

MINUTES OF THE 15TH EES/EHS CONVENTION

The fifteenth Annual Convention of the Episcopal High /Elementary Schools Reunion was held on August 31, 2013 in Atlanta, Georgia and led by the National President, Sam Abdullai. Prayers were offered by the National Chaplain, Alice Kromah, followed by the singing of the School Ode. The National Secretary Famata King, called roll and the following States were present: Georgia, Indiana, Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Philadelphia, South Carolina, Minnesota and Texas. Prior to commencing the business of the Association, the President recognized the presence of Mother Marilyn Robertson and Mr. & Mrs. David Mcglaughin , former teachers. The National President mentioned that Mother Robertson who had lived in Liberia from 2004-2013 had now relocated to the United States and currently lives in Henderson, Nevada. He welcomed Mother Robertson and the McLaughlin's and expressed gratitude for their presence. In response, Mrs. Robertson expressed how elated she was to be in the midst of former students and graduates of the Episcopal school. She said, "If your heart is in Liberia, there is no doubt, your heart will be with the school" She added that it is her ardent desire to help the school in any way she possibly can. The National Vice President, Lawrence Morgan, was given the opportunity to thank Mother Robertson for her passion and commitment that have never wavered. Following the Vice President's remarks, the National President formally opened the Convention and the agenda for the convention was adopted. Excerpts of discussions, information and decisions were as follows:

- The National President gave a status report of the organization. He discussed various projects that were undertaken and completed as well as projects that were in progress. Projects included the Science Lab, the Bowen Cottage, the Technology Center, the Memorial Wall and the Payroll. Details of the projects were addressed by the Project Coordinator, William Feweh Sherman and the National Treasurer, Bill Paasewe. The National President informed the convention that projects can only be carried on if members remain committed to meeting their yearly dues. He further stated that Records show a low level of commitment and appeal to the convention to reach out to other members for their full participation.

- Payroll, said the National President has become our signature project, but sustaining this is at a critical stage. Report from the National Treasurer shows that for the past years, funding of payroll has been declining. According to the President, we can only maintain the regular payment of the salaries to our teachers if our membership remains strong and committed. He discussed the effectiveness of the Website and encouraged the members to periodically visit the site and encourage others to do so. He believed, the website gives an over-all view of activities and this may encourage and provide valuable information to the members.
- On relationship with the Liberian Chapter and the Diocese, the National President reported that there is a break in the three-way communication link. Because of this break in link, we have not been able to get a true picture of status of activities. There are instances in which information out of Liberia on the status of the Institution are mixed up. The National President told the Convention that he saw the need for a delegation to visit Liberia on a fact-finding mission, which will include strengthening the three-way communication between the two chapters and the Diocese. He requested the convention to authorize a two man-delegation for this mission. The convention of members approved and granted the request.
- Reference to funding of the trip, the trip will be funded by the Association. However, some of the members of the Association contributed and others pledged contributions towards the cost of the trip. Those who contributed/pledge included:
 1. Lawrence Morgan; contributed a check of \$200.00
 2. Bill Paasewe; pledged 15% of the trip cost
 3. Feweh Sherman: pledged 15% of the trip cost
 4. Emily Russ: pledged 15% of the trip cost

REPORTS:

As customary, various reports were presented at the convention. These reports are designed to inform the Association of successes and challenges during the year and plans for the coming year. The reports focused on Membership; Projects and Finance. Highlights of the reports

were as stated below, however for details information, please visit our website:

<http://ehsees.org>

- **MEMBERSHIP:** This committee is chaired by Bob Sherman. Bob was unable to attend the Convention, but submitted a detailed report focusing on growth through regional efforts. The states have been structured into 7 regions and each region is represented by a Regional Vice President. The Regional Vice Presidents are responsible to coordinate and collaborate with the local leaders in their regions. There will be monthly general meetings of the Regional Vice Presidents, at which time status reports from their various regions are presented. The monthly meeting is also attended by the Executive Board of the Association. Four of the seven Regional Vice Presidents are present at the convention.
- **PROJECTS:** Feweh Sherman, in his status report as Project Chairman, informed the convention that the project for purchasing a truck launched in New York has made some major inroads. Up to the time of the Convention, he reported that \$6,000 had been raised /donated towards this project. Feweh also proudly announced the success of the Memorial Wall that was launched two years ago. He stated that the project had made significant dent in the finances of the Association. Details of revenue generated from this project are included in the financial records of the Association. Other projects Feweh discussed in his report included the Technology Center under construction; the Bowen Cottage nearing finishing; the C. Barnaby Chemistry Lab completed and the ongoing payroll which had become the signature project of the Association. Reference to project for the coming year; Feweh informed and recommended and the President requested authorization from the convention for two main projects to be founded in 2013/2014 to be (1) The roofing of the Elementary school and (2) the Payroll. The convention approved and granted the request.
- **FINANCE:** National Treasurer Bill Paasewe in his report to the convention disclosed that total cash receipts for the year was \$14,525, out of which \$6,000 accounts for special funds raised towards the acquisition of a utility truck for the campus. During the same period, total cash disbursed was \$10,764. According to the report payroll funding for

teachers and administrators' salaries accounts for about 60% of the disbursement. Bill further indicated that financial support to the Association has been low and this poses a threat to the future allotment to the payroll. In order to get a clearer insight of the financial status, he made a visual presentation reflecting the cost of payroll to total receipts. According to the presentation, the annual payroll cost was \$12,400 and in order to meet this cost it will require a minimum of 85 committed members paying the annual due of \$150. The average attendance for the past three years has been around 25 members. Bill emphasized that unless there is growth in membership coupled with commitment, the funding of teachers/administrators' payroll may not go beyond the end of the 3rd quarter of 2013/2014. Details of the financial reports are found on the website.

In the wake of the financial report, the convention raised concerns about receipts from tuition; how those funds are managed and the possibility of further investigation to provide some answers to the members of the Association. There was also the question of the availability of an endowment funds for Bethany that needs clarity, in that vein the President appointed Emily Ross and Catherine Dunn to research if there are any such funds.

ELECTIONS: 2013/2014 marked the end of the two years' term of the current leadership chaired by Sam Abdullai. However, the constitution allows for another two years' term, hence the current officers were eligible to run again, if they so desire. Against that understanding the Chairman of the Elections Commission, Rev. James Yarsiah announced that the Election Commission had received communication of interest from the current leadership to vie for their current position. However, the floor was opened for additional nomination from the membership present at the convention. Except for the position of Secretary, all other officers were re-elected by acclamation. Those re-elected were: Sam Abdullai, President; Lawrence Morgan, Vice President; Bill Paasewe; Treasurer, Alice Kromah; Chaplain. An election for the position of General Secretary was held and Bendu F. Gittens was elected.

The three-day convention was climaxed by a dinner and ball. The guest speaker of the evening was Ms. Sando Jeru Jones, alumnae. The topic of Mrs. Jones' speech was "we have the power to make a difference". She pointed out that "We the members of the Episcopal Elementary School/Episcopal High School (St. Johns and House of Bethany) Alumni Association are the missionaries of today and we must be grounded in the faith that we have the power to make a difference. By making a difference at EES/EHS, we will start a ripple effect that will impact multiple generations. In exercising our power to make a difference, we can provide hope for the children who attend the schools, the children of Cape Mount, and Liberia". Mrs. Jones pointed out that through the efforts of others, Liberia can be proud of medical doctors, lawyers, engineers, economists, accountants etc. who are products of the Episcopal schools in Liberia. She called on the membership to provide similar opportunity for the Liberian children of tomorrow. The details of Mrs. Jones can be found on the website.