



JAMAICAN NEWSLETTER VIBES

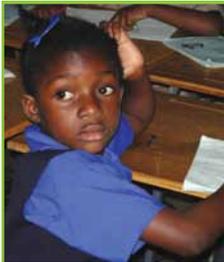
MARCH 2012



Reading, the foundation for success.

Literacy is both a basic need and a basic right, notes Terrilyn Brown, Vice Principal of St. Anne's Primary School, one of Jamaican Self-Help's partners in Kingston, Jamaica. Reading forms the foundation of a child's development, and *"once you learn to read, nothing can stop you."*

Jamaican Self-Help believes firmly that literacy is a basic right for all, and is a fundamental skill for personal and social development. In Jamaica, literacy can offer a way out of poverty, for individuals to achieve their potential and so that the country as a whole can benefit from the contributions of all its citizens. However, the current reality for young Jamaicans is of great concern.

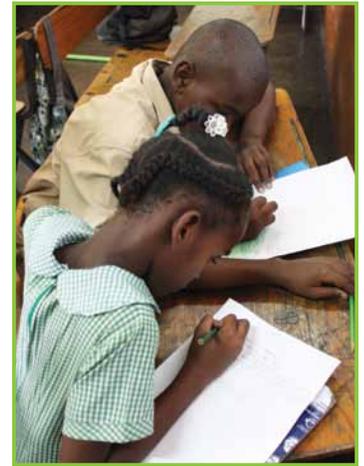


In Jamaica, approximately 30% of students leaving primary school are illiterate.

Approximately 142,000 youth are out of school and out of work and about 25% of these did not go beyond Grade 9.

As a teacher at a primary school in a struggling community, Ms. Brown sees the challenges that her students face every day. Parents eke out a living at the local market or selling on the street and have little money or time to look after their children. Many have low levels of education. *"If the parents have trouble with literacy themselves or do not value education, the children do not receive the encouragement and guidance needed to succeed."* The result is another generation of disenfranchised youth and a cycle of poverty that continues to be difficult to break.

But as Ms. Brown notes, *"reading opens the world"* to children. Her school helps students who are struggling with reading, because the ability to read also improves their self-confidence and empowers them to take on other challenges. If a child can read, he or she can learn and continue through high school and even post secondary education. A young adult who can read can find work and become a contributing member of his or her family and community.



While the government of Jamaica has placed an increased focus on literacy in schools, illiteracy continues to be an issue, particularly in marginalized communities. To address the need, Jamaica introduced a new "A-STEP" programme in the fall of 2011. This programme is for students who have attempted the Grade 4 Literacy test for three years in a row and still have not passed. These students, now in Grade 7, are placed in a separate full year programme with a curriculum focusing on literacy and numeracy.

Even with government initiatives, Jamaican children and youth continue to need additional help to learn to read. JSH has made a commitment to assisting Jamaicans to overcome poverty, and supports literacy and reading programmes for children and youth in all seven of its projects.

(Sources: UNICEF, 2005 & 2009; Terrilyn Brown, St. Anne's Primary School).

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.



How WE make a difference...

As one of Jamaican Self-Help's many priorities, we focus on literacy and reading in all seven of our projects: for children in primary schools and for young adults in communities. Our programmes provide resources for schools and community centres to offer one on one and small group classes, special activities and support for children and youth living in poverty. JSH focuses on increasing literacy skills because we know that the ability to read correlates to the ability to succeed in school and in life, and helps the young generation to break the cycle of poverty.

What I think about reading is a higher part to life. It is a must for me. I love this reading programme. I love it, I love it. I have learnt how to read, yes! I have learnt how to spell. This is great. I love it.

~ JANOY

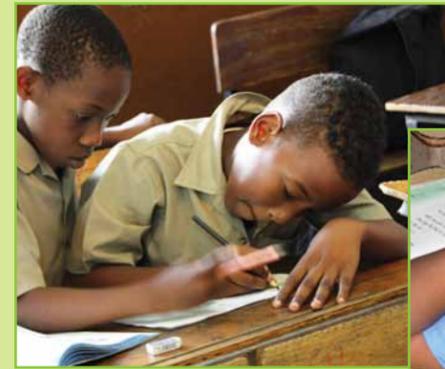
...while I was reading I make alot of mistakes and I was about to cry when Miss Bennett told me that I will learn from my mistake. She gave me letters, sounds and spelling. That day I felt proud because I learned to sound letters. I really like to thank Miss Bennett alot ...

~ JORRAINE

Teachers report positive effects of the special literacy classes on students, and that when students are in their regular class they have the tools they need to learn.

In one case, a teacher reported that a male student was not coming to school, and so to reach out and encourage him, he was invited to join the literacy programme. He became interested in words. He became motivated to learn because of his success in spelling. His attendance improved. This success is typical of the results of the literacy programmes across the JSH schools. Students say they have fun learning.

One principal credits the teachers' effective use of the technology. She explains that with this help the children have been improving in literacy and numeracy and are better able to move to higher grade levels.



How YOU make a difference...

Jamaican Self-Help needs your financial support to ensure these literacy programmes and other education and community projects in Jamaica can continue.

BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR

One of the many ways you can help our programme is by joining the Hands Across the Water monthly donor club. For just a small monthly contribution you can be part of the joy and pride of a child learning to read.

When I got to the reading room I was so sad... (then) when I finish my exam and I heard that I past I was so happy that I run (to my teacher) and hug her up and she look up with a great big smile from that day I was the brightest girl in class. I love her so much.

~ KEYLA

LEAVE A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

After you have remembered family and friends, think of your friends at JSH to enable us to continue our work in Jamaica and here at home. After more than 30 years of continuous operations in Jamaica, we have demonstrated effective programs that have benefitted many children, youth, parents, community workers and educational staff.

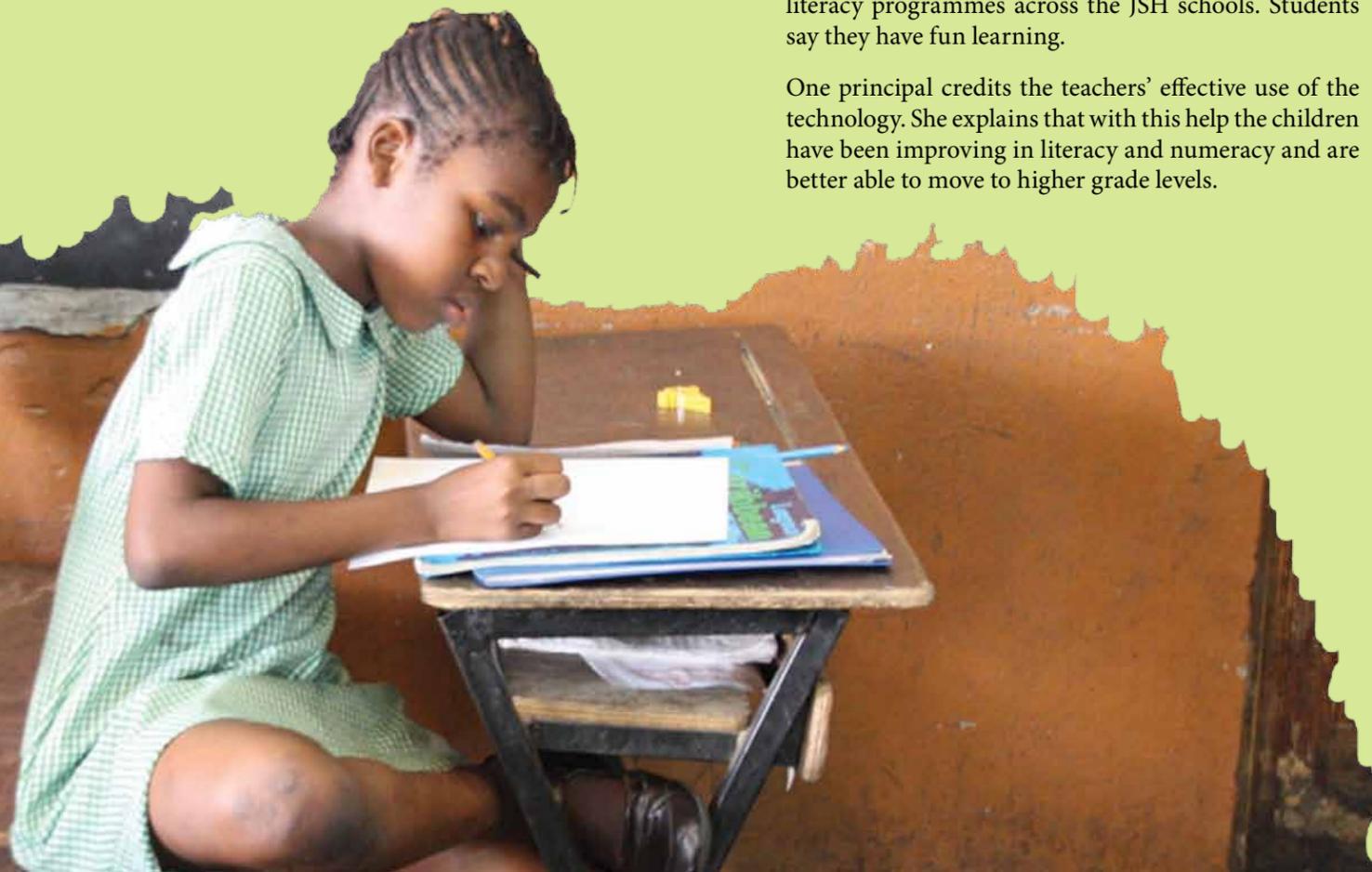
When I started to read my teacher told me I am very slow and I needed more assistance. I was very ashamed of myself I feel so happy because I can read much better now. I am not afraid to read. I felt so heroic.

~ NGOZI

According to the school guidance counselors, JSH plays a "major role" noting that "other schools want to have what we have" and that "we are blessed and really grateful." "They help us a great deal. I don't know how we would fund most of the projects that we have."

Students express a collective desire and belief that they can improve themselves through their education. One student explains, the teachers "don't want us to be like the gangsters. We don't want to be like that. We want to grow up and be in society and be good people."

There are many other ways you can help make a difference. Contact Jamaican Self-Help anytime to discuss the possibilities.



Jamaica, in the news.

On December 28, Jamaicans voted in a new Prime Minister and governing party: Portia Simpson-Miller is the first elected female Prime Minister of Jamaica, leading her People's National Party (PNP) to a clear victory over the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and its leader, former Education Minister Andrew Holness. As leader of the newly elected government, Ms. Simpson-Miller promised to renegotiate the agreement with the International Monetary Fund, establish the National Energy Council to devise alternatives to secure Jamaica's energy future, and develop plans and build infrastructure to boost sports tourism, health tourism and the performing arts.



On February 28, The United Nations Development Program released its new Human Development Report for the Caribbean entitled "Human Development and the Shift to Better Citizen Security." The report was developed over 2 years through consultations throughout the Caribbean region. In 2011, Dr. Marlyn J. Jones, the CHDR National Author for Jamaica presented the results of a 2010-2011 survey of 2,000 Jamaicans regarding experiences and perceptions of citizen security. She noted that 61 percent of respondents in the survey considered crime a serious problem, 48% of the respondents expressed fear about the possibility of becoming a victim, and only 36 percent felt secure living in the country. Dr. Jones explained, "This signals the importance of implementing programs to help the society transition to a level of security in which citizens can enjoy the personal freedoms they are currently denied because of the threat and fear of crime." (For details on the report, visit www.jm.undp.org)

In January, both Canadian and Jamaican media reported that gang-related homicides had declined significantly over the past two years as police in both countries cracked down on key gang leaders, such as those from the renowned Shower Posse. The 2011 "incursion" where over 70 Jamaicans were killed as police searched for the notorious Christopher "Dudus" Coke has left an impact on Jamaica as a whole and in some communities in particular. As key gang leaders are arrested or flee their communities, JSH partners have reported increased stability in some of neighbourhoods, with less violence and general fear. However, there are children who still show signs of trauma and related behavioural issues. The funding of social intervention programmes to address and prevent violence continues to be discussed at the national level.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

For more information, please contact JSH
705-743-1671 • www.jshcanada.org.

APRIL 22, 2012

23rd Annual JSH Brunch and Auction

Appetizers - Auction - Awareness

Sunday April 22, 2012; 11:30am- 2:30pm

Princess Gardens Retirement Residence Courtyard Café
100 Charlotte Street, Peterborough

Tickets in advance only:

\$35 per person; \$15 for students and youth

APRIL 22 – 29, 2012

Take a Jamaican Blue Mountain Coffee Break!

Come by the Dreams of Beans café in Peterborough anytime between April 22 and 29 and pick up a pound of Blue Mountain coffee with proceeds to JSH.

Thanks to Johanna and her staff at Dreams of Beans for their support!



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

Charitable Registration # 89733 7150 RR0001