



PRESS RELEASE  
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### Take Stock Graduate – Fausto Morales Prepares to Graduate from MIT Great Return on Donors' Investment



When looking for a great return on your investment, look to Take Stock in Children. *Scholarships, Mentors and Hope* is what students are afforded with the TSIC opportunity.

While on a brief visit home with his family, Take Stock graduate, Fausto Morales took time to meet with John Padgett, Monroe County Education Foundation President and Edward B. Knight and shared wonderful stories about what it takes to succeed and his plans after graduation from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Fausto Morales, born in Havana, Cuba and a 2008 Take Stock graduate from Coral Shores High School, will walk across the stage at MIT next month, receiving his bachelor's degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering.

Both Mr. Knight and Mr. Padget gleamed with joy as Fausto gave tremendous credit to Take Stock and reminisced about when he signed his contract in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. With his parents support and TSIC, he knew a great path had been created for him and his education endeavors.

Fausto's dad was trained as a biochemist in Cuba but upon moving to the US; worked in the kitchen and janitorial services at Key Largo School during the day, and weekends as a pastor. His mom worked in the kitchen at the Key Largo School, and is now a Para-Professional at Horace O'Bryant Middle School. "I saw them make a difference, and I knew my education would help me make a difference."

"I took the SAT my junior year and scored well enough to get into UF, where I was accepted. I'm a tech geek, I am good with computers and good at math, so just for kicks I applied to MIT. Math has always been one of my favorite subjects. I credit that to one of my favorite teachers at Coral Shores High School, Mrs. Barbara Swango. She is the best."

He was shocked when he received his acceptance letter in December 2007. Although he had Take Stock, he was not sure how he would pay the remainder of MIT's fees. Because financial aid at MIT is solely based on need, MIT offered Fausto their full financial package.

Mr. Knight shared his story that he knew he was going to college but had no money--recalling, "when I went to UF, the school was giving out scholarship of \$46, which as you know is not a lot, even back then. So I worked at a filling station and at the Orange and Blue to make ends meet. Jimmy Buffet and I had a running joke - you gotta do what you gotta do." Mr. Knight told Fausto, "I'm very proud of you, my pace maker is beeping with joy" as everyone smiled.

Business consulting is a career Fausto had considered, but Fausto stated "I felt I could make more of an impact if do something other than what most graduates are planning to do. I have accepted a job opportunity with Exxon Mobil as an engineer inspecting and helping to clean oil sites to protect our precious environment. I am also working on my certification to teach math." No doubt having grown up on the beautiful, yet environmentally sensitive Florida Keys had some impact on this scholar's final job decision.

Before Fausto left, he extended his hand, shook and with such gratitude proclaimed, "Mr. Knight, I hope I have made you proud on the return on your investment. Take Stock not only provided me with the means to go to college, but it also gave me a support group in people like John Padget, Jim Hall (previous Program Coordinator) and the Take Stock Staff".

Prior to the reunion, Dresdin Edwards-Bray, TSIC Program Coordinator met with Fausto and his family to arrange the event. Mrs. and Mrs. Fausto Morales, Sr. added, "we are so proud of Fausto and all of his accomplishments. We are also happy that our son Jonathan has been given the Take

Stock opportunity, and we hope in the near future our daughter Melody will be in Take Stock to make it a family affair.”

**Take Stock In Children – changing lives one child at a time!**

Photo captions: Photo 1 – John Padget, Fausto Morales and Edward B. Knight. Photo 2 – Fausto and Mr. Knight. Photo 3 – The Morales Family (Left-Right) – Melody Morales, Yanira and Fausto Morales, Sr., Jonathan Morales, Fausto and his wife Rachel.

Article and photos by Dresdin Edwards-Bray, Take Stock In Children, Program Coordinator  
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