

## **A School Like No Other**

*Peter Gatama, Teacher, Greaves Adventist Academy, Montreal, Quebec*

Located at 2330 West Hill is a building with a special purpose. It is the home of the only Seventh-day Adventist School in the province of Quebec. Welcome to a school like no other. A school where Moslems, Hindus, Catholics, Protestants, Black & White, small and big congregate every morning at 8:15 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. on a regular day. A place where in a normal year, about 320 young boys and girls come in search for an educational experience. There is no place like Greaves Adventist Academy!

I have been a teacher at this location for 10 years and I praise God every day. Many have come and gone. This is a training ground for those who have a passion for the teaching ministry. No gymnasium or playing fields but I taught Physical Education from 1994 to 2001. No library or complete science laboratory yet there is no school like Greaves Adventist Academy. The government knows it exists, the community knows it is here, but many church members know nothing about its existence yet there is no other school like it! What makes it a school like no other?

The administration and teachers, the unique student population, and the curriculum offered! A school is not complete without these three components. Greaves Adventist Academy has one of the highest rates of teacher turn-over than many other Adventist schools in Canada. Many teachers come and if they finish two years, it's a miracle. The few that hold on like me are left wondering what it is that the teachers who left did not like. All I can say that there is other school like Greaves Adventist Academy.

Our school is an international, missionary school with a Christ-centred curriculum. Students from Pre-kindergarten to Grade 11 can by the end of the year, sing the song – “I Know Whom Jesus Is” and “Jesus Is a Winner Man”. The French and Music classes are special and so is the Math and Physics! A tour of the school on a normal day would make one wonder where all the 300 plus students sit, eat, study, play, and socialise. Yet there is no school like Greaves Adventist Academy. The dress down and cultural days, the Christmas concert and the Assembly Fridays are unique experiences for the students, teachers and parents. God has been good to us and continues to be.

There is no school like Greaves Adventist Academy, where one can enter through one door and exit through the next without being noticed. A school where the corridors are full during break yet no cries of fights, only hugs of love. Students love the atmosphere. A place where trained and untrained teachers come to share the love of God with children who have never opened a Bible in their lives. This year I was blessed to have taught Bible in Grade 10. The over 30 students took the Discovery Bible Course and did well, graduating with a beautiful diploma. What an experience it was to see students who have never read the Bible become excited about Jesus and the Three Angels Message! Glory be to God.

I am glad to be a part of the Greaves Adventist Academy family. This coming school year we will have a new Principal and Superintendent of Education. Some teachers have

left and others will be coming. The student population is fluctuating between 295 and 300 but still there is no other school like Greaves Adventist Academy. I invite teachers who want to experience the joy of teaching as well as the challenge of teaching to try Greaves Adventist Academy.

I have been a Grade 7 homeroom teacher for 10 years now and I love it. I have taught almost every subject in High school except French, Music, and Art! But in my 20 years in the field of education from Kenya to Montreal, I have never been to a school as uniquely special like Greaves Adventist Academy. A school where students who have left do well in institutions of higher learning and owe it to the great teachers and wonderful school atmosphere. What a school, whose motto is to prepare children for time and eternity in Montreal, Quebec!

As a teacher, I pray and hope that this coming school year will be different in many ways. I hope that teachers will be more committed to the cause of the teaching ministry with Christ as the head. I am confident that with a new administration at the conference and the school level, many things will change for the better by the grace of God. There is no Adventist institution that does not have its challenges and I hope that the teachers, students, and parents of Greaves Adventist Academy will accept the challenges and our uniqueness. There is no school like our school and may we use these ups and downs as stepping stones for I believe the best is yet to come. I salute my colleagues who have accepted the challenge and are marching forward by faith knowing that King Jesus is coming soon. Those who have left feeling discouraged, I pray that you have found peace and stability in your new station but remember God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

There is no way out. The only way out is up! God bless the administration, teachers, students, and parents of Greaves Adventist Academy.