



JAMAICAN NEWSLETTER VIBES

SEPTEMBER 2013



Today in Kingston...

...a little boy is walking to school in a downtown neighbourhood with his auntie and his sister.

They live close by the school and as they walk they pass by the “regulars” on the street – a mother shaking out a dirty rug, a couple of young men having a smoke on the curbside, the local vendor selling juice in bags. As they approach the gate of the school they meet with other students – most take the city bus – and everyone gathers in the school yard, a paved area surrounded by concrete block walls. It is 7:30am and morning devotions and classes will start in an hour. The little boy is excited because today is music day and he will have a chance to show the music teacher that he has practiced his recorder and is ready for the competition that will take place later this week. He likes music class more than anything, and his auntie is proud that not only is he doing well in music, but he has improved in his regular classwork as well. The boy had many behaviour issues from an unstable home life, but now his teacher says that he has settled down a lot and concentrates more, and that he is more polite with the other children and with the teachers.



Down the street there is another school, but this one is for teenagers and young adults. Its programmes are aimed at helping youth who have difficulty in the regular school system.

It has small classes for teenagers who want to pass Grade 9; skills training in sewing or hairstyling for those who want to learn a trade so they can start their own business; and one-on-one counselling to help the students with family issues, and to coach them on how to get along with others and develop more self-confidence. One of the students, just 16 years old, came to this school after she had her baby last year. She dropped out of regular school when she was pregnant, but now she would really like to have her own business working from home so she can take care of her son. She has made arrangements with a neighbour to look after her baby while she takes classes. She loves to learn about hairstyling – creating fancy styles, and learning what’s in the cosmetics and how to use them safely. She is looking forward to learning how to set up her finances and how to market her business. She is shy and not very confident, but the teachers are kind. They see that she is very smart, she just needs a little extra encouragement and support to keep up her school work and still care for her small family.

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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.



JSH in Jamaica: Education and Social Development

Jamaica is a country full of potential. Yet, many inner-city families and communities are plagued by poverty, instability and social stigma. This year Jamaican Self-Help is supporting partners and projects in Kingston that focus on children and youth. Our programme uses a holistic approach to education and social development in three urban communities that share similar challenges.

A leader in providing quality education and promoting academic excellence.



Tavares Gardens Primary School

Fostering healthy, safe communities. Building pride.



S-Corner Community Development

Valuable learning opportunities for students to realize their potential.



St. Margaret's Human Resources Centre

Tavares Gardens Primary School is located in one of the underserved communities of Kingston where all 240 children of the school come from poor or struggling families. The community is affected 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, Tavares Gardens Primary School strives to offer its students quality education from Grades One through Six.

A staff of 11 provide the core curriculum, and with the support of JSH, the school can offer extra literacy classes for children who have fallen behind, because reading is essential for future success. JSH also enables the school to offer physical education and music for all its students, and team sports and creative arts groups that compete regionally and nationally. These activities provide a chance for the students to be exposed to places and people outside of the local community, and they build valuable life skills and competencies that foster critical thinking, communication, decision making, team building skills and raise the children's self-esteem, so they can feel confident and prepared for the future.

S-Corner Community Development Organization is a broad-based community development organization located in Bennett 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. It has increasingly moved towards a focus on youth. With JSH support, S-Corner offers academic upgrading and homework support, family counselling, and community-building activities that offer young people opportunities for self-improvement while developing a positive community environment.

St. Margaret's Human Resources Centre is located in the community of Olympic Gardens in Kingston and has a student population of approximately 250 youth aged 14–25 who are not able to participate in 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 skills training and remedial education. Each student enrolled at St. Margaret's has an individualized learning plan which may include both a skill area and academic upgrading. Some students will complete their personalized programme in one year, others in 2 or 3 years. JSH supports the woodworking programme, which includes training in practical skills and theory, remedial classes and a lunch programme.

St Margaret's also sees the need to help support parents living in difficult circumstances. JSH contributes to the parenting workshops held several times over the year. With JSH support, a library also offers reading and homework assistance to all Centre students as well as community members.

JSH in Canada: Global Education and Youth Engagement

As part of our mandate, JSH offers opportunities for Canadians to learn more about global issues and to become actively involved. In order for positive social change to be sustained, JSH believes that we need to understand the links between the North and the South, and we must work to improve people's lives at the community level while also addressing the root causes of poverty and inequity.

JSH organizes events in both Peterborough and Ottawa that share Jamaican experiences with Canadians. A highlight this year will be the visit of Mr. Layton Shaw, a teacher from Jamaica, for a fall speaker tour. We will also feature Jamaican voices and other experiences from the South through online information, videos and newsletter stories and delve deeper into development issues online and through public education activities.

JSH coordinates Youth 4 Global Change, a group of Peterborough area teenagers who are keen to learn and participate in activities that make positive change locally and globally. This year, JSH is organizing two short-term volunteer service trips for youth to work in schools and community organizations and learn from our partners directly in Jamaica. We are also exploring opportunities for an adult group to travel to Jamaica on a similar programme.



Youth Service Trip to Jamaica

For 2013-2014, JSH activities include literacy classes, music, sports and arts for children; academic upgrading, trades skills training and counselling for teenagers; and parenting support and outreach. Through these activities JSH aims to help vulnerable children and youth gain the skills and self-confidence they need to improve their lives and break the poverty cycle.



Today in Kingston... (cont.)



At the end of the day, both the young woman and the little boy and his sister often rush home.

They know that the streets can sometimes be dangerous as there are different gangs who fight over territory or drugs. There was a shooting last month – apparently someone informed the police about a drug deal – and people in the neighbourhood were fearful that there would be revenge shootings.

The staff at the local community centre went out and spoke to members of the community who agreed not to take any action. To bring the community together, the Centre organized an outdoor concert that afternoon for the youth to share their talents in music and dance. They hoped that concert would appeal to everyone and break the tension.

As the three students come to the stage, they see dozens of people out, even some from rival gangs. They stop to watch for a while - it is so great to see people clapping and singing along with the performers. They can feel that things are getting better.

And today in Kingston, they look forward to a brighter tomorrow.

Looking for another way you can help? Why not organize your own fundraiser for JSH? It's easy – ask your family and friends for ideas and work on something together. Join our online JSH Fundraising Network to share ideas or tell us about your activity. Call **705-743-1671** or email ayendri@jshcanada.org to join today!

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

OCT. 10, 2013

2013 Ganley Lecture Panel Discussion

“The New Direction of Canadian Foreign Aid: Exploring the Relationship Between Development and the Mining Industry”. Donations accepted for the Ganley Fund for Innovation. Organized by JSH with support from Kawartha World Issues Centre and Sustainable Trent.

**7:00pm, The Market Hall
140 Charlotte St., Peterborough.**

NOV. 9, 2013

6th Annual JSH Caribbean IRIE Dinner

Delicious Caribbean food and special guest speaker Mr. Layton Shaw from Tavares Gardens Primary School, Kingston Jamaica.

**St. John's Guild Hall
Brock Street, Peterborough.**

NOV. 23-24, 2013

7th 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.**



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