



# JAMAICAN NEWSLETTER VIBES

NOVEMBER 2012



## Empowering youth today and tomorrow: JSH in Jamaica 2012 - 2013

Longstanding partnerships in Jamaica enable Jamaican Self-Help to work toward the goal of breaking the cycle of poverty. JSH empowers individuals in both urban and rural Jamaica to improve their lives through education and skills training.

Programmes include literacy for children and youth, trade skills training for young adults, and activities to develop life skills for youth and for parents including such topics as conflict resolution, personal and household budgeting. Children also need opportunities to improve their self-esteem, so JSH-supported recreational activities such as music and sports. These activities also build a sense of community – connecting schools with community and developing pride and self-worth among the people of marginalized neighbourhoods. JSH builds networks by bringing our Jamaican partners together on common issues, and links Canadians and Jamaicans through volunteer service trips, financial contributions, and visits of Jamaican speakers to Canada.

This year, JSH is proud to partner with seven organizations and schools who carry out vital programmes that assist some of those most vulnerable in Jamaica. We support **St. Peter Claver Primary School** and **St. Anne's Primary School** through our Canadian high school volunteer trips, where Canadian students assist in Jamaican classrooms with one-on-one tutoring, sports or arts activities with children in Grades 1 through 6. JSH organizes workshops and meetings for staff from all seven partners to help them maintain the high quality of their programmes. We are also providing five partners with financial assistance for some of their key activities this year.



**445,000 Jamaicans**  
are living in poverty,  
an increase of 180,000  
or 40% since 2007.

**Close to 142,000**  
youth are out of school  
and unemployed.

(From Government of Jamaica speech in the Jamaica Gleaner, Oct 14, 2010 and Private Sector Organization of Jamaica (PSOJ) Position Paper on Education - 2012)

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.



# JSH's commitment to youth in Jamaica remains strong in both urban and rural communities.

Our presence this year focuses on five partners and the programmes they deliver to assist and support vulnerable youth, parents and families.

## S-CORNER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

S-Corner is located in an urban community characterized by long term poverty, sporadic violence and social stigma. Based on a wide spread community consultation, S-Corner has focused its efforts on youth and parents in the community. S-Corner offers daily classes to youth to upgrade their academics and to learn basic IT skills, which is essential in today's world. S-Corner also provides creative and constructive outlets for youth such as sports or socials that serve to bring the community together.



Parents are given support to work through challenges in raising their children under very difficult circumstances. Many parents are teenagers, still young themselves, so they receive guidance and support both for raising children and for their own reproductive health. The S-Corner parenting coordinator and reproductive health nurse organize workshops, individual counselling and informal talks on the street each week to reach both male and female parents in the community.

- Counselling and training for 60 parents
- Literacy upgrading and basic computer skills for 100 youth
- Recreation and social activities for community youth



## ST. MARGARET'S HUMAN RESOURCES CENTRE

St. Margaret's is a community-based centre in a downtown neighbourhood that offers at-risk youth the basic skills to find employment and create a better life. At St. Margaret's, the vocational courses of woodworking/carpentry and textiles/sewing offer young people from the surrounding community both a trade skill for future employment, and a programme that can help them to develop life skills, such as literacy, conflict resolution, and self-confidence.



Students enrol in one skill area and take daily classes from September to June to prepare them to sit the St. Margaret's exam or the HEART national exam for trade skills. The library is open to all students for homework assignments, to encourage reading, and to learn to use the internet. The programmes at St. Margaret's keep young men and women "off the street" and away from crime and harmful activities.

- Woodworking & Sewing courses for 60 students
- Library service for 250 students

## ST. PIUS X TRAINING CENTRE

St. Pius X Training Centre offers skills training courses to young people from various inner-city communities to help them find stable employment. Cosmetology, known in Canada as "aesthetics", is a profitable micro-enterprise option for women who have few resources, as it only requires affordable materials and women can work from their homes. The cosmetology course at St. Pius X has been very successful in the past, and the

Centre has expanded the programme this year to include more students. Students take classes from Monday to Thursday each week which cover both theory and practical components, as well as special sessions on literacy and life skills. After the 6 month course, students can advance to a second level or graduate to start their own businesses offering manicures, pedicures, or hair styling services.



- Cosmetology course for 30 students

## ST. THERESA'S LITERACY PROJECT



Rural communities in Jamaica suffer from the highest levels of poverty. With very limited resources for education, literacy levels in rural schools are often far below grade level. St. Theresa's Literacy Project employs three teachers and a project supervisor to carry out remedial reading classes in two primary schools in the rural parish of St. Mary on the north-east coast of Jamaica.

All students are tested at the beginning of each school term and those with greatest need are selected for the literacy programme. These students are placed in one-on-one or small group reading classes during the school day. Progress is often rapid – with just a little extra support and effective

teaching methods, students have a much better chance to achieve their grade level in reading and subsequently succeed in their overall academics.

- Remedial reading classes for 150 students in 2 rural primary schools

## TAVARES GARDENS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tavares Gardens Primary School is located in a poor, marginalized and often unstable inner-city community. Because of its location, very few children are sent to this school, and with few children, there are scarce resources for learning. JSH supports weekly music and physical education classes for all 250 students.



The school also has music ensembles and sports teams who participate in regional competitions. These programmes are extremely important in attracting students to the school and motivating them to attend regularly.

Sports and music develop interpersonal skills, and bring a sense of accomplishment and value to the students and their parents, the staff, and the surrounding community. Everyone is excited when the soccer team wins in the regional competition or the recorder group plays at the School's open house. All children deserve a chance to play!

- Music and Sports for all 250 students



## Jamaica in the news...

In late October, Prime Minister Stephen Harper welcomed Jamaican Prime Minister Portia Simpson-Miller to Canada. The two leaders had opportunities to discuss economic and trade issues, and other ties between the two countries. Canada promised to offer support to Jamaica's agricultural sector to help the island's economy. The visit was cut short as Simpson-Miller was called back to Jamaica just as Hurricane Sandy was about to cross the island.

Many Canadians waited anxiously for news about the storm as it tracked across the capital city of Kingston on October 24 and moved northeast towards Cuba. Reports came trickling back over several days. Overall, the island had prepared itself well and damage was not widespread. The eastern section of the island was affected, and many farmers lost their crops. One person was killed by the storm. Phone calls and emails from JSH partners in Kingston indicated that although electrical lines were down and buildings were damaged, the city was not as badly impacted as expected. The Co-ordinator for the JSH project on the north coast called in to report that the literacy project also did not suffer significant damage. Across the island, however, there was no water or electricity in most households for three days or more. By Monday Oct 29, schools were re-opened and except for the worst hit areas, Jamaica was back to work.

## Jamaican Self-Help in the news...

On Saturday October 20th, Tucker Barton, Chair of the JSH Board of Directors, had the honour of being in attendance as the organization received the prestigious *Jamaican High Commissioner's Award*. The High Commissioner for Jamaica to Canada, Her Excellency Sheila Sealy Monteith, presented the award, to recognize "*commitment and contribution to improving the quality of life in communities in Jamaica.*"

The event was hosted by J(O)CA, the Jamaican Ottawa Community Association, and gathered over 150 people together at their annual gala. Jamaican Self-Help has a volunteer committee in Ottawa, led by co-chairs Ute Gerbrandt and Irvin Stewart, and through their efforts, Jamaican Self-Help's work in Jamaica has become well known to the Jamaican community in Ottawa.



(l to r) Tucker Barton, Irvin Stewart, Ute Gerbrandt

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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

### NOVEMBER 2012

#### Artisan Sale

Local, unique handcrafted items.

**Saturday November 24 &  
Sunday November 25,  
Mark St. United Church,  
Peterborough.**

### FEBRUARY 2013

#### One World Dinner

The World's Largest International  
Vegetarian Potluck Dinner.

**Saturday February 2,  
St. Paul's Presbyterian Church,  
Peterborough.**

### APRIL 2013

#### Annual JSH Brunch and Auction

Watch for details early in 2013!

**Sunday April 28,  
Princess Gardens Atrium,  
Peterborough.**



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