

HAPPINESS OF DEDICATION

- SIDELIGHTS OF ECBEA SCHOLARSHIPS ASSESSMENT

It is late at night and only a small number of stars can be seen through the window. Edmontonians, exhausted from a whole day's work, have already gone to sleep and only the occasional speeding car breaks the silence. At the 103 Avenue and 107 street corner, in the meeting room of a four-story office building, a group of parents are still happily devoting themselves to the bilingual program.

This is the annual ECBEA (Edmonton Chinese Bilingual Education Association) scholarship assessment. This year, I have been honored with an invitation to attend. I was told that in previous years the assessment was not finalized until 2 am because of fierce debate. With the increased number of scholarships this year, I was a bit scared about how late the meeting would run. That day I had just attended the opening ceremony of the Confucius Institute Preparatory Committee meeting, then hurried to Peter Wong's (President of ECBEA) office, which was quite tiring for me. However, when I was taking the elevator to the office, what I heard were elated voices and what I saw were smiling and energetic faces.

Please do not forget, all the members of the ECBEA Board already had a full day of hard work, yet they have come to this meeting straight from their jobs and are working overtime. They retain their enthusiasm throughout the evening, and one can easily tell that they truly love this program. I found myself infected by the atmosphere, and suddenly my spirit rose.

The scholarships are divided into 10 categories. Students submit their applications which consist of an application form with statements from parents and recommendation letters from their teachers attached to the report. All the data is collected by an advanced computer data system for detailed records and statistical analysis.

Grades are the first achievement to be considered during the assessment. When a student has one score of 79 (that does not reach the minimum standard), while the other scores are all very excellent, we can not help but sigh. Strict accordance with established standards for accreditation should not be changed but we still deeply regret turning away a promising

student.

Secondly, a student's involvement in social welfare activities is also important, and this part of the selection is very fair. Each student's self-representation must be read by the more than 10 judges and then a vote is taken, wherein majority rules. The reading is always very interesting; the students' writing is somewhat blunt but innocent. One juror will read while the others smile and listen to the heart of the piece, and from each person's face can be seen their impressions toward the kids.

Of course, in the face of fierce competition, where all candidates have considerable strength, the jury will look forward, make generous remarks, and share common memories of a particular candidate's growth in the past year. After considering their involvement in various social activities, an objective evaluation can be made.

Scholarship Assessment Night is difficult, but it is also a very memorable night. Assessment ends and is followed by the various school ceremonies. Edmonton has the most lovely students, the most respected teachers, the most responsible parents and we all look forward to that exciting moment when the scholarships are unveiled. I would like to express my deepest respect to each of the parents of bilingual education! Thank you so much.