



JAMAICAN NEWSLETTER VIBES

MARCH 2014



Students want to be outstanding

JSH Study confirms impact of programmes on education

Jamaican Self-Help believes education is essential for positive social development, and has worked with three primary schools in Kingston, Jamaica for a number of years to help ensure children have the foundation they need to succeed. Principal Margaret Bolt developed and championed an effective model of education at St. Peter Claver Primary School, which has since been replicated at St. Anne's Primary School, and Tavares Gardens Primary School. All three schools share a common vision, and have been supported by JSH to carry out programmes that focus on literacy as well as activities such as sports, music, dance and clubs. In addition, parenting outreach and support, and teacher training have been important parts of this approach. These activities are aimed at improving students' academic achievements, and also developing their self-confidence, sense of efficacy and a feeling of pride in the greater community – all factors in ensuring positive child development even in a context of urban poverty.



Students enjoy phys ed classes.

From 2009 to 2012, students indicated significant improvement

Feelings of safety at school

65% → 72%

Pride in school work

84% → 90%

Family thinks this is a good school

84% → 89%

In 2009, JSH decided it would be important to supplement the anecdotal evidence of impact with a more systematic multi-year study that included student surveys and focus group interviews. The results could then be documented and shared in Jamaica with the participating schools and the Ministry of Education, and in Canada with JSH members and funders.

Among the findings, the study noted that in just three years literacy levels on the Grade 4 Literacy Test improved by between 4% and 11% across the three schools. And in 2012, 92% of students in Grades 4 to 6 agreed that *"My teacher believes I can learn."*

One of the principals commented: *"We have made a difference in social interactions. Data shows that aggression has lessened. Students have learned manners and practice them with visitors."*

At another school the teacher noted, *"The students think they are kind of stars. Our school no longer feels like a beaten stick. When the students go out, the community says 'what's happening?' A lot of respect is now given to the school. People have a different view of the school."*

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Jamaican Self-Help is an organization of Canadians working in solidarity to foster the development of healthy Jamaican communities through partnership based on mutual respect, understanding and a shared vision of self-determination; and to foster an understanding of global forces (North and South) and their interconnectedness.



STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

Focus on social programmes that build stability and efficacy at both the individual and school level as the foundation for education.

Offer extra or co-curricular activities as key components to academic success.

Ensure adequate literacy and numeracy support for children in early grades.

Build parent and community ownership and pride in the school to alleviate the impact of community violence.

Instill enthusiasm for learning among children through adequate academic support and positive reinforcement.

Invest in long-term strategies to ensure effective values and approaches to learning are entrenched in the culture of the school.

This study would not be possible without the invaluable dedication and assistance of: Dr. Catherine D. Bruce and Tara Flynn, Faculty of Education, Trent University; Dr. Lynn Kostuch, Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, Peterborough; Margaret Brissett-Bolt and Stephney Webb, Ministry of Education, Jamaica; JSH volunteers & staff - Paula Wagar, Joyce Mackenzie, Darlene Stubbs, Nancy Chesher, Allison Bunting, Tanner Swann, Leanne Taylor, Marisa Kaczmarczyk; and most of all the students, teachers, parents and support staff of St. Anne's Primary School (Principal – Estella Forrester), St. Peter Claver Primary School (Principal – Karen Jackson-Reynolds), Tavares Gardens Primary School (Principal – Linnette Malcolm), Jamaica.

Two key factors played a role in this success. **Learning readiness:** Only once basic and social needs are addressed, can academic success be achieved; and **Student and teacher efficacy:** Students who believe they will be successful set higher goals for themselves, try harder to achieve those goals, and persist through obstacles. Students with low efficacy experience a fear of failure. High efficacy teachers believe that they can help students learn. They produce high student achievement, invest more time in special needs students and build student confidence.

In October 2013, the final report was presented to the Minister, Ronald Thwaites, as well as his most senior staff – the Permanent Secretary and the Chief Education Officer – in a round table discussion that included impassioned remarks from the three school principals. The Minister was very interested in the results and promised to follow up with the three principals to learn more about their model. The Ministry also made a commitment to pursue further work with JSH in the future.

For more details on the School Study, visit www.jshcanada.org.



School study team meets with Jamaica's Minister of Education.

*"Each day I live, I want it to be
a day to give the best of me.*

*I'm only one, but not alone -
my finest day is yet unknown.*

*I broke my heart for
every gain, to taste the sweet,
I faced the pain,*

*I rise and fall, yet through it all,
this much remains.*

*I want one moment in time when
I'm more than I thought I could be*

*when all of my dreams
are a heartbeat away and
the answers are all up to me"*

**~ Whitney Houston
'One Moment in Time'**



Greetings. Indeed we all have had our moment in time, as we have achieved some of our goals and have maximized our potential, right? But for some persons who are less fortunate than us, it's difficult for them to maximize their true potentials and to seize their moment in time. These individuals I'm talking about are children in the inner-city of Jamaica, specifically those at the Tavares Gardens Primary school.

Tavares Gardens Primary is located in the inner-city community of Payne Avenue. The community culture is not one that embraces education, effective parenting skills, styles or involvement, as violence takes precedence. Two major strategies used by our school to combat these problems and to assist students to maximize their potential are through the creative arts and sports programs. In these programs, students are taught good values, attitudes, discipline, persistence, and the value of hard work, thus impacting positively on behaviour, academic performance, punctuality, their parents' involvement in the school and by extension the community. A typical example was when the school football team made it to the final of the Annual In-sport Primary Football Competition this year and the community came out in full support of the team at the final match where the team won and became the champion for the very first time.



JAMAICAN VIBES



Shining Stars



Cathy Bruce

Lead Researcher,
JSH School Study

Cathy is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at Trent University and was named an outstanding university professor by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations in 2013. She began her career in education as a classroom teacher, and has worked as a school district mathematics consultant. In addition to teaching at the university for the past 10 years, she also has an active research program focused on teaching and learning in mathematics. Despite her very busy life, Cathy became involved with JSH in 2008, volunteering her expertise in research design, data collection and analysis for the JSH School Study. She brought in other research experts through the course of the study to work alongside our Jamaican contacts. In October, Cathy was part of the delegation that presented to the Jamaican Minister of Education, and she has enthusiastically agreed to continue working with JSH and our Jamaican partners as we pursue the recommendations of the study.



Tiwana Mackalia Palmer

Student, St. Peter Claver
Primary School

Tiwana is an 11-year-old Grade 6 student at St. Peter Claver Primary School. She lives with her mom, grandparents, an uncle and six cousins on Spanish Town Road, about a 30 minute walk from school. She feels very lucky to be a student at St. Peter Claver because it is a nice school and the teachers are very helpful. She enjoys math, and dreams that one day she may have a career in the field of medicine.

Tiwana really enjoys being a member of the Brownies after school. Along with about 30 of her classmates she is learning sewing skills, communication skills and is generally just having fun. One day Tiwana would love to see snow and maybe visit Canada.

Excerpts from Layton Shaw's speech at the JSH Caribbean Irie Dinner, October 2013

Ladies and gentlemen, students who experience discrimination based on their socio-economic background, literacy level, health status (eg. living with HIV & AIDS) or those who were abused sexually or have an overall behavioural problems are drafted into Drama, where they are taught to dance, recite poems, act in plays, while benefitting from therapeutic counselling and learning good values and life skills in a caring and loving social atmosphere. Since entering the Annual JCDC Drama Competition in 2011, the Drama group has done exceptionally well. To date they have won a total of 25 medals, and two certificates of merit in the category of drama. The group entered the speech component of competition for the first time this year and earned a bronze medal and certificate of merit.

These programs are indeed helping students to achieve their moment in time as they motivate as well as sharpen their skills and talents to become the best in their parish and among the best

in the island. But could you image that this would not have been possible without the monetary assistance of Jamaican Self-Help. Without the support from the JSH organization, the school would not be able to pay the specialist in the mentioned areas, to purchase the equipment that is needed and take care of all the other related expenses for the program to be effective and ultimately provide students with the opportunity to have their moment to shine or their moment in time.

On behalf of everyone at Tavares Gardens Primary, I thank you.

Layton Shaw is the guidance counsellor and drama teacher at Tavares Gardens Primary School in Kingston. He was in Canada last October and spoke in Toronto, Ottawa and Peterborough. Layton's tour was sponsored by the Ontario Council for International Co-operation.



Celebrating Volunteers at the 2014 Spark Photo Festival

For over 30 years, JSH volunteers and donors have risen to the challenge of our mission and actively participated in supporting our programs and partners both in Jamaica and here at home in Peterborough. Volunteers are present in all aspects of our work. Through participation in local events, evaluating our international programs, sharing culture, hosting Jamaican visitors, sharing expertise and skills, or direct involvement in program delivery with Jamaican partners, JSH volunteers contribute to the ongoing success and longevity of our organization.

We are pleased to recognize the important contribution of our volunteers in April at this year's **SPARK PHOTO FESTIVAL** in our exhibit theme, *"Empowering People. Building Community."*

As you journey through our exhibit, you will notice theme areas of *"Community Events"*, *"Youth 4 Global Change"*, *"Volunteer Trips to Jamaica"* and *"People of Jamaican Self-Help"*, highlighting the contributions volunteers make every day to every aspect of our organization.

Empowered people are the foundation of strong and vibrant communities, and whether abroad in Jamaica or here at home, connections between people and cultures also build resilient communities and a better world.

The support of donors and dedication of volunteers ensures that we continue to take action to break the cycle of poverty, we work together to change the unjust structures that Jamaicans face, and we offer opportunities to learn, to contemplate and to find new ways toward a world free of poverty.

The JSH Exhibit will be open to the public for the month of April. Join us at our Opening Reception during National Volunteer Week, or drop by anytime to view the photos and visit the JSH office. For details visit: www.sparkphotofestival.com or www.jshcanada.org or call 705-743-1671.

LOCATION

Just outside the JSH office in
The Commerce Building,
upstairs at 129 1/2 Hunter St. West,
Peterborough K9J 7X7

HOURS

Mon - Thurs 10-4; Fri - Sun 11-2

OPENING RECEPTION

Tuesday, April 8, 5-7pm

JSH CONVERSATIONS

Wednesday, April 30, 5-7pm



Celebrating JSH volunteers.

UPCOMING EVENTS

For details, visit www.jshcanada.org
or call the JSH office at (705) 743-1671.

SUNDAY, APRIL 27

Jamaican' Me Shine – JSH Annual Fundraising Event

Auction – Hors d'oeuvres – Entertainment.
Tickets \$40/person (\$20 tax receipt).
Contact JSH for details or to order tickets.

**11:30am-2:30pm, Princess Gardens Atrium
100 Charlotte St., Peterborough.**

FRIDAY, MAY 23

Afro-Caribbean Cultural Extravaganza

Featuring upcoming and well-known performers!
Save the date and check the JSH website for details as they
become available. For information call 613-843-1762.

**7:00 pm, Ottawa Mennonite Church
1830 Kilborn Ave., Ottawa**



www.jshcanada.org | 705-743-1671 | info@jshcanada.org
P.O. Box 1992, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada K9J 7X7

Charitable Registration # 89733 7150 RR0001