



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**President Obama Receives Cartoon From Inspirational Young Canadian**

Brampton, ON, February 22, 2009: Fourteen-year-old Canadian phenomenon, James Valitchka, made two dreams come true when he presented President Barack Obama with a framed copy of “*But I have a dream...*” by Canadian cartoonist Colin McClean, during the President’s first official international visit on February 19.

The two-panel cartoon first depicts a young Martin Luther King telling his disbelieving school teacher that he has a dream of equality for all people; it is contrasted in the second panel by a beaming President and First Lady Obama in front of the White House.

While most Canadians can only dream of having a face-to-face encounter with the American Head of State, this was the second time within one month that James Valitchka had the privilege. The first came on Martin Luther King day, one day prior to the President’s inauguration, when James and the President Elect were both touring the same high school in Washington, D.C. James, a dual Canadian/American citizen, was on the tour as a member of the *Presidential Classroom* program. He will forever recall the President’s words to him, “James, I believe that you and many young people will use your gifts and talents to make a positive change in the world around you. You can be that change.” To this James responded, “Yes, I will Sir.”

The second meeting with President Obama came last Thursday in Ottawa, Ontario as James was among a few Canadians selected to attend the historic day’s events. James is a fan of Canadian cartoonist Colin McClean, whose *Life’s Lighter Side*™ comic strip appears in Share Newspaper, Planet Africa magazine and on a number of business publications. Colin is also a great admirer of the new American President; he remarked, “The election of President Obama touched me deeply because it represents the power of vision, teamwork, individual tenacity and collective hope. I believe it’s a positive message for the world.” Colin is thrilled to have had his artwork given to President Obama, “It’s the next best thing to meeting him in person. I’m inspired by James and honoured to have such a truly remarkable young man do this.”

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14-year-old James Valitchka has already published eight books. He is the founder of the LITERACY CAN CHANGE LIVES annual student conference. As a motivational speaker, he has influenced tens of thousands of students with his anti-bullying advocacy and literacy speeches. His goals are to enrich the world through encouraging literacy, anti-bullying, caring and safe classrooms, and morally positive behaviours. He is currently writing his ninth book while attending Appleby College in Oakville, Ontario. For more information visit: [www.jamesvalitchka.com](http://www.jamesvalitchka.com)

Colin McClean is a resident of Brampton, Ontario. His *Life’s Lighter Side* comic strip has appeared in local, national and international publications over the past ten years. He also uses his unique illustration style to simplify complex messages and provide innovative communications solutions for organizations and businesses. For more information visit: [www.LLSCARTOONS.com](http://www.LLSCARTOONS.com)

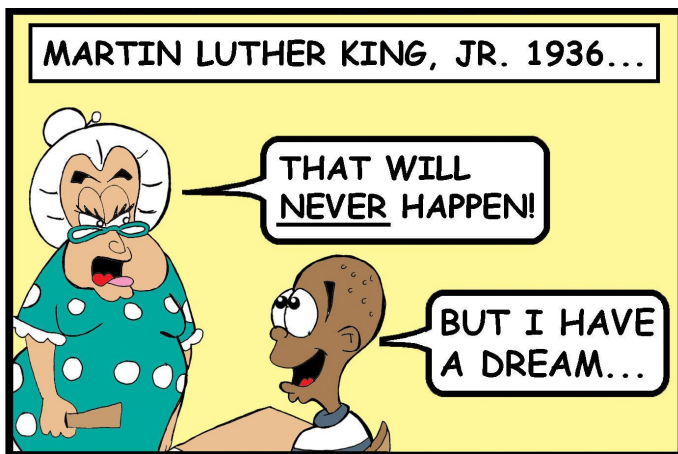


E-mail: [colin@llscartoons.com](mailto:colin@llscartoons.com)  
[www.LLSCARTOONS.com](http://www.LLSCARTOONS.com)

Media Contacts:

Colin McClean:  
<mailto:colin@LLScartoons.com>  
416-428-2598

James Valitchka:  
[jamesvalitchka@yahoo.ca](mailto:jamesvalitchka@yahoo.ca)  
905-582-4541



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