

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## Academica Group staff provide school playground in the Dominican Republic

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After months of casual Fridays, employees at Academica Group's head office in London Ontario collected enough toonies to construct an entire playground for a small elementary school in Cabarete, Dominican Republic. The \$900 Cdn donated by Academica staff paid for local blacksmiths to construct and install brightly-coloured slides, swings, and teeter-totters in the schoolyard. *(See photo attached)*

The project was inspired by the personal experience of Academica Group CEO Rod Skinkle, who was struck by the inequities facing disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the Dominican, and in particular the struggles of 216 students at the small school.

"These kids came from poor homes, to study in crude facilities with unreliable water and only a gravel yard to play in," remembers Skinkle. "Something had to be done. Others were tackling the essentials, but the playground was being neglected – and educators understand that physical activity and play are essential for effective learning. Fortunately, I work with a team of passionate people who are committed to helping young people achieve their potential through education. I'm proud of the way they generously rallied to support this project."

### About Academica Group™:

Originally founded in 1995 as Acumen Research Group, the company pioneered the application of consumer research to higher education policy, branding, alumni and student recruitment challenges. Academica's annual *University & College Applicant Survey* (UCAS™) surveys more than 150,000 post-secondary applicants every spring, and the company has provided research and strategic consulting to more than one hundred college, university, and education clients. Academica Group's SkoolPool™ application connects thousands of institutions with prospective students on Facebook, MySpace, Bebo and other leading social networks.

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*Students at the school in Cabarete, Dominican Republic play on newly-installed playground equipment, thanks to the generosity of Academica Group staff.*

*Photo Credit: Miguelina Zayas, School Director.*