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ΕΓΙΝΕ Η ΕΓΚΑΙΝΙΑΣΗ «ΤΟΥ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΤΙΚΟΥ ΙΔΡΥΜΑΤΟΣ ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ»



Φωτογραφικό στιγμιότυπο από την εκδήλωση της εγκαινίασης του Εκπαιδευτικού Ιδρύματος Σωκράτης. (ΕΙΣ). Διακρίνονται (από δ.): Άγγελος Κοματσούλης – Εκπρόσωπος & Αντιπρόεδρος του ΕΙΣ - κύριος εισηγητής της συνέντευξης τύπου, ο τ. Πρόεδρος ΕΚΜ κ. Α. Μαρής, η κα Όλγα Παπαδάτου – Γεν. Γραμματέας του ΕΙΣ, η κα Κ. Θεολόγου – μέλος του Δ.Σ. ΕΙΣ, ο εκ των δωρητών του ΕΙΣ - στέλεχος της Ελληνικής Παροικίας κ. Στράτον Στήβενς, ο κ. Γ. Σινογιάννης – Γεν. Δι/τής της ΕΚΜ, οι κυρίες Κ. Κοντώνη, Α. Σκιαδοπούλου, Π. Σηφάκης – μέλοι του Δ.Σ.-ΕΙΣ, ο κ. Φ. Κομπορόζος – Δι/τής Δημ. Σχ. ΕΚΜ, η Γεν. Πρόξενος της Ελλάδος στο Μοντερέαλ κα Μαρία Καρνούτσου – ομιλήτρια της εκδήλωσης, ο αρχιτέκτων κ. Ιωάννης Θεοδοσόπουλος – πρόεδρος της ΕΚΜ - ιδρυτικό μέλος του Δ.Σ. ΕΙΣ – επίσης ομιλητής της εκδήλωσης, ο κ. Φ. Σωτηρόπουλος - παρουσιαστής, και ο κ. Δ. Γιαντσούλης – Αντιπρόεδρος του ΕΙΣ.

PRESS CONFERENCE

INAUGURATION OF FOUNDATION

The Board of Directors of The Socrates Educational Foundation cordially invites you to a Press Conference on the Inauguration of the Foundation's Mission, Objectives and Logo.

The meeting will take place at the Hellenic Community Centre (Foyer), 5757 Wilderton Avenue, Montreal.

Date: Tuesday, October 24, 2006.
Time: 3:30 P.M.

R.S.V.P: Mrs. Olga Papadatos
Secretary, Board of Directors.
Tel:(514) 683-7825.



PRESS CONFERENCE SPEECH

Members of the media, dear friends, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Socrates Educational Foundation, I would like to thank you for coming to this press conference concerning the inauguration of a new foundation whose purpose I will outline shortly.

I would like to thank the president of the Hellenic Community of Montreal Mr. John Theodosopoulos for granting us the use of this facility and for agreeing to take part in our new venture. A special word of thanks is also extended to our new Consul General Mrs. Maria Karnoutsou who we welcome to our fair city and wish her well in her new position.

A number of years ago, ladies and gentlemen, a group of Socrates school parents and their principal initiated an application to the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency for the purpose of creating a non-profit charitable organization whose purpose would be to financially support trilingual (French, Greek & English) education in Canada. (Members of the press will find in their Press-kit a "Brief History of the Socrates Foundation").

The question that you may have in mind is what prompted this group of individuals to proceed in this direction? The reasons are the following:
-Education in general is under funded and more so parochial schools,
-Low income families often need financial support if they want to send their youngsters to a parochial school,
-and, more money needs to be directed to schools for activities or events, without having to see students becoming involved in fundraising. I will expand on this very point in a moment.

The process of creating a foundation and obtaining a charitable number proved to be rather difficult in the post September 11th world. Hard work and perseverance paid off, and on August 1, 2003 the organization qualified for a tax-exempt status as a registered charity. The initial cost of obtaining a charter was borne by many of the founding members as well as donations received from the four Socrates schools parent committees.

We would like to publicly also thank a number of individuals who stepped forward and aided the foundation. I am referring to:

- Mr. John Roumeliotis of Black Ink Inc, who designed our Logo.
- Mr. Nick & Panayiotis Kremmydiotis of Imprimerie K-Litho, who Printed all our stationary supplies
- Mr. James Kromida, C.A. who agreed to Audit the foundations books.
- Mr. Jerry Analytis, Q.C. who agreed to serve as our legal counsel.

The next document that I would like to point out in your press-kit is our "Mission Statement". Our objectives speak of providing financial support for trilingual Education:

- to offer scholarships, bursaries and prizes for scholastic achievement,
- to purchase of educational equipment and /or material pertinent to schools,
- to provide assistance to students of low income families,
- to improve and/or expand school buildings and their surrounding grounds, and
- to promote and perpetuate Hellenic culture and heritage.

While we are inaugurating the S.E.F. today, our fundraising efforts have already started through our personal contacts; be it individuals or Organizations. For those of you that want to know how funding requests are handled, I draw your attention to the document in your Press-Kit entitled "Application Request for Funding". (I would like to stress that funds are never made available to individuals, but are only considered when submitted by institutions)

This then brings us to Why the need to fundraise?
In today's society, schools (if they are to play a broader role) need extra

resources. But the money just isn't there. Parents already have picked-up a good deal of the slack. What has also occurred is that there has been an increase in school foundations. They are modeled after their counterparts in Hospitals and Universities, which hold Capital campaigns to finance different needs. Other schools develop initiative partnerships with corporations that provide exposure in the corporate place of business as well as funding.

The favorite fundraising activity for elementary schools is the chocolate bar drive. The question of importance of course is "How many chocolate bars does it take to buy a proper education for a child"? We would like to see schools do away with door to door fundraising, because we believe that it is not safe for children to be on the streets peddling chocolates or the multitude of other products that companies provide. We also find this process not healthy for youngsters and counter productive to their education.

Our alternative is simple and clear, we would like to step in and financially support school initiatives (be it field trips, excursions, scholarships, bursaries, prizes, educational equipment needs, assistance to low income families etc, etc.).

And finally a word about "Why trilingual Education"?

The goal of parents who send their children to Socrates schools, Demosthenis school or any such trilingual (French, Greek & English) educational program, in this or any other province in Canada, is to encourage students to make the knowledge gained by the three languages, part of their professional development and social and cultural life. It is said that "being bilingual is an opening onto the world". If that is the case, then there is a lot that can be said about the benefits of those schools in different Communities that offer trilingual education.

Like you, we beam with pride when a graduate from these schools receives high praise for an award or a position in the Academic or Business world. Socrates schools or any other like minded school, is a small parochial school system with a dedicated body of teachers and administrators that strive toward enriching the student experience. We at the Socrates Educational Foundation want to ensure that these schools successes are sustained and would like to ensure that as we move forward with our mission, we are in a position to positively transform the lives of students and advance knowledge for a better Canadian society.

I would like to draw your attention to the last item in your Press-Kit, entitled "Board Members" and as I call his or her name, kindly stand so that you may be recognized.

Ladies and gentlemen, I will stop at this point and give you an opportunity to ask questions. Questions that I may not able to answer will be directed to members of the foundation present today.

-QUESTION PERIOD-

Ladies and gentlemen this concludes today's press conference and I extend an invitation to all of you to join us for refreshments and finger food being served here in the foyer. Extra copies of the documents made available to the press can be found at the front desk for your information.

Individuals who may wish to make a donation to the Socrates Educational Foundation can approach me or any member of the board at your convenience.

Thank you.
Angelo Komatsoulis
October 24, 2006.