



JAMAICAN NEWSLETTER VIBES

SEPTEMBER 2014



Poverty • Unemployment • Violence • Social Stigma: a cruel cycle we can interrupt.

Jamaica's poverty rate is at its highest level since 2004. Today, one in four Jamaican children live in poverty. And most of these children live in the marginalized urban neighbourhoods of Kingston. Unemployment in Jamaica jumped from 13.7% in 2012 to 16.3% in 2013. This rate doubles for youth under 25 – where one in three youth are unemployed. And once again, this situation is magnified in inner-city communities. Violence in these communities, often connected to the drug trade, has been characterized as primarily male on male, poor on poor, and youth on youth. Alarming, an increasing number of young people are both the victims and perpetrators of violent crime. As a result, residents living there, particularly young adults, are confronted with a stigma that can prevent them from finding work or accessing vital services. This situation creates frustration and powerlessness, reinforces a subculture of conflict, and ultimately perpetuates the cycle of poverty.

The United Nations Development Program notes that in terms of education, access is not the problem in Jamaica, but rather it's the quality of education, underperformance of boys and attendance problems that create barriers to success. In 2013, only 63% of Grade 4 children passed the national literacy test. And only 60% of children passed the Grade 6 Achievement Test (GSAT) on their first attempt. Jamaican Self-Help focuses on supporting education for inner-city Jamaican children and youth through both primary schools and community centres.

Based on our partners' experience, JSH has learned that to be effective, we must take a holistic approach: working with children of different age groups, their parents and families, and reaching out to the broader community. Programmes must address basic education needs like literacy and numeracy, and also develop interpersonal and conflict resolution skills. We support efforts to build secure and supportive environments for children to grow and learn. We strive to foster a sense of hope and positive change in the broader community. And to sustain the changes in the long term, we support the development of the partner organizations and their staff, and make connections to other stakeholders, like the Ministry of Education.



"The equation is simple: education is the most basic insurance against poverty. Education represents opportunity. At all ages, it empowers people with the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to shape a better future."

Irina Bokova,
Director-General, UNESCO (2010)

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 in Jamaica:

Our Programme

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Basic education is fundamental to human development; in the communities where JSH works, children and teenagers have fallen behind, dropped out of school, or have not had the right kind of support to develop basic reading, math and educational skills. Many of these youth need guidance and support to address their academic needs, build self-esteem and deal with conflict. They need advocates who will ensure that they have the opportunities to apply their talents and skills despite the systemic barriers that they face. In some cases, they need opportunities to develop specific job skills and support to find work. JSH supports the specialized classes, programmes and one-on-one support that these young people need to succeed.

CULTURE AND RECREATION

Sports, music, drama, dance — all these activities help children and youth to build their self-confidence, learn teamwork skills, and show their talents. They help ensure that children come to school regularly and can help students improve their academics. In communities that suffer from instability and poverty, these activities also serve as outlets for children to express themselves in constructive ways. They offer families and the broader community fun opportunities to come together and build a sense of community spirit. For all these reasons, JSH supports these activities at three primary schools.

DEVELOPMENT FOR THE FUTURE

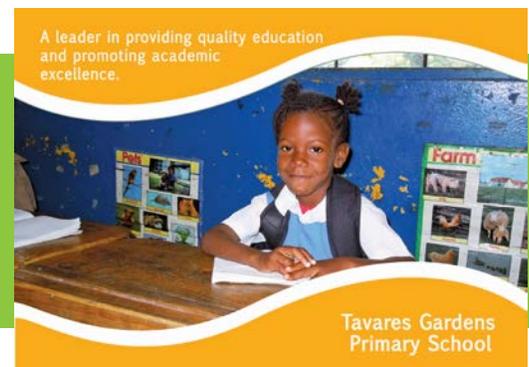
For development to be effective in the long-term, the Jamaican organizations involved need to be strong and able to manage the challenges that they face. In addition to supporting the projects and activities of our partners, JSH works together with each partner to identify their unique skills and needs, and assists them through staff training, guidance in planning and evaluation, and supporting their management and administrative work so that they can continue to run effective programmes and access the resources they need to sustain themselves.

Our Partners

Jamaican Self-Help believes that long-term partnerships help to ensure effective development.

This year we will continue to work with S-Corner Community Development Organization, St. Margaret's Human Resources Centre and Tavares Gardens Primary School in the areas of basic education, culture and recreation and parenting.

We are very pleased to also extend our support to enhance the music and performing arts programmes at St. Anne's Primary School and St. Peter Claver Primary School.

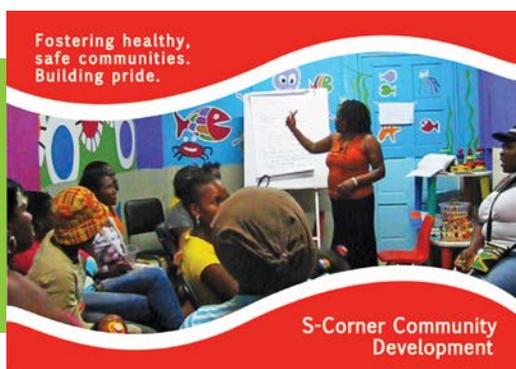


Tavares Gardens Primary School

is located in one of the under-served communities of Kingston where all 240 children of the school come from poor or struggling families. The community is plagued by high levels of inter-community and intra-community violence. As a result, children have few skills, scarce coping mechanisms, and they have trouble in school. There is little money for activities for the children or special events that could bring the community together. Still, the staff of 11 at Tavares Gardens Primary School strives to offer its students quality education from Grades One through Six.

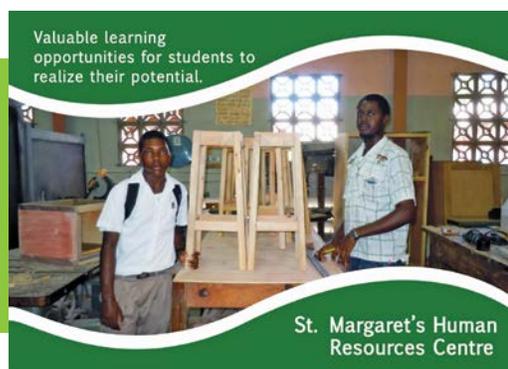


Empowering People, Building Community



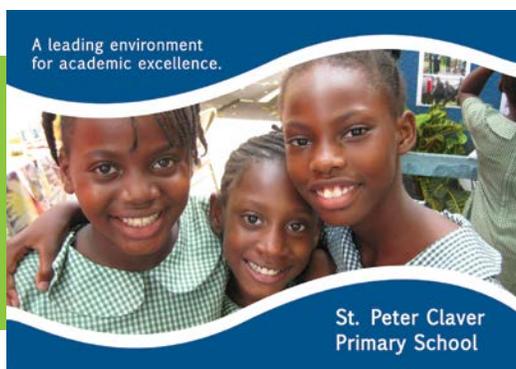
S-Corner Community Development Organization

is a broad-based community development organization located in Bennet Lands, Kingston – an urban community hindered by long term poverty, sporadic violence and public stigma. S-Corner's mission is to "build healthy and safe communities, where residents are proud to live, through programs of technological education, life skills development, income generation and psychosocial support." S-Corner has taken on multiple roles in the community, in its efforts to develop widespread community participation and respond to the needs identified.



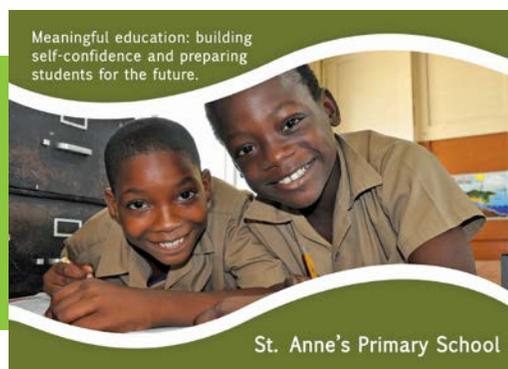
St. Margaret's Human Resources Centre

is located in the community of Olympic Gardens, Kingston and has a student population of approximately 250 youth aged 14–25 who are not part of the regular education system due to low literacy levels, behaviour issues, or unstable living circumstances. The Centre aims to address youth unemployment and improve education through skill training and remedial education.



St. Peter Claver Primary School

serves the educational needs of the Bennet Lands community in Kingston. The challenges faced by the school are similar to those in other inner-city communities. Poverty leads to crime and violence in the community and a variety of barriers for children to attend school and achieve academic success. The school has responded to these challenges by empowering its 900+ students and reaching the broader community through an effective and diverse educational and co-curricular programme that builds academic skills and a sense of pride.



St. Anne's Primary School

is located in an inner-city community that continues to suffer from a great deal of instability and unpredictable bouts of violence. The school offers a safe and positive learning environment for its 550 students in Grades 1 through 6. Due to the context in which they work, in addition to the regular curriculum, St. Anne's staff are dedicated to helping their students and families overcome the trauma and challenges they experience by offering community-building activities that enhance the learning environment.



JSH in Canada:

JSH works to build a community of engaged and informed citizens who can make the links with our work and partners in Jamaica, and have a positive impact here at home. To further our commitment to *empower people and build community* JSH holds public education events, including the annual Ganley Lecture, cross-cultural activities such as the Caribbean Street Festival and Ottawa's Afro-Caribbean Cultural Extravaganza, and we organize ways for Jamaicans and Canadians to work and learn together through trips to Jamaica, and partner tours to Canada. We also host a number of successful fundraising events over the course of the year. We involve volunteers in all aspects of our work.



To make an impact in the longer term, JSH has several youth-focused programmes. **Our Youth 4 Global Change** committee meets weekly and is active in social justice issues. Members learn about topics such as water privatization or income inequality, and they plan ways to educate and involve the public in positive social change. JSH hosts an annual Building a Movement (BAM) youth retreat that focuses on developing a deeper understanding of global inequality, team-building and skills training. The annual **Youth Awareness Trip** in March also aims to develop leadership in global social justice issues among teenagers in the Peterborough region through an intensive two-week educational and volunteer experience in Jamaica.

We are excited to partner with several local organizations to offer **TEACH Outside the Box: Social Justice Certificate Program**. Participants explore themes of transformative education, Indigenous knowledge systems, global issues and anti-oppression. With this initiative we hope to grow the community of socially conscious teachers who are trained to tackle tough subjects like economic inequality and human rights while actively creating inclusive classroom spaces.

Looking For Another Way To Get Involved?

Why not organize a fundraiser?

It's easy, ask your family and friends for ideas and work on something together. Contact the JSH office to tell us about your plans, and we can provide you with any information you need.

Or, become a volunteer?

JSH is always looking for new volunteers. If you have a few hours a month, or if you can help just on an occasional basis, let us know!

Or, visit Jamaica?

We are always interested to help Canadians connect to Jamaica. Let us know if you want to be part of a volunteer service trip, or if you are already travelling to Jamaica and would like to visit our projects.

And remember, if you are not already on our email list, please send us a quick note online and we'll keep you updated on current news and upcoming events.

heather@jshcanada.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

NOV. 22-23, 2014

8th Annual JSH Artisan Sale

Featuring two dozen local artisans with silver and gemstone jewellery, handmade soap, pottery, woodworking, photography, basketry, weaving, preserves and more!

Mark St. United Church Hall, Peterborough.

NOVEMBER 2014

10th Annual Ganley Lecture

Watch for details coming soon!



www.jshcanada.org | 705-743-1671 | info@jshcanada.org

P.O. Box 1992, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada K9J 7X7

Charitable Registration # 89733 7150 RR0001