

**Congratulations Kwaku, winner of the Windsor District Labour Council Education Advocacy Award!**

*All that is needed to make a happy life is within yourself, in your way of thinking.- Marcus Aurelius*



Kwaku Fordjour migrated from Ghana to Canada in 1974. He was an Electrical Engineering graduate who wanted to learn about the North American Electrical System, which is different from the European System. Since he could not find a job in his profession, he started working in a warehouse in Toronto for \$2.00/hr., commuting 2 hours each way every day.

In 1977, he was accepted into the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Windsor, where he continued with the Electrical Program. Following graduation, he began working at Bachan Aerospace as a Final Inspector until he was injured in a car accident and couldn't continue with his work there. He later found a job at the Windsor Roman Catholic Separate School Board as a Grant Worker, in the Audio Visual Department, and eventually became a full time Audio Visual Technician in 1987, where the technicians were grouped with Para-Professionals.

Kwaku felt that the IT department needed a spokesperson and became an OPSEU Union Committee Member in 1987. In 1998, the Windsor and Essex County Catholic School Boards amalgamated to become the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board and Kwaku was again a Union Committee Member with the SEIU, which eventually became CAW Local 2458. Kwaku was the Head of the Hardware Systems Support, a position he held until retiring in August 2012. Overall, Kwaku negotiated at least 8 contracts, and counseled union members for countless hours. Although retired, you will still see him at demonstrations to bring awareness and education concerning the workplace.

In 2010, Kwaku became involved with the Sudanese-Canadian Association of Windsor to secure grants from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Kwaku's participation toward this effort resulted in over \$150,000.00 going towards this cause. This grant is used to help the Homework Club the community runs, which is open to all nationalities. It started as a Saturday program, but as the number of students increased, the schedule changed to Monday through Friday, to better serve the needs of the students. Presently, there are 69 registered students.

Kwaku is the coordinator of the Homework Club, and he works closely with Frontier College, to recruit volunteers from the University of Windsor's Faculty of Education and the Engineering Department, St. Clair College and high school students. The registered students range from JK through Grade 12, and the computers used for the program are all donated by Computers For Kids. There are other resources used to help the students, especially in Mathematics, English and Science. Kwaku helps to set up a learning plan for students with existing homework, or if they come empty handed, he develops work based on their current classroom lessons and specific student needs and interests. Accommodations are made based on the various learning styles of each student. When asked how he feels about the program, Kwaku says, "It's rewarding when they just get it". Shy kids come out of their shell because Kwaku is so easy to talk to and personable.

Kwaku has been married to Marian Fordjour for 39 years. He is the proud father of three children: Dr. Yaa Fordjour (optometrist), Afia Fordjour-Franklin (teacher) married to Arjei Franklin (retired CFL player), and Kwab Fordjour (student). He is also a proud and doting grandfather to Miles Franklin. His love and devotion to his family is evident by the number of photos that adorned his desk area at work and the countless stories he recounted about his family.

Kwaku is an unending proponent of workers' rights and educational opportunities for all. He has been a wonderful resource. All those he has come in contact with are kept laughing even through rough times. He even impersonated the Director of Education, Mr. Mike Moher, when a CBC reporter came to the Board Office to interview him and he was nowhere to be found. When the jig was up, the reporter was embarrassed and the Director amused. You never know what to expect from Kwaku, or what he will do next. You can be sure, however, that his optimism and support is sincere and appreciated by those who work with him and are lucky to be considered his friends. He is a fountain of information and he is always willing to help out, which is why he is so deserving of the Windsor District Labour Council Education Advocacy Award.

On behalf of CAW 2458 and your friends at WECD SB, we are sending you a hug and a smile.