, I want to say a big thank you to our donors and sponsors. It is their trust and contributions that made this venture to grow to what it is today.

I hope you enjoy the rest of the evening.

Thank you all for being here on behalf of the members of the JELMS committee