FUNDRAISING SPEECH

FOR

SAMUEL TURAY

REVISED

“REBUILDING THE MAGBURAKA SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR BOYS”

Hello everyone! I am so pleased to see all of you here tonight: men and women, family and friends, distinguished guests and patrons, and of course, a special greeting to all of my brothers, past, present and future, from the Magburaka Secondary School for Boys. Tonight we’re here to show some “fancy footwork” in honor of this wonderful school, and the truth is, to be at this dance and to acknowledge the steps we’ve all taken and the paths we’ve forged to be here tonight is no small coincidence. With every beat of the music you hear tonight and with every vibration of the bass and trumpet, imagine those sound waves echoing back to our home in Magburaka and remember and learn about our homeland and the school that gave us our foundation-a foundation that keeps giving to each one of us every single day.

We’ve come a long way from that city, but it will always remain in our hearts. When I think of what life was like as a young boy growing up there, I still cannot believe that I am here with all of you, and what is even more amazing is that so many of **YOU** are **HERE** too! Which one of us would have ever imagined \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years ago that we would be dancing in this beautiful banquet hall and sharing this wonderful night together? Who would have imagined that all this would have been possible? There’s an old African proverb that teaches us, “For tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.” At the Magburaka Secondary School for Boys, each one of us got a wonderful education, and that education taught us the most valuable lessons. We learned about life outside of our town and we learned how to survive in ways beyond the primal instincts we were born with. We learned that no matter what our families, friends and neighbors did or did not possess materially, they made sure we all received an excellent education from the Secondary School for Boys and that education is truly priceless. As we learned our lessons and grew from the encouragement and guidance, we gained strength from receiving this wonderful gift. Now it’s time to shine the light for the next generations to grow and learn and continue to nurture and build upon those roots for the others that follow us.

Tonight is dedicated to “Rebuilding the Magburaka Secondary School for Boys.” Most of us are aware that our school has an incredible reputation and an even more impressive list of graduates of whom it can boast-present company included!! The school has nurtured and supported several important dignitaries who have done their part to give back to our country, Sierra Leone, throughout the years, and I am sure all of us are so proud to be able to say that the current President of our country, His Excellency Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma is one of our very esteemed graduates. The administration and staff of the school do an incredible job of sharing their knowledge, wisdom and caring with all of the students-even with the financial challenges they face each day. Even with those challenges, the school has garnered an impeccable reputation. It is known as “The Oxford of the Northern Province of Sierra Leone.” Can you even imagine the heights and outreach that would be achieved if each one of its graduates from around the globe gave what they could to support the school? It’s positive effect on the future of our citizens, the community of Magburaka, the country of Sierra Leone, and even the planet would be enormous!

The school has several needs that include the refurbishing of the dormitories in the lower school, about fifty new student bedrooms in the upper school, classrooms, laboratories, and furniture for the staff quarters. The school also needs an electrical plant that will generate constant electricity and access to a reliable and clean water supply.

One current and critically important project is the construction of a resource center. The effort to build this center has been spearheaded by the Parent body of the Magburaka Old Boys Association (M.O.B.A). I would like to commend the MOBA- USA Branch for the construction of a computer lab and the refurbishing of twenty bedrooms in the upper section of the school. Your participation has been an inspiration, but there’s more work to do…. and it doesn’t stop. We have to keep in mind that due to prevailing poverty and hardship in the country, the majority of students currently enrolled cannot even afford the textbooks prescribed. They have to rely on just the notes given by their teachers. Their learning is limited to only what the teacher presents to them in class. In addition, paying their school fees is also an uphill battle for the majority of those currently attending the school.

We are all so blessed to be here, doing what we can to make the world a better place for all, and it’s time for us to give back to those who have give us so much. In Magburaka, an overwhelming majority of the population lives in poverty and it is now our turn to do what we can to make a difference in the community that raised us. Our country is rich in natural resources, but Magburaka needs infrastructure and the means to build the support systems that will strengthen our neighborhoods. Demographics also show that our community is young. It’s estimated that last year almost 42% of the population was under the age of fifteen years old. These young people need guidance. They need encouragement, and most of all they need a well-rounded education to teach them and prepare them for tomorrow. Progress is being made slowly but surely. Wells are being built so that fresh water is more than just a dream. Roads are being paved throughout the city so that local businesses can thrive and commerce can be promoted, but the foundation of self-sustenance is formed and built with an education.

Each one of us has challenges in our everyday lives that teach us to appreciate who we are and what we have. I know that one of the most important gifts I have received in my life is the education I received at the Magburaka Secondary School for Boys. I learned how to survive, grow, and give back.

The late Nelson Mandela was a brilliant man and one whose words and thoughts were wise and powerful. I’d like to share some of his wisdom with you, and I invite you to picture what you can do to give to and support this fine school. He said, “There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you yourself have altered.” Magburaka, as I said, is evolving, but with belief in, and support of the next generation, that growth will be insured. Mandela also said, “Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all.” That too, is accomplished with education. And finally, “It always seems impossible until it is done.” So many of us, thanks to the lessons we learned, have transformed the impossible into opportunity. Someone was generous enough to give **YOU** a chance to learn and grow. Can you imagine what your contributions to the Magburaka Secondary School would do to encourage these students and to allow more boys the opportunity to attend? Take a look at what your education has done for you. I am proud to be a graduate of the Magburaka Secondary School for Boys. I am proud to call you my brothers, and I am proud of those who currently defy hardship and adverse conditions to learn their lessons in order to improve their lives and see to it that their community becomes a better place. It was not so long ago that each one of us attended and I am sure if we all take a look back, over our shoulders, to who we were and what we had back then, we would see that we each have an impressive list of accomplishments to share. It’s time to think about what you have and what you can give back. Your generosity and respect for the future of Magburaka is truly something to celebrate…so let’s dance!!! Thank you all!!