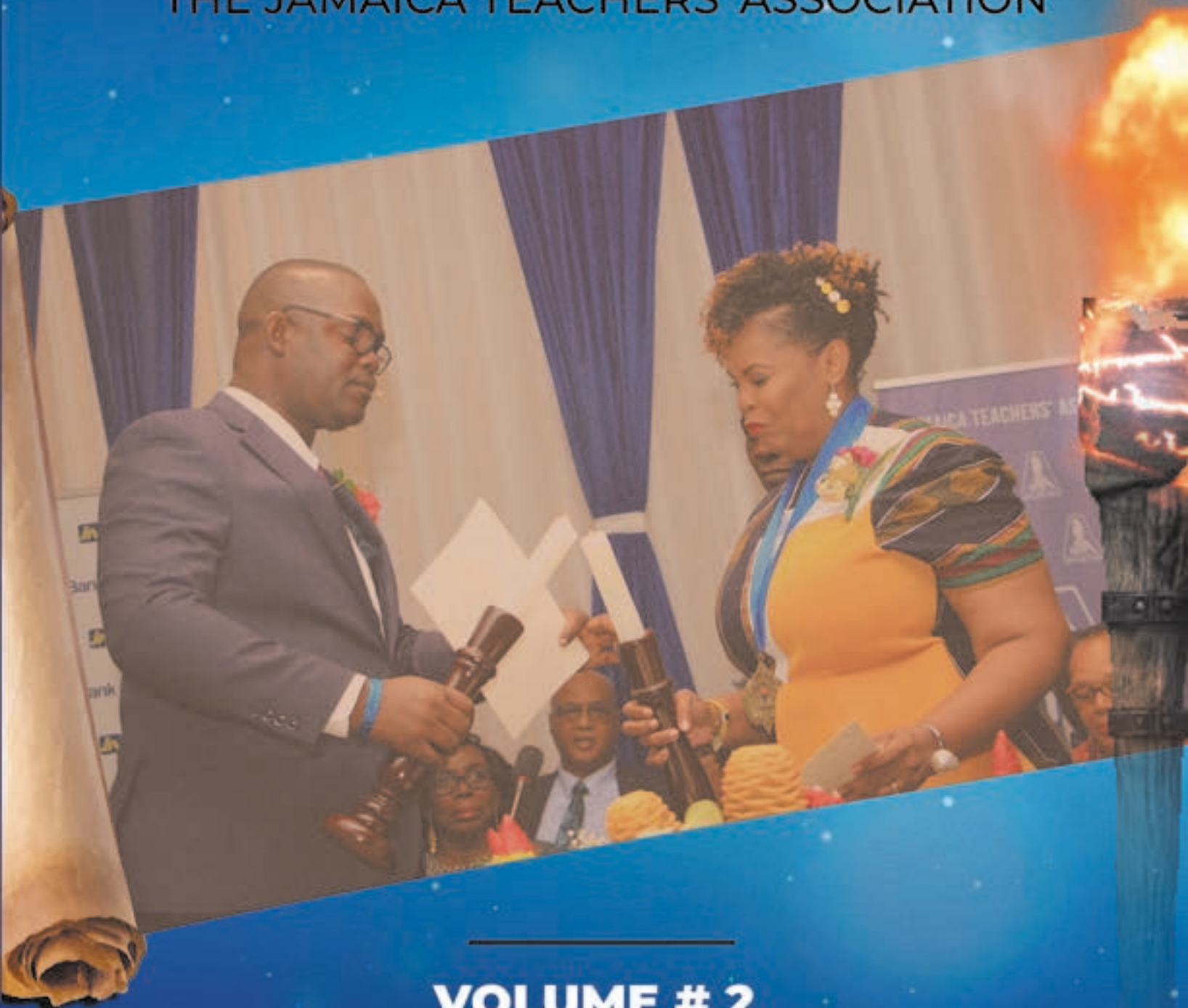




THE CLARION

THE JAMAICA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



VOLUME # 2
ISSUE # 9, AUGUST 2022

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The Clarion

(Volume 2 • Issue # 9)

The Clarion is a publication of
Jamaica Teachers' Association
97B Church Street, Kingston
Tel. 876-922-1385-7 • Email: jta@cwjamaica.com

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MESSAGES

Embracing passion, dedication and service !

Congratulations are in order for the Jamaica Teachers' Association for the successful publication of yet another edition of *The Clarion*, the teachers' newspaper.

The periodical serves the very productive and useful purpose of keeping your members informed on all matters pertaining to their noble profession.

I want to thank you for your passion, dedication and service to the nation's students and schools. One of my personal goals for this year is to meet as many of your members as I possibly can—and soon—to keep the lines of communication open between the Ministry of Education and Youth and the Jamaica Teachers' Association.

I ask that you do the same with the parents in your school communities.

Multiplicity of voices is a key component if not a pillar of democratic systems; we are therefore confident that *The Clarion* will continue to expand the democratic space through its invaluable contribution to the education enterprise.

The vision of the society to which we must advance necessarily requires this annual gazette to continue to promote the ideals of a free and democratic society, pro-



Hon Fayval Williams, MP
Minister of Education & Youth

viding a public platform for Jamaican teachers to express their opinions, thus contributing to the strengthening of our democracy.

For its part, this administration believes that the role of the press is to hold government accountable and to empower, inform, educate and entertain the public. Indeed, this noble act can only serve to enhance the quality of our freedom.

As Minister with responsibility for education and Youth, I am impressed by your continued achievements and offer my very best wishes for continued growth and success.

A stellar educational opportunity

Greetings Colleagues. It is my distinct pleasure to congratulate all educators on the mammoth task we have undertaken by availing ourselves to be the pillars on which this nation is being built. The Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA) has been providing representation to us as educators for the past 57 years and, as such, has facilitated the provision of a stellar educational opportunity to the citizens of Jamaica.

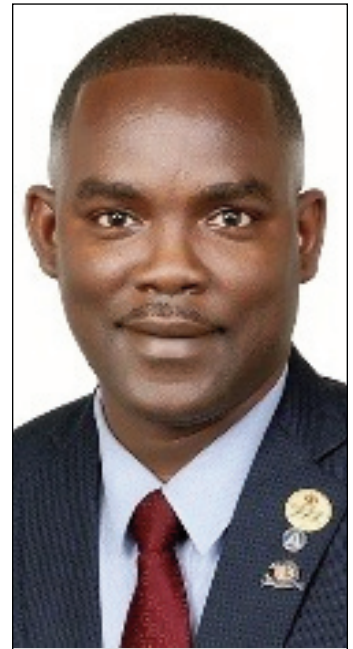
This provision of quality education by the teachers of Jamaica has undoubtedly given credence to educational reformer, John Dewey's maxim, "Education is not preparation for life; it is life itself."

Consequently, as we seek to educate our members through the various articles and documents presented in the various editions of the *Clarion*, we encourage our members to continue to soar to new heights of excellence.

I urge us to reflect on the gains we have accrued over the years where we transitioned from regular teachers to world class educators, capable of navigating the virtual space, teaching our students using different modalities, which showcase our adaptability, as we reimagine education and prepare for the fourth industrial revolution.

This is no easy feat, but we are cognizant of Jamaica's Vision 2030 and as such, we are doing our best to ensure that this vision becomes a reality, notwithstanding the many challenges we face on a daily basis.

Challenges such as poor salary, poor classroom environment, lack of resources – including technological support,



Winston Smith, JP
JTA President, 2021-22

significant deficiencies in the social skills of our students as well as some parents, coupled with the assertion by many, that the education system has failed the nation.

Colleagues, as we read this edition of the *Clarion*, I encourage us all to be focused on the good that is being done by us as educators within the sector. I implore you to ignore the noise around you, as this does not equate to quality assessments despite what others may believe.

Let us not be weary in well doing, but rather let us run our race with confidence, knowing that many of our critics can never accomplish what we have. Certainly, we at the JTA are very proud of the work that has been done to keep the education system successfully afloat, amidst this pandemic.

Continued on page 3



PASSING THE TORCH

The Annual Conference of the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA) is one of the calendar events of the Association and also of the Nation. The theme of this year's conference, held at the Rose Hall Resort, St James, August 22 to 24, was "Revisiting the foundation: building our human capital through equitable educational opportunities." One of the most significant symbolic moments of annual conferences was again staged, at the 58th Annual Conference, the iconic passing of the torch, representing the official change over of presidential leadership. Here, in photo, Winston Smith, President for Conference Year 2021-22, is seen lighting the torch of incoming President for 2022-23, La Sonja Harrison, symbolically marking change and continuity. In the background (seated) are past presidents (from left) Judith L Spencer Jarrett and Howard Isaacs. Leighton Johnson, Principal of Muschett High, Trelawny, was proclaimed as President-Elect at the session on August 22, 2022. Past President of the Caribbean Union of Teachers Colin Green was the keynote speaker at the first session of the conference.

Continued from page 2

As we gingerly emerge from this difficult period, I say to you all, well done!! We are extremely grateful to you for

your sterling contribution to nation building and look forward to even bigger and better things in the near future. I am aware that with the current domestic

and worldwide upheaval, our mettle as educators will be, and continues to be, tested, but we will embrace these challenges with confidence and optimism,

enabled by our faith in God. Furthermore, our collective ability to Unite and Serve will see us through any and every challenge.

Tackling Issues In Jamaica's Education System

In 1962, the Academic (school) year began in January. The school year was shorter. Easter was two weeks long and, because many schools were denominationally owned, classes were never held during Holy Week and many of the principals (headmasters/mistresses) were ministers of the sponsoring church. Christmas holidays lasted three weeks and the Summer six weeks to two months

In 1962, there were many independent schools, to compensate for the relatively few places in the established high schools. Here is a list of these schools – all but one of which no longer exist: Bodmin College, Buxton College, Crandall High School, Durham College of Commerce, Gaynestead High School, Strathford High School, St. Martin's High School, St. Simon's College, Tutorial College and Waulgrove College.

These institutions filled the yawning gap in the education system which lingered up to the 1980s. Only Gaynestead has survived.

These institutions, together with a myriad of trade training centres, complemented the education system which consisted mainly of elementary (now primary and all age) schools and a few high schools.

In 1962 we became an independent nation within the British Empire and Commonwealth. The school year started January, until it was changed in 1964 to September with the promulgation of the current Education Act. In 1962 there were more than 500 schools with total enrolment of just over 250,000. Most of these were elementary schools with school leaving age at 15 years.

There were fewer than 100 High schools with enrolment of under 50,000. There were also three technical high schools. The Common Entrance Examination was just five years old and only 3,500 children aged eleven plus were awarded FREE places.

In 1962 we were recruiting teachers from Europe and North America for our high schools and many of our "Established Churches" were largely curated by expatriates.

The population of Jamaica was approximately 1.5million and the literacy rate was under 50%, and the retention system operating



By Patrick Smith

in the education system created the well-known character "Big Boy". A decade into independence, we had not made significant progress, which forced the government to introduce a literacy initiative called JAMAL.

Sixty years on, what is our education system like?

We have full enrolment in our more than 1,000 early childhood institutions. Regular attendance is another matter. Our primary institutions reach learners in almost every community, despite our challenging topography.

Our 164 secondary level institutions cater to most of our primary graduates, with the remainder being nestled into the "all age" schools. Some later find their way into the higher levels of these "high" schools, the remainder, an estimated eight per cent, leave school at grade 9, without the benefit of a secondary education.

There can be no disputing that our governments, elected since 1944 (first election under Universal Adult Suffrage), have built many schools. The extinction of the privately owned and managed high schools, cited above, is proof of this. Indeed, our history from 1835 is one of school building and school closure. Many of our schools are denominationally owned but publicly funded. The reality is we have pri-

mary and secondary schools that are underpopulated. School attendance is still a problem, despite social intervention programmes, like PATH. Transportation is still a major issue for many families as is the other issues of books, uniforms, and food. It is estimated that average national attendance is three and a half days – higher at the secondary level -- and overall performance is not to expectation.

Indeed, both the Report of the Patterson-led Commission (2021) and the predecessor Rae Davies Task Force (2004) commented on the inadequacies of the education System and made some very valuable recommendations. Problem is, governments have never fully implemented the recommendations contained in these reports, yet go on to create other Commissions to enquire into the very system they have previously investigated.

In his recent G. Arthur Brown Lecture at the Bank of Jamaica, former Prime Minister, Golding referenced the Professor Patterson Commission Report (2021) which, inter alia, spoke to the performance of students and, by extension, the deficiencies of education system. This was juxtaposed against the 2004 Rae Davis-led Task Force Report which reflected the same issue. Golding did not lose the opportunity to attack the JTA for its "...institutional resistance to reform ...", reciting the oft-misconstrued leave entitlement of four months leave after five years and the thirteen weeks of school holidays that teachers currently enjoy.

Obviously, the former Prime Minister misreads Regulation 64 as an entitlement. If all teachers are "entitled" to this leave, the Ministers of Finance and Education will have to retroactively compensate the many thousands of teachers who have been denied this "entitlement" every fifth year (fourth, in the case of principals) of their engagement.

The former Prime Minister also proffered another reason for performance, intimating by way of example, the role of parental involvement.

He also spoke to the \$122-B allocation to education. No one disputes the fact that the Education Sector gets the lion's share of the budgetary allocation. This is only fitting, having regard to the percentage of Jamaicans engaged in the education system. His contention is that the country does not get value for money.

And, perhaps he is right. All Jamaicans will insist that we do not get value for our tax dollar. We don't get value at our hospitals, at the Collectorates, the quality of our roads does not justify the taxes we pay and, certainly, teachers will insist that they are not compensated for their effort.

Performance pay is resisted, Golding said. But why not?

Why would a Union accept performance pay for its members or differential payment based on scarcity in a particular subject... Mathematics and Science, for example? Persons who make such suggestions obviously do not understand the job of a teacher in the school setting. A teacher's job is much more than teaching the prescribed subject. It involves character development and the socialization of the child. Paying a teacher who teaches a scarce subject does not address the other real issues in the classroom.

We have had reports on the performance of our schools since the 1840s and recommendations made, few of which were implemented, even then by the colonial authority. A teachers' union only came into being in January 1894. By then, the predecessor Jamaica Union of Teachers (JUT) was battling the infamous colonial "Payment by Result" system which was in force up to the 1940.

Performance pay? Why would a Union agree to punish its members for the failings of Government?

Patrick Smith is Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the JTA and a former President.

The JTC Bill & the Public Sector Compensation Review: *The Arbiters of the Demise of Teacher Unionism in Jamaica?*

The events of the past year concerning labour relations should trouble the mind of every practitioner in education, and indeed any well-thinking Jamaican. Teacher unionism in particular, has come under serious threat with the combined assault of the Jamaica Teaching Council Bill and the Public Sector Compensation Review.

On May 19, 2022 the Jamaica Teachers' Association, led by President Winston Smith made a fulsome submission to the Joint Select Committee on the Jamaica Teaching Council Act. The Gleaner reported "testy exchanges" between the Minister of Education Fayval Williams and the President. The Union took issue with several of the proposals in the Bill:

The very definition of who is a teacher is cause for concern in terms of the stipulations outlined in the Bill. Implemented as is, it would immediately separate some practitioners from the system, especially those at the pre-primary level and some categories within the tertiary sector.

In addition, the Bill has an innate bias when one considers the one-year period given for a practitioner to upgrade to trained-graduate status, since there is no degree or postgraduate programme that may be completed within that time.

The disproportionate composition of the Commission remains a challenge for teachers with only six persons representing the teacher out of a proposed twenty-three (23) member team. Further, as the union representing over 20,000 teachers, the Jamaica Teachers' Association is not specifically named in the Bill as a stakeholder group to comprise this Commission, and this is cause for serious alarm.

The grievance process as outlined in the Bill is also flawed, as complaints against the teacher can be brought to the Board, the Council and the Ministry simultaneously. The possibility exists that three different results could be had from the three bodies outlined. The entire process can be circumvented and teachers can be summarily dis-



By Melissa Beckford-Simpson

missed at any time on the basis of an expired license.

Practitioners should be very wary of the fact, that should the Bill be implemented in its current state, appraisals will now be conducted externally, by a central body; the Jamaica Teaching Council. Not only will this place the teacher at a grave disadvantage, but also it will remove much of the autonomy of school administrators.

The Union took particular umbrage to the fact that the Bill seems to seek to criminalise teachers with excessive fines and the court process involved, should one breach the clauses. The Bill suggests a fine of half a million dollars for the most serious offense named and; requires appearance at court which makes the offense criminal.

It is a most egregious act that the charge of an expired license could essentially leave the teacher with a criminal record. While the Bill speaks loudly on the matters outlined, it is deafeningly silent on the details of others including tenureship of teachers and the financing of the Commission that will regulate the system. The teachers will no doubt bear the burden of financing the Commission since no formula has been given for the determination of the

cost of the license. The Bill proposes to be an empowering legislation when there is no mention of how the profession will be so improved.

The JTA was by no means the only stakeholder group to have made submissions on the Bill: the tertiary sector, the umbrella group for churches, the private sector, amongst others all made submissions from their particular lens.

Protection of the Legacy of Unionism

Unionism in Jamaica is built, fundamentally, upon the bedrock of teacher advocacy. It is no wonder that the first operable labour union established only a few years after Emancipation was a teachers' union. Indeed, the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865 was a labour rebellion, although it has hardly been given that status by those who would seek to undermine the collective efficacy that was so evident in a group of marginally literate blacks, fresh out of enslavement.

It was almost unheard of that such an achievement could be possible and; in the wake of the bloody suppression, the indomitable Jamaica Union of Teachers emerged at 1894. The era surrounding the riots of the 1930s across the Caribbean propelled the growth of unions representing workers of every class and description of work, not the least of which included varying categories of educators in Jamaica. In 1964, the JUT merged with four of these unions to become the powerful Jamaica Teachers' Association.

The survival of unionism in general and; teacher unionism in particular, depends largely on ensuring that the JTA and the other member unions of the Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions (JCTU) protect the hard-won principle of collective bargaining. Free collective bargaining, as afforded through trade unionism, is still the best way to ensure the protection

of workers "against arbitrary and unjustly discriminatory employer action." (Farley, 1959).

We must be wary of the new Public Sector Compensation Review that seeks to, amongst other things: remove discrete motor vehicle concessions from travelling officers; roll in allowances into basic pay, thereby reducing in the long run, the ability of unions to negotiate for improvements for the particular sector.

The Minister of Finance, Dr. Nigel Clarke has taken pains to explain to the public, the government's position in implementing the new compensation structure across the system.

On the surface, the arguments appear to be both plausible and reasonable as articulated by the government. But we must never be found guilty of ethnic fatigue when the current combined climate of the JTC Bill and the Compensation Review threatens our very existence.

The JTA, while vociferously challenging particular troubling aspects of the Bill, must ensure that we make our position equally clear through our endorsements, affiliations and presence. To be clear, the Union cannot afford to be caught off guard by those who would seek to undermine its relevance and; declare that it has outlived its usefulness.

Colleagues in all sectors of the education system should understand that if ever a time we needed unionism, it is now. Neither haste, nor insularity will serve us well in this zeitgeist that resembles the 1930s and precedence will be established by both the scrutiny and action (or lack thereof) that we take. May we heed the caution of our ancestors who would remind us... "fyah deh a muss muss tail him tink a cool breeze."

Melissa Beckford-Simpson
Classroom teacher and Member
of the JTA General Council



Hanover Parish Highlights of the Year

The Annual General Meeting of the Hanover JTA was held on June 1, 2022 at the Anglican Church Hall, Lucea in the parish.

The meeting was attended by members from across the four DAs. Approximately 80 members were in attendance. The meeting was chaired by President Perronet Hall Riley. JTA IPP, Jasford Gabriel and Norman Allen, Regional Officer West, represented the parent body.

Representatives of a number of organizations were present including JTA Cooperative Credit Union, TIP, EDUCOM, and Carlong Publishers.

President-Elect nominees Leighton Johnson and Suzette Baker-Tulloch addressed the teachers seeking their support in the elections.

Members were awarded for their contributions to the Parish for the conference year. Awardees included: P. Riley, N. Crossman, M. Daley, S. Buchanan, J. Johnson and C Whittingham.



Representatives of the Parish at the Helen Stills Professional Development Day (from left) C. Whittingham Parish PRO; J Beckford-Johnson, Principal Bethel Primary, and M Bernard-Reid.

COVID-19, for some of the students in Hanover. All DAs were present for the Parish Sports held at the Esher Primary School on May 20, 2022.

For the first time in years, Hanover parish was able to secure a full team of 80 students, thanks to the hard work of the

Sports Committee. There were many challenges experienced at the National Sports. However, at the end of the day, Hanover placed 13th with a total of 22 points.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hanover Parish was represented at the JN Teacher's Day Luncheon at their Head Office in Kingston as well as several other National events.

Hanover Parish was represented at the Helen Stills Professional Development



Clayton Hall Deputy Secretary General (left) and Norman Allen (right) who replaces him as Regional Officer West are in conversation with Dr Michelle Pinnock, Director of Regional Education Service (Region 3).

Seminar, Future Leaders Conference, Resolution workshop, Study Circle training, and other JTA-sponsored or organised events.

REGIONAL OFFICER WEST

The Western Region consisting of Hanover, St. James, Westmoreland and Trelawny wished farewell to our beloved Regional Officer Clayton Hall, who was promoted to Deputy Secretary General and we welcomed our new Regional Officer Norman Allen.



**Perronet Hall Riley
Hanover Parish President**

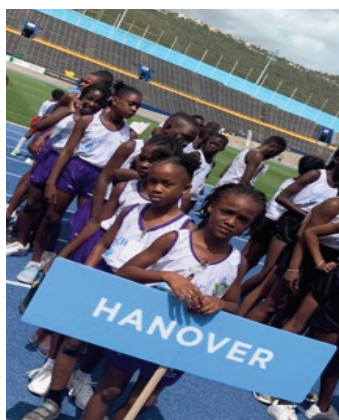
Hanover Parish President and Executives

Perronet Hall Riley has been a professional educator for 25 years and is the Vice Principal of the Sandy Bay Primary School, Hanover.

As an active member of the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA) Hanover Chapter she has served in various positions in the District and Parish Association: as President, Treasurer, Professional Advancement Committee Chair, and Women Caucus member.

She says: "As the outgoing president of the Parish my dream and aspiration is to continue flying the JTA flag high and help to inspire younger teachers to actively engaged in their association as together we Unite and Serve."

Executive for the year 2021-2022: President, Perronet Hall Riley; President Elect, Tamara Shaw; Secretary, Sabrinea Buchanan-Anderson; Treasurer, Maldiv Bernard-Reid; Membership Chairman: Sharon Chapman; Study Circle Chairman, Sharon Walker Campbell; Public Relations Officer, Chrisann Whittingham, Sports Coordinator, Latoya Locke; PAC Chairman, Julia Johnson, and Awards Committee Chair Nadienne Crossman.



SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS

Hanover Parish hosted their DA Sports amidst various challenges. The DA Sports paved the way for an exciting Parish Sports. These sporting activities marked the first such for the past two years, because of

Hanover Parish Association

Awards Committee Report

*By Nadienne Crossman,
Chair*

The Awards Committee was duly constituted and consisted of Nadienne Crossman, Chairman; Denise Bolton, Secretary; Julia Johnson, Public Relations Officer; Sabrinea Buchanan, Member; Michelle Muschette, Member and Peronnet Hall Riley, ex-officio member.

Three on-line meetings were held for the Conference Year.

All meetings had five members present.

The Awards Committee made presentations at the Half-Yearly Meeting, one Parish Executive Meeting, one District Association Meeting, and the Annual General Meeting.

The Committee made recommendations for the following Awards:

Roll of Honour Award—three individuals were presented from the Parish: Prime Minister Medal of Appreciation—one teacher was presented from the Parish; R.C.Tavares—two teachers were presented from the Parish; Ben Hawthorne—three teachers were presented from the Parish.

Edith Dalton James – three teachers were presented from the Parish

Fay E. Saunders – one teacher was presented from the Parish.

We extend our heartiest congratulations to. Sharon Chapman who will be receiving the Edith Dalton James Award at the Annual Conference 2022.



Peronnet Riley receives her award from Jasford Gabriel, IPP



Chrisann Whittingham receives her award from Jasford Gabriel, IPP

Outstanding Awards at the Parish Level

The following individuals were lauded for outstanding support to the Hanover Parish Association.

- Chrisann Whittingham
- Sabrinea Buchanan-Anderson
- Marvin Daley
- Clayton Hall
- Nadienne Crossman
- Julia Johnson
- Perronet Hall- Riley

Hopewell DA Year In Review

Hopewell DA hosted five meetings in the conference year.

An online Carol Service was held, over 70 students, parents, and teachers were in attendance. Clayton Hall and Patrick Smith from head office gave greetings. Students and teachers were given prizes from the service.

One of our online meetings was about teachers' wellbeing. The meeting showed how agriculture can aid in self care. This meeting was a combined meeting where all four DAs was represented. Invited guest from TIP shared on financial health. Teachers were reminded and informed about various leave packages and how to go about the business of leave. Nadine Crossman made that presentation.

At the meeting a nurse was instrumental in giving tips on how to do the preliminary check for breast cancer, and also what was to be done should one be diagnosed with breast cancer.

A total of five schools were represented at the DA Sports. They were: Bethel Primary, Caecoon Primary, Success Primary, Watford Hill Primary and Pondside Primary. Bethel Primary emerged the winner.

Over 40 athletes represented the DA at the Parish level. Of this 40, 28 students represented the parish at the National Championships.

One teacher was awarded a gift basket in recognition of outstanding contributions to the academic and holistic development of the students within the DA.

Teachers participated in a number of events hosted by the Parent body, to include: professional development seminar, onboarding of our new RO, JN Teachers Day Luncheon, update on the salary negotiations, church services, new teachers seminars and retirement seminars.

St James Parish Association

President's Report

I have come this far by faith leaning on the Lord. Nelson Mandela posited, "Everyone can rise from their circumstances and achieve success if they are dedicated to and passionate about what they do."

It was no easy task navigating our way through the pandemic but I believe that with dedication and God's help we were able to achieve our goals. The executive met twice monthly and we worked together as a team.

We had a successful Half Yearly Meeting last November, 2021. The main highlight was the link up with our colleagues in Trinidad and Tobago from whom we got an insight into the education landscape in that twin-island state in relation to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

During this year, we adopted Roehampton Primary School. We have donated sanitizing items and school supplies, visited during Child Month and did a treat for the students.

Our usual Christmas Cheer activity was done and two of our teachers benefitted from this activity. On the first Saturday of this year, we visited the Harrison Seventh Day Adventist Church and on the first Sunday we went to Light House Ministries. These two church services were spiritually uplifting.

There is a What'sApp Group for all the male teachers in the parish. Thanks to Omar Tomlinson for creating this group.

There were several opportunities for you, my colleagues, to become more knowledgeable about the JTA and to grow in the profession.

As President, I have represented the parish at all Central Executive and General Council



**By Onex Bowen
President**

Meetings. I also represented the parish at other national activities as well as the Education Summit in New York, in March of this year.



Meet the Executive Members

(l-r) Celestine Dalrymple-Collins, Women's Caucus Chair; Anakay Hanson, Treasurer; La Toya Calvin-Williams, Assistant PRO; Lushawn Leslie, Secretary. In front (seated) is Onex Bowen, Parish President. Missing from photo are Kerry Ann Alexander, President Elect; Lincoln Heron, Immediate Past President; Sherian Mercy, Council Representative; Anakay Fowler, Public Relations Officer and Suzette Virgo, Sports Coordinator

It was my delight to participate in activities for all six District Associations. I want to congratulate all DAs and thank you and your presidents for your support during the year.

Colleagues, now is the time when we must be more united than ever. We are faced with the

Compensation Review, The Patterson Report and The JTC Bill among other factors that can really be agents of stress. I implore my colleagues to live one day at a time. Let us take care of our health and spend valuable time with our families.

My greatest disappointment as President is that some of you, my colleagues, do not attend DA meetings so you are not as knowledgeable as you could be about the union and your rights. I encourage you to attend the meetings and participate.

My greatest joy as President was the opportunity I had to create new leaders. I pause to

acknowledge first-time leaders at the parish level like Faithlyn Anderson, Credentials' Chair; Anna Kay Hanson, Treasurer and Lushawn Leslie, Secretary. You have all done an excellent job. I am forever grateful to you.

Accomplishments 2021-22

By La Toya Calvin-Williams

The parish is divided into six DAs, namely, Montego Bay DA1, DA2, DA3, Anchovy, Cambridge and Upper St. James. Presidents serving the DAs for the conference year 2021-2022 are: Montego Bay DA 1- Claudia Cargill; Montego Bay DA 2 - Dr. Sadie Mortley; Montego Bay DA 3 - Kerry Ann Alexander; Anchovy DA- LaToya Calvin Williams; Cambridge - Millicent Davis; Upper St. James- Judy McIntosh Powell.

The Parish utilizes white as its official colour. The Parish meets with contact teachers, DA executives and Parish executives every third Tuesday at the Regional Office, or via Zoom Platform and every 2nd Tuesday for executive meetings.

All DAs are constituted and actively engaging their teachers for this conference year.

DAs have adopted the trend to host both virtual and in person meetings in their areas on a monthly basis. Activities include: professional development, socials, basket parties, wellness and mental health seminars, needy students drive, games day, charity events, adoption of schools, carried out by the DAs in the conference year 2021-2022.

The Parish participated in the National Teachers' Netball Rally and was victorious. Congrats to all participants.

Continued on page 9

Accomplishments of St James Parish 2021-22

Continued from page 8

The Parish participated in the National Teachers' Netball Rally and was victorious. Congrats to all participants.

Member from the Parish executive body assisted with a treat of students from the adopted school.

Colleagues may we continue to seek to work together especially in these challenging times. I know many of us are overwhelmed, but with God all things are possible.

Colleagues, be safe. Blessings to you as we continue to unite and serve.



Members of the winning team for JTA Sports Rally 2022.





Trelawny Parish Association

Trelawny: The Gem with a passion for service

The Trelawny Parish Association demonstrated tenacity and a seriousness of purpose as we embarked on providing quality service to our teachers during the 2021 to 2022 conference year. Notwithstanding the myriad challenges that we faced, Team Trelawny's ability to work collaboratively allowed us to successfully undertake several activities and initiatives.

As we advanced through the conference year, we continued to battle with the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic. With a heightened sense of grit and determination we designed the Parish's plan and got to work.

The Parish comprises of four District Associations (DAs), namely: The Queen of Spain Valley, Falmouth, Central, and Upper Trelawny. The Parish executive was made up of:

- President Leighton Johnson
- President-Elect Winston Robinson
- Immediate Past President Donnecia Downer
- Secretary Maria Josephs Hemmings
- Treasurer Horace McKellop
- PRO Patrice Beharie
- District Association Presidents
- Queen of Spain Valley: Chaleen Webb Hines
- Falmouth: Vanesha Gordon Brown
- Upper: Natalie Brown
- Central: Desrine Palmer

WORKING COMMITTEES

To ensure that the parish fulfilled the national mandate the executive was supported by the following individuals who served as committee chairpersons:

- Study Circle, Maria Josephs Hemmings
- Membership, Desrine Palmer
- Professional Advancement, Marlene Gordon Reid
- Sports, Desrine Palmer
- Women's Caucus, Maudlyn Wright Shaw

The activities and initiatives of the Parish reflected the national mandate and were in alignment with the conventions as outlined in the Articles of the Association. We were not able to meet in the physical space, however our monthly meetings on the Zoom Platform were engaging and informative.

In addition to enhancing the mental wellness of our members, the Parish adopted an initiative by the Queen of Spain Valley District Association to have virtual exercise sessions

on Monday Morning for the first term, leading up to March 2022. This initiative was in response to the sedentary lifestyle that many of our members were now experiencing.

In response to the national mandate of reviving Study Circle, members from the parish participated in the Study Circle Workshop.

The JTA is a Membership based organization and the Trelawny Parish Association continues to champion this objective. Our Membership Chairman worked well within that parish and her efforts allowed Trelawny to be the champion parish for the month of April in signing the most new members to our Association. No one can underestimate the strength of women and this was evident as the Parish's Women's Caucus hosted a women's conference. This was an initiative of the Queen of Spain Valley District Association under the theme 'Women of Excellence: Equipped and Empowered for the 21st century.' This was a well-organized and executed conference.

The Trelawny JTA personifies the core values of highlighting the contributions made by teachers within the DAs and Parish. It is against that background that two awards functions were held during this year. The Queen of Spain Valley District Association hosted its inaugural Awards function in December 2021 and honoured 13 individuals who worked well in the DA for the past 10 years.

The Trelawny Teachers Association also hosted its inaugural Annual Awards function in April, where 15 teachers were honoured for long, dedicated and outstanding contributions made to the development of education and the JTA. President Winston Smith delivered the keynote address.

SPORTS

A key feature in any conference year is the Annual Teachers Sports Day. Trelawny represented very well in football and netball. Though we were not crowned champions on that day, we were exceptional opponents to the champions. Commendations to the Chairman of Sports D. Palmer, supported by W. Robinson who both coordinated the activities for the teachers of Trelawny to represent the parish well.

Continued on page 11



Leighton Johnson
Trelawny Parish President

The President's Message

It was with a great sense of humility that I served as President for the Trelawny Parish for the Conference year 2021-2022. It gives me great pleasure to make this contribution to the Clarion, as I give an account of Trelawny's stewardship for the period under review.

Additionally I use this opportunity to express sincere gratitude to my colleagues for extending their votes of confidence in my ability to lead the Parish Association.

The Jamaica Teachers' Association is recognized for its sterling contribution to the development of education in Jamaica. We have a rich legacy of providing world class and first class representation for teachers at every level within the sector.

The Trelawny Teachers' Association understood the mandate of the wider association and provided opportunities for teachers to improve their professional disposition through the many Professional Developments sessions hosted, while simultaneously maintaining a close eye on teacher advocacy and welfare.

I must commend the Parish Association's Executive for working collaboratively in the execution of activities carried out in the parish.

Many of these activities were executed under difficult circumstances; however the team demonstrated commitment, dedication and determination in their duties.

Trelawny - Highlights of Activities For The year



Parish sports highlights



Trelawny was represented at the return of the Teachers Sports Day.



Trelawny was out in full force at the National JTA/Sagor Athletic Championship



We encouraged our teachers to remain fit and healthy

Continued from page 10

As we returned to normality, we were once again gearing up for the National JTA/Sagor Athletics Championship. Our Parish Sports took the form of a runoff where the better athletes were selected to represent Trelawny at the National event.

Trelawny participated in the National Athletics Championship hosted in June 2022. We commend the leadership of the Jamaica Teachers' Association for continuing on its path of providing opportunities for

our students to develop their skills as athletes and for our teachers to develop their skills as coaches.

As we move forward, the Parish pledges to ensure the following: all District Associations in the Parish will adopt the President-Elect format; all District Associations within the Parish will have functioning Accounts; all District Associations will set targets to increase membership to the Association.

This conference year tested our mettle. It created teachers who were more tolerant and patient. It helped develop teachers who are more creative and are better equipped to navigate and utilize technology as an ally. H.E Luccock said no one man can whistle an orchestra; it takes a whole orchestra to play. We had to rely on each other to make things happen. Thank you team Trelawny, we accomplished this together.



Surviving the Pandemic: A Teacher's Perspective

The year 2020 was an unprecedented one. A presenter at CNN news said that the word “unprecedented” was the most used word of 2020.

Bringing it home in our Jamaican context, the artiste, Gyptian in his song said, “These are some serious times.” This had never been more evident than it was then in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Society, as we know it was faced with a threat to our way of life.

Notwithstanding this, as humans, our positivity was tested. We know that we are survivors. We persevered. We pushed through all the trials, amidst the unprecedented times. Though we are still in a pandemic, we are more on the way out than in.

Allow me to share some ways how, as teachers, we coped throughout the pandemic.

Physical activity

Research has shown that physical activity releases chemical hormones in the brain that make us feel good, boost self-esteem, boost concentration, improve sleep and give an overwhelming sense of wellbeing. The best activity doesn't mean getting a gym membership, or jogging at 5 in the morning. It just takes the willingness to get up and water the garden.

During the pandemic, we got the time to do the long overdue spring cleaning that was planned for a whole year. We did virtual walks, “zoomercise” sessions, and virtual parties where friends danced the night away. Those were great ways that we interacted and shared while remaining active.



By Michael Huggan

Physical distance not Social distance

As social creatures, we are at our strongest when we are together. We made use of virtual platforms to stay in touch with each other. We shared emotions with individuals we trusted or even those we didn't, because there were times we just needed to vent and/or vibe with anyone that was available.

During those times when we got lonely and felt isolated, we had to have mental check-ins that, as we know, left unchecked are often precursors to mental issues.

It was during this time that I developed some of the most meaningful friendships as I took up the phone, video called somebody, to find out how their day was, told a joke, had a laugh and let down my hair (didn't have much or any to let down).

In fact there was a time when my hair had grown to the point where my daughter could put in cornrows. I laughed at myself a lot during that time. It

is now that I appreciate that laughing during the pandemic was an expression of emotions that I got to share with friends and family. It was just maybe that “small thread” that kept me tethered to my sanity.

Explore a Passion - Learn a new skill

The pandemic, I believe, made us, and even more so me, better managers of time. So, with all the curfews and restrictions that were in place, we felt those long twenty-four hours of each day sluggishly ‘crawling’ by. So, what did we do with all that free time?

We took the opportunities to explore those passions that we have always had, such as - learning to bake; learning to sew; using the opportunity to become better public speakers enrolling in online classes and developing those new skills that we never had the time to craft.

Get a pet

During the pandemic, I was most mornings awakened to the sound of my wife and Germie. Germie is the name that my wife gave to the family's German Shepherd. Germie, you see, is a pandemic puppy that came into our lives and brought a ray of sunshine. He shares it with the whole family. His presence alone and his sheer ignorance of what is happening around him gives a sense of hope.

This kind of behaviour reminds me of the sort of hope that allowed us to get up everyday, with the renewed strength we needed to meet the day-to-day challenges of the pandemic

head-on with the knowledge that we were indeed equipped to survive the experience.

Create a passive income stream

You see, the beauty with time is that it is infinite. However, we live finite lives, so some of us made some extra income, in a time when the economy was producing new income generating avenues.

We used the opportunity to consult with our financial advisors, search the internet for passive income ideas, start a business from home and sell our services.

What this did, is that it gave us a sense of self-worth, evidence that we could succeed in something outside of teaching. It provided us with opportunities to practice the 4 Cs that we so often hear promoted in the education faculty.

1. Think Critically
2. Use the opportunity to Collaborate

3. Use varying modalities to Communicate and share ideas
4. Use the shared ideas Creatively.

My colleagues, this pandemic was, and still is an opportunity rather than a threat. We will all come out on the other side as victors. We are teachers. We are strong. We are Nation Builders.

Michael Huggan is a teacher at Beulah Primary and Infant School, Clarendon

Selvin May - The Epitome of Service

More Than a Guard in The JTA Credit Union's Car Park

"Bedrin/sistren, turn left..."
"Take time, you can reverse now..."
"Never mind I will direct you. Yuh safe..."
"You can trust me...yeah man, dats my job..."

These are some of the words and sentiments of help and care used by the security guard who, for the most part, is in the JTA Credit Union's car park as he helps clients and staff navigate their way into and out of the usually crammed park.

Indeed, as long as Wenge, whose correct name is Selvin May, was in the car park, at the Credit Union, you would be safe and you could trust him with your car and with yourself.

When he was hired over twenty years ago by the Property Manager at the time at the JTA Head Office, Claudia Ferguson, and the then Secretary General Woodburn Miller, Wenge was told "Your job is to protect and secure the vehicles in your car park."

Mr. May took those instructions to heart: he not only secured and protected the cars but the occupants as well.

Whoever came through the back gate without his knowledge would be questioned or asked to go back down the lane, and the very use of the lane was determined to an extent by May.

One thing about Selvin May was that he greeted everyone with a smile, and his favourite remark was "Blessed Love". For some, there was greeting in the form of a left hand salute and a howdy and thank you was also part of his daily routine.

"Rasta", as he is also popularly called, always enquired about your family, and shared his own journey.



Selvin May aka Wenge

Said Wenge: "I enjoy working at the Credit Union and the JTA. They had confidence in me and gave me ratings...yeah man."

The JTA's willingness to employ him gave him the bounce back, the job he needed to become an independent person.

'I enjoy working at the Credit Union and the JTA. They had confidence in me and gave me ratings..yeah man.'

May says he enjoys his job and the interactions that come with it and did it with pride and a hearty smile. It begs the question: Does Mr. May know how much we, as members of the public, enjoy working with him?

Mr May leaves the JTA in December 2022, after a satisfactory stint as a member of the security staff.

Speaking of Mr May's departure, Robert Ramsay the General Manager of the JTA Credit Union said: "Although employed to the JTA, over the

years, Wenge actively poured out his talents with the Credit Union and its operations. Indeed, he is counted as an honorary staff member of the Credit Union.

He was more than a security officer for the JTA Credit Union. Wenge has become a constant part of the lives of members of staff and the membership in general at the head office of the JTA Credit Union."

Mr Ramsay says when he first started working with the Credit Union, he was impressed with the way Wenge carried out his work with pride and the careful attention he paid to detail. "He knew and remembered everyone and how best to help them as they visited our offices."

He described Selvin May as a tireless worker who made his presence known and felt by all who came in contact with him. "He never did this in a rude or obtrusive manner, but in a friendly and respectful way that made everyone feel much safer, knowing that Wenge is in the parking lot," Mr Ramsay said.

Paul Adams, the Credit Union's President, also added his thoughts. "Wenge is the best definition of commitment. He has a natural eye that he can telescopically scan the place and have an understanding of not only where everything is but where everything should be. He has an expressed natural ability with interpersonal skills which he uses to assist his communication with everybody at every level. Wenge is the job," Mr Adams said.

And Mr. May could regularly be heard speaking highly of Karen Kennedy, current Board member and Pauline Stephenson a past member of the Supervisory committee

Said Mrs. Stephenson: "He has been a faithful and dedicated worker and one who was always willing and helpful. I think he has a commitment to his job. I always look forward to seeing him as he is always on the job."

Mrs Kennedy, for her part, described Mr. May as her son. According to her, "He calls me 'Mommy' and for me that is a mark of respect. As Africans hold women in high esteem and high respect that is how Selvin would do for me", she explained

"His concern for me has been overwhelming as whenever I am at the Credit Union, as soon as I arrive in a car he would volunteer to open the car door and takes my things for me and expects nothing in return. We treat each other as equals, blessed by the High God," she reported.

The JTA and JTA Coop. Credit Union families hail Mr. May and wish him all the best.

The JTA Co-op Credit Union will miss you Selvin "Wenge" May. We wish you all the best on your retirement.



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Men In Education Conference 2022

Men play a critical part in improving education systems. However, over the years there has been a steady decline of males entering the noble profession. There have also been challenges among the males within the profession including lack of interest and male marginalisation. On the other hand, some have found themselves on the wrong side of the law including being involved in sexual abuse.

It is with the need in mind to boost the contribution of males that volunteers within the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA) have been pushing for avenues to focus mainly on addressing the challenges faced by male teachers.

The Men in Education Conference was conceptualised during the conference year 2020- 2021 with its first staging done virtually due to the pandemic. However, it is now expected to become a staple activity of the Association.

The Education & Research Committee was tasked with the responsibility to spearhead the first physical staging of the Men in

Education Conference in collaboration with the males of the Professional Advancement and Teacher Welfare Committee, for the year 2021- 2022.

After many setbacks, the committee was able to successfully stage this conference on Monday, June 13, 2022 at the Holiday Inn Resort, Montego Bay, St James under the theme: "Male Empowerment: Championing the cause of Education for Sustainable Development."

From as early as 7:30 a.m. male teachers started entering the resort with the intention of not missing any of the day's activities.

The proceedings began at approximately 9:45 a.m., with Chairman Jermaine Williams sharing his opening remarks after which the devotional exercise was led by



**By Jermaine Williams,
Conference
Chairman**

Pastor Luke Smith. He encouraged the males that there "is value in what you are doing. Do it so well to inspire others, remember the value of building community among yourselves, remember the value of authenticity, be real about the struggles."

The programme overview was conducted by servicing officer for the committee, Deputy Secretary General Member Services and Industrial Relations, Clayton Hall. Greetings were brought by Secretary General Dr. Mark Nicely. He reminded participants to avoid violence or any type of abuse against the children in their care.

President Winston R. Smith in his comments said: "We are leaders, even from the concept of creation. We should never abuse our authority. We must recognize that we stand as an example for our children to follow".

The keynote address was delivered by Gary Allen, Chief Executive Officer, RJR Communications Group. He said:

"Men in education must stand tall, look the part and communicate effectively. Males are needed in education because any eco- system that is out of balance is destined for extinction".

Discussion on Men's Health was led by General Practitioner Dr. Martin Taylor. We were reminded of how important it is to take care of our bodies. He also highlighted some of the lifestyle diseases affecting males.

A presentation on the Child Care & Protection Act was done by Eric Vassell. There was a very interesting and informative panel discussion on "Masculinity in the 21st Century Workplace".

Feedback from the evaluation sheet provided elicited the following comments, among others. "excellent implementation of this event", "the activity should be two days and more men involved", "timely conference", "the conference was an encouragement and a great benefit to me."

Time for Business Unusual in Education

Many people often shy away from or tend to deny the weight of reality. The fact of the matter is, if one is not part of the solution then, by default, one becomes part of the problem.

Consequently, as a nation and more so a body of leaders and nation builders, we cannot sit casually by, play politics and procrastinate on matters pertaining to education, discipline and youth development. This folly is to the detriment of us all.

Examine with me, this case in point, to better conceptualize the depth of the precipice in which we will find ourselves, if a better path is not forged; expeditiously too.

Imagine the youngster who has spent his/her school life galloping around the school's campus, on the very limited number of days he/she attends. Now this same youngster's tenure has ended and he/she is graduating this year. The reality of the situation is that after five long years and sometimes even

six (because the child may have repeated a grade), he/she may be leaving his/her secondary education level institution without a single subject pass in the recognized school leaving exam.

Sadly, in the school system, there are many youngsters, who are in this very same position and like objects on a conveyor belt in a factory, these youth are ushered out to join the unemployment line.

A very large number of school leavers do not transition to tertiary education in Jamaica, as they are either not eligible or unable to, as a result of financial challenges or other concerns.



**By Rayon Simpson,
Chairman, JTA
Credentials
Committee**

As guardians of the gate and preservers of our nation's best interest, holistic development and ultimate progress, we need to take immediate, decisive and practical actions, as an initial response to this deep rooted issue, which has the potential to grow and spread, causing chaos and mayhem, within our society.

The issue with underperformance will never be fixed with mass CSEC revision classes just before exams or Ministry operated summer school.

Together, these actions are a giant step in the right direction, to contribute to the overall, holistic, self-development of the individual, thus ultimately resulting in improved academic performance.

It's my belief that you will never find a single school that is doing very well, academically, but has less than an eighty-five percent attendance and or punctuality rating.

However, there are many schools in Jamaica, far too many that still have not demonstrated their understanding of the significance of attendance and punctuality on performance.

We must accept that the following is our stark reality.

1. A number of our Jamaican students only receive parenting when they are at school.

2. Schools that are creating positive waves, cannot and should not depend solely on the Ministry to realize the outcomes that are needed for the cohort of the institution to thrive and succeed.

3. We know only too well that sometimes when you write to the Ministry, on issues pertaining to initiatives regarding the development of the institution or operational improvement, you never ever receive a response.

4. We know only too well that many children leave our school spaces and are recruited as hard core criminals each year.



St Ann Parish President's Message & Report

*'If you want to go fast go alone,
if you want to go far go to-
gether' (Swahili Proverb)*

By Rowena Newman Ridley

The executive team of the St Ann Parish was drafted and some coerced to take on leadership at different levels of the JTA. Our plan? to impact the lives of our teachers from all walks of life.

Led by a mandate to unite and serve while navigating a pandemic that seemed it would never end, as your Parish President, the challenge was given to find enduring and enduring ways to reach and encourage the teachers.

Many of the events planned had to be designed in ways to improve teaching and learning while impacting the lives of teachers positively. Of the many events planned, we were able to successfully stage several activities, mostly using the virtual modality.

These included:

1. November -Parent Workshop. Our a guest speaker was our very own PAC Chairman An-niona Jones

2. The Women's Caucus started off the year focussing on women's wellness by staging Total Wellness and Early Childhood Technology training.

3. Finding your Why-- A Professional Advancement and Teacher Welfare Committee event aimed at helping our teachers to reflect on why we started teaching in the first place. Our guest speaker was Esther Tyson, education consultant.

4. World sight day workshop

5. December: Disabilities week webinar

6. Annual Carol Service featuring exquisite local artistes and instrumentalists

7. February: We hosted Financing your dreams - attendees were fed the ins and outs of investing in the Jamaica Stock



MEMBERS OF THE ST ANN PARISH EXECUTIVE:

(From left): Rowena Newman-Ridley, President; Diana Campbell, President Elect; Carole Davis-Cunningham, Immediate Past President, (now deceased); Alando Lawrence, IPP once removed; Kesreen Dillon, Secretary; Vermique Gardener, PRO; Cheryl Thomas, Treasurer; Shaunette Scarlette, Sports Coordinator; Angela Brown-Lumbley, President-Alexandria DA; Marlene Edwards, President-Brown's Town DA; Tamara Riley, President-Clairemont DA; Fiona Wallace, President Moneague DA; Kellian Brown-Davis, President Ocho Rios DA; Candice Brown, President St Ann's Bay DA; Terriann Gillespie, Secretary-Alexandria DA; Odette Waugh-Fagan, Secretary Brown's Town DA; Holaya Waller, Secretary, Clairemont DA; Marcene Beckford, Secretary, Moneague DA; Nikita Rose Secretary, Ocho Rios DA; and Michelle Lynch, Secretary St. Ann's Bay DA.

Market and making your money work for you on the JSE.

8. Teacher training in Sign Language. That executed the largest cohort of sign language training programs in our Parish's History. Today, graduates are among us who are now Jamaican Sign Language literate and able to help their students learn in even more dynamic ways

9. Women's Caucus engaged the ladies at the St Ann Women's Center with an entrepreneurial empowerment session, aimed at helping them to see ways they could persevere despite setbacks.

10. Read Across Jamaica Day activities across the parish saw members reading to groups far and wide.

11. Our Sports runoff was held in May. We executed a successful staging of a parish run off on May 25, 2022 at the York Castle High School in preparation for the national staging of the JTA/Sagicor Primary Championship.

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St Ann Parish Association

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12. Our Membership Committee led by Chairman Marlene Edwards has been conducting a membership audit to fuel our membership drive as we cannot grow without new members.

13. We highlighted issues affecting the Special Education sector through multiple modalities. This year, major focus was given to visual impairments and caring for the eyes. Intellectual disabilities, autism and other learning disorders were also targeted.

14. Study Circles -- we have two active circles

15. Our Early Childhood chairman established an active WhatsApp group for the community of Early Childhood practitioners across the parish, to share best practices and improve the output of students at the early childhood level.

16. The Women's Caucus staged its Sip and Chill event, which focused on cyber, home and personal safety, especially for women.

17. Research webinar was held on Thursday, June 2, 2022.

18. The Education and Research Team is actively executing research on recovery for boys' education, emerging from the pandemic.

In addition to all these, members of the executive were actively engaged in activities planned at the national level as they were scheduled. We made our voices heard on JTA and educational policy and matters of great importance to our teachers' welfare. As we bring the curtains down on this conference, I take the time to salute this august executive who attended a whopping eight executive meetings and over 15 committee meetings as we



St Ann donates to Mustard Seed Community

It was a special time for members of the St. Ann Parish Association Executive who visited Mustard Seed Communities, Jacob's Ladder in Hadden District, Moneague St Ann. The team who made a visit to the home donated cleaning items, personal care items, books and a small amount of clothing to the home that caters to adults with disabilities and in the care of the charity. The donation was made possible through the efforts of the Parish President along with members of the Parish Association. It formed part of an initiative aimed at spreading the love to the less fortunate. Interaction with the residents and supervisor was both informative and rewarding.



St Ann President Elect Diana Campbell poses after church with members of the delegation at the New Year's Church Service, held at the Brown's Town Baptist Church on January 2, 2022

planned, prepared and collected information for dissemination across the parish to you, our teachers.

I take this opportunity to thank especially Diana Camp-

bell our President-Elect; Kereen Dillon, Cheryl Thomas, Vermique Gardener, Alando Lawrence our IPP once removed who stood in the gap for us, and Our Regional Officer

whose guidance helped me focus even when everything seemed blurred for most of us, especially during the passing of our IPP.

I would also like to place on record our immense gratitude to our Secretary General and our National President who went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure our questions were answered and muddy waters cleared as we navigated negotiation and all the tumult that came with it.

I take pleasure in handing over to a most capable, creative, patient, and service-driven Woman of Worth, Diana Campbell. It has been my pleasure serving you, my fellow teachers, and I stand ready to provide support to my successor. Let us continue to unite and serve.



St Mary Parish Association

The awesome task of leading the St Mary Parish Association was mine at the start of the conference year, September 2021.

I believed that as a team, the executive body would soar in spite of seemingly insurmountable challenges we all faced, the COVID-19 pandemic being at the top of the list. Though we were operating in difficult times, we charted our course with the determination to move forward with discipline, courage and hope.

As the pandemic was still very much with us, the challenge we faced was remaining safe while keeping our Parish Association alive. Our meetings were held every first Tuesday of each month, and the decision was made for us to move forward using a mixed modality.

The theme for our conference year is "Bridging the Digital and Social Divide: Transforming Education for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development." Like our National President, my heart was set on helping our teachers care for themselves, while caring for others. So, as we began to soar, our September meeting was focused on laying the foundation of self-care and care for each other.

A Health and Wellness Chairman was co-opted and a committee formed to look at the needs of our teachers and how we could help them care for themselves. Each of the Parish Executive Committee members was also assigned an accountability partner, where we were expected to check in on the other as the year progressed.

The presentations at our Half Yearly and Annual General Meetings focused on issues having to deal with mental health and self care. Our presenters were Dr. Sheriffa Colquhoun, Family Psychologist and Dr. Gail



By
Keisha-Fae Gooden Johnson
St Mary Parish President

our Regional Office and as we made plans to assist children in need of resources at the early childhood level. Five (5) early childhood institutions were selected and presentations were made in November. The schools identified were: Annotto Bay Infant, Carron Hall Infant, Port Maria Infant, Church of Christ Basic, in Gayle and Zion Hill Basic, in Richmond; one institution from each District Association.

CHURCH SERVICES

We continued to soar in January with two Church Services: One

As such, we were very much present and engaged in the National Netball and Football Rally.. The Netball team was knocked out in the preliminary round while the Football team went as far as the semi-finals. Our cricketers did really well and overcame Portland and St. Ann at the Regional level. It was at the semi finals that they lost by five runs to Manchester.

Our Parish hosted the Vilma Lawes-Munroe 5k Walk/Run on May 28. It was another great event. We had students, from the Oracabessa High School who entered the competition and who



St Mary Parish Executive made a presentation to needy children of five Early Childhood Institutions. Representatives of each District Association from left: Deniese Smiley, for Carron Hall Infant - Central DA; Doraine Lindsay-Murphy, Port Maria Infant - North DA; Keisha Gordon-Scarlett, Annotto Bay Infant, East DA; Loraine Henry, President Elect and Early Childhood Chairman; *Representative of Zion Hill Basic, Richmond DA; Keisha-Fae Gooden-Johnson, President and representative for Church of Christ Basic, West DA, and Devon Meek, Regional Officer, North East Region.

by Hudson, Director Strategic Human Resource and Administration, Ministry of Health and Wellness.

The Sports Chairman was commissioned to liaise with the Health and Wellness Chairman to initiate a programme that would encourage our teachers to take care of their health while living a sedentary life as we were forced by the pandemic to operate from home.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

October saw us soaring as we had our badging ceremony at

on Saturday, January 1, at the Claremont Seventh Day Adventist Church in Highgate, and the other at the Port Maria United Church on Sunday, January 2. The President's message was read by Timroy Shaw, a General Council representative and Past Parish President and Keisha-Fae Gooden-Johnson, Parish President. Other teachers were also in attendance at both services.

SPORTS

The Sports Coordinator, Wayne Taitam, is passionate about our sports involvement.

did well. However, it was the children from Annotto Bay Primary who stole the show in the children's section. We congratulate Crystal Gordon, 1st place winner in the girls category; Kwan Smith 1st place, Bobbie Maragh 2nd place and Devon Rose 3rd place in the boys category.

These children went on to represent the parish at the JTA/Sagicor Athletics Championship.

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St Mary Parish Association

Parish Executive

The Parish Executive comprises of the following persons: Keisha-Fae Gooden-Johnson, President; Loraine Henry, President Elect; Deniese Smiley, Immediate Past President; Vivien Mattison, Secretary; Timroy Shaw Resolutions Chairman-Council Rep; Marsha Johnson, Membership Chairman; Wayne Taitam, Sports Chairman; Eva Coleman-Stamp, Treasurer; Shantel Searchwell, Public Relations Chairman; Shanthele Simms, DA President – West; Veranique Thomas-Davis, DA Secretary – West; Alicia Whyllie, DA President – East; Lorine Bryan, DA Secretary – East; Sheldon Royes, DA President – Central; Shawna-Lee Smith, DA Secretary – Central; Donique Smith, DA President- North/ Fundraising Chair; Lorine Byran, DA Secretary – North; Dorothy Douglas, DA President – Richmond; Neressa Davis-Brown; DA Secretary – Richmond; Vivienne Ramsay, Study Circle Chairman; Loraine Henry, Early Childhood Chairman; Melisa Williams-Hydol, Primary Chairman; Sasha Blake, Secondary Chairman; Yaneque Forrest, Professional Advancement and Teacher Welfare Chairman; Javed Allison, Health and Wellness Chairman.

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EDUCATION WEEK

The Church Service to mark the start of Education Week was held in our region, at the Brown's Town Tabernacle Church. The parish was represented by the President, Keisha-Fae Gooden-Johnson; the President Elect, Loraine Henry – who read the second lesson,



The JTA Vilma Lawes-Munroe 5K Walk Run Children's category winners: (from left) Bobbie Maragh, second place male; Kwan Smith, first place male category; Crystal Gordon, first place female; and Devon Rose, third place male; all from Annotto Bay Primary School.



Parish Church Service, January 1, 2022 at Claremont SDA Church, Highgate, St Mary. Members of the Parish Executive (Front Row from left) Donique Smith, North DA President; Deniese Smiley, Immediate Past President; Timroy Shaw General Council Representative; Eva Coleman-Stamp, Treasurer; Lorraine Greaves, Secretary Regional Office and other teachers.

and several other members. We also participated in the Read Across Jamaica Day. Several of our Parish Executive members visited a number of early childhood institutions (ECIs) across the parish and read with and for our nation's children.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The JTA is known for its propensity and its mission to aid its

members in their personal and professional development. The Regional Resolution's Writing Workshop which was held in April at the Regional Office was attended by three of our executive members and two others. The Men's Conference saw six of our outstanding male leaders from the parish in attendance. It was reported that the experience was informative and empowering. Not to be left out at all, St.

Mary was numbered among those selected for the JTA Future Leaders Conference held in June. These leaders are now poised to exceed limits and redefine boundaries.

In conclusion, though the struggle was real and there were many seemingly insurmountable challenges, the executive committee decided to soar. In the areas and moments where soaring was impossible, we ran.

There were times, too, where we slowed to a walk and even had to crawl, however, we did not give up but kept on moving. We drew strength from each other and from God, who is our source.

The St. Mary Teachers' Association has a wide variety of talented individuals and it is our

pledge to strengthen our union at the grass roots level – within the District Associations (DAs).

Strong DAs make strong Parish Associations and, by extension, the National leadership will be even stronger. According to Francis of Assisi, we will "Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible and suddenly you are doing the impossible."



Portland Parish Association

We have ended another conference year and must continue to give God thanks for His goodness towards us! I am eternally grateful to have been provided with the opportunity to serve in the capacity of the president of one of the most beautiful parishes in Jamaica.

I am even more honoured to be a part of the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA) which I have served in the capacity as: DA Sports Coordinator and President, Parish: President and Sport's Coordinator for fifteen years.



Herman Reid
Portland Parish President

The parish executive, guided by the mandates established at the beginning of the conference year was able to coordinate activities for our members to be engaged in, such as: monthly Parish Executive meetings, supporting DAs activities, supporting National and Regional activities, honouring and awarding retired members and donating a wheel chair to the Port Antonio Hospital.

I, personally, pray that God will guide and give his

treasured wisdom to President Elect Adli Lewis and the Parish Executive of 2022-2023.

Volunteers are difficult to find now-a-days and those who offer their time and services in the name of a cause or institution must be seriously recognized.

I salute all members of the JTA! Let us love, care and embrace each other as we unite and serve.

Portland Parish Overview

The JTA Portland Parish Association started the 57th annual conference year 2021-22 with a sense of gratitude, purpose, and a passion for service, despite the uncertainty of the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic.

The Parish executive was pleased to unite and serve with our assertive National President, Winston Smith, parish members, and all JTA national executive representatives.

Portland, over the years, has always maintained a team of dedicated Parish presidents, executive members, and a highly committed Regional Officer, Devon Meek. This year was no exception. The team was led by Herman Reid, President; Taneisha Reboe, IPP; Adli Lewis, President-Elect, and Regional Officer, Devon Meek who provided much invaluable support and guidance to teachers through the pandemic.

The other members of the Executive include: Shauna Ashley, Secretary; Claudia McLean,



The National President, Regional Officer, and the Parish's presidential core, visited schools in the St. Georges District Association.

Treasurer; Joy Harris, Parish Membership Chair (Co-Opted); Celia Roper, Sports Coordinator; Novlett Muirhead Watson, Study Circle Representative (co-opted), and Claudine Lewis, PRO.

Our four (4) District Associations - Rio Grande, St. Georges, Port Antonio and East Portland -- through the guidance of the DA presidents, all engaged in various activities to educate and entertain their constituents. And, oh, how psychologically beneficial those meetings were for teachers during the Pandemic.

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Portland Parish Association

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Portland Bounces Back

As a parish, we were able to navigate various stipulations, such as No Movement Days, to ensure that our parish meetings were held, at 4 p.m. on the second Tuesday, in each month. The pandemic prompted far more communication among members via texts and phone calls, drawing many persons closer, while we practicing physical distancing and other safety protocols.

The onset of the Corona virus emotionally and psychologically affected not only our students and parents but also our teachers and school administrators. Many experienced several challenges in navigating the online platform, whether it was the limited, or lack of, access to a device, or issues with connectivity. However, when the announcement came that 129 schools across Jamaica were approved for face-to-face reopening January 4, 2022, it was greeted with melancholy emotions.

Understandably, educators especially in some rural areas, were enthused to reach more students, but were also quite concerned about the exposure to the virus and the safety of all. These and other issues sparked the need for divine intervention, and as such, the Parish hosted a series of prayer session for our teachers.

In commemoration of the year 2022 and the Easter term, members attended Church services at the Buff Bay SDA Church, and at Christ Church Port Antonio on January 1 and January 2, respectively. Our National President Winston Smith was quite motivating in his message that was delivered virtually. All in attendance were blessed as we were reminded that prayer works and encouraged to Reignite values, morals and attitudes in our children.

With renewed enthusiasm, the Parish hosted its virtual Half Yearly meeting virtually on November 19, 2021. The members logged on in their numbers and were enlightened on JTA issues



Herman Reid, Parish president (left); Devon Meek, Regional Officer North East (second left; Claudia McLean, Treasurer, (second right) and Joy Harris (3rd right) joined by staff of the Port Antonio Hospital at the presentation of a wheelchair.



Portland AGM-front row (from left) Jasford Gabriel, IPP-JTA; Herman Reid, Parish President; Shauna Ashley, Secretary; Taneisha Reboe, Parish IPP. Back row: Adli Lewis, Parish President Elect, and guest speaker Dr. Gayle Hudson.

concerning teachers. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Margaret Chin Assistant Secretary General, JTA, delivered an invigorating message on: 'Teacher - Professional In A Time Like This'.

Keen On Kindness

The Portland Parish association is cognizant of the added strain that the COVID-19 virus has placed on our health sector. Hence, it was quite fitting when Parish President Herman Reid and his team made a donation of a much needed wheelchair to the Port Antonio Hospital.

Men On Fire

On January 19, 2022, a team of influential presidential officers and leaders, led a JTA Portland Parish Tour. The quartet comprised of Winston Smith, JTA President; Devon Meek, RO, North East; Herman Reid, Parish President, and Adli Lewis, Parish President-Elect.

They visited schools in the St Georges DA, and held discussions with the teachers on hot topics; from salary negotiations, and allowances, to leave entitlement. This, indeed, was a very good initiative.

Rewarding the Greats

In honour of International Women's Day on May 8, the male leaders ensured that the women of Portland were reminded of how greatly appreciated and valued they are. The Parish Executive also presented tokens of appreciation to Mrs. Thompson, retired vice principal of Port Antonio Primary, and Mrs. Jarrett, retired Principal of Fruitful Vale Primary, who both served as parish treasurers.

The celebrations continued on International Men's Day, and the appreciation was reciprocated to our men who were celebrated for their worth and outstanding

contribution to nation building. The awardees, Everard Owen, retired lecturer of CASE and Gaian Thompson, retired Principal of Fair Prospect Primary School, were both acknowledged for their contribution in the area of sports. In light of the ongoing challenges, JTA Portland remained resilient, and determined to enhance our teachers professionally. On February 3, 2022, the JTA Portland PAC team under the auspices of Adli Lewis, President-Elect and Kaydian Scott, held a virtual School Leaders' Seminar. The principals welcomed this initiative.

Sport Volunteerism Still Alive
Sports preparation and staging of events at the DA and parish levels were dealt a huge blow as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, when news broke of the hosting of the 2022 JTA/Sagcor Primary Athletics meet, the dedicated sports enthusiasts of Portland committed their time to support the team on training days and at training camp.

Although Portland finished in an unfamiliar eighth place at the championships, the parish wholeheartedly applauded the hard work of the athletes, coaches, coordinators, parents and school administrators. High Commendations also to the participants of the Vilma Lawes Munroe 5K Walk/Run. We are extremely proud of your efforts and we remain undaunted in our strides to return bigger and better next year.



Roll of Honor

Cecelia Grant Francis Named to JTA Roll of Honour

The fifty-second (52nd) Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA) Roll of Honour awardee, 2021, is Cecelia Grant Francis. She is the latest to have earned the highest accolade bestowed on anyone by the JTA.

Mrs Grant Francis started her career as a pre-trained teacher at Burnt Savannah Primary School, St Elizabeth in 1975 and retired as Principal at Porus Primary School in Manchester, in 2012.

Her stellar career spanning 46 years has been marked by innovation and accomplishment at several institutions and in the lives of the countless people she has served and with whom she has interacted over the years.

Mrs Grant Francis was educated at Bethlehem Teachers' College, Teachers Certificate; Church Teacher's College, Diploma; University of the West Indies, Bachelor's Degree, and Nova Southeastern University in Florida, Master's Degree.

Her service to her chosen profession has been full and expansive. In addition to her work as principal, teacher and guidance counsellor, her services stretched the gamut from developing and strengthening sports programmes, through directly impacting the sense of self-esteem and pride among her students in their dress and deportment.

She served the JTA from her early days at Burnt Savannah as a contact teacher – the first of four stints -- through her career. Mrs Grant Francis has displayed unself-



Roll of Honour Awardee Cecelia Grant Francis (c) flanked by President (2021-22) Winston Smith (left) and Custos of Kingston Steadman Fuller.



Grant Francis (r) being greeted by Communications Consultant Beverley Newell at the Awards ceremony at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel, Kingston. Looking on is JTA trustee Patrick Smith

ish devotion in her work in the South Central Region where she was President for the Clarendon Parish Association. At the National level, Cecelia Grant-Francis has served on the JTA's General Council, Central Executive and as a delegate to Conference.

She has been a Board Member of the TIP Friendly Society for 10 years, and is a former Chairman of the Professional Advancement Committee.

Her work and service have been recognized prior to her being named to the JTA Roll of Honour in December 2021. She is the recipient of the JTA's WBC Ben Hawthorne, Golden Torch and 50th Anniversary Awards, and the Prime Minister's Medal of Appreciation, in 2015, in recognition of her contribution to Education.

Although retired, she established a Learning Centre which assists children to develop literacy and numeracy skills, as well as promotes social graces. She is also President of the Manchester Chapter of Retired Teachers and Chairperson of The Jamaica Cultural Development Commission's Civic Committee.

The Manchester Peace Coalition, the Friends of the Mandeville Hospital, and Prison Ministry are among the many other organisations benefitting from the services of this indefatigable community worker and Justice of the Peace.

Prepared and Ready to Serve

Dr. Mark Nicely, Secretary General, JTA

Secretary General of the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA), Dr. Mark Nicely sees himself as someone who has been prepared by his experiences for the job as the main administrator at the 58-year-old Association. The eighth (8th) Secretary General assumed the post in November 2021, succeeding Byron Farquharson who is retired.

Dr. Nicely is well acquainted with the structure, functions, and mission of the JTA, having served as the forty ninth (49th) President from 2013-2014 and Deputy Secretary General for Member Service and Industrial Relations from 2015-2021. He has experienced serving at all levels of the Jamaica Teachers' Association.

Dr. Nicely has served as District Association President, Parish President and as member and chairman of several committees. He is a career educator.

He started his work in education at the Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) as a Mathematics teacher and continued this journey at the Constant Spring Primary & Junior High School, which was then led by Principal Austin Wright. Dr. Nicely's learning and apprenticeship began from then. In addition to carrying out his official duties, he assisted with the administrative functions of the institution.

These included liaising with the Ministry of Education, submission of forms, getting questions answered about the canteen or about leave arrangements as well as any other activity that would assist with the smooth and efficient running of the school. This hands-on approach provided opportunities for him to learn about school leadership.



**Dr. Mark Nicely
Secretary General, JTA**

Dr. Nicely has a working knowledge about the operations of institutions at every level of the education system. He has been a classroom teacher, guidance counsellor, senior teacher 3, principal of a primary and junior high school, principal of a high school and a lecturer at different colleges.

Dr Nicely says the 60th anniversary of the JTA, in two years, will be a watershed moment and a critical date in the life of the organization.

He has also been chairman of the One Way Group of Schools and an external examiner for the Joint Board of Teacher Education.

Dr. Nicely prides himself on purposely approaching any experience, including his job, with his problem-solving skills. In fact, his job as guidance counsellor was a fascinating role that helped to hone his skill sets to the extent that he completed his doctorate in that programme of study.

While he values academics, Dr. Nicely believes that apprenticeship, hands on problem solving, troubleshooting and experiential processes provided a footing for the development of who he is today. As a lifelong learner, he continues to grow as he works at developing his competencies in any space within which he operates.

Dr. Nicely is of the belief that the everyday job as Secretary General spreads across a wide gamut of areas-from human resource matters through business services, members' welfare, the handling of critical illness cases, pension information to salary or finances of the organization. In fact, this extends to anything that could create a problem for teachers. Consequently, he regards this job as Secretary General as a great privilege, as he is to be able to give back and serve Jamaica.

He also attributes his overall success to his working experiences in other geographical locations. For instance, during the time of his residency in England, between 1997 and 2000, he worked for the British Petroleum Company. This was a lucrative job which saw him doing well for himself.

However, something was amiss; he was not giving back to Jamaica as he believed a patriotic Jamaican should. He recounts the knowledge gained as equipping him with experiences essential for his current job. "I learnt decorum, discipline and decency. I learnt about work ethics; whether it was snowing, raining or hailing, you got up and went to work," Dr Nicely explained.

He is keen on volunteerism. He is a member of the Jamaica Tertiary Commission, a member of the Teachers' Services Com-

mission and a Director on the E-Learning Jamaica Company Limited Board. Dr. Nicely continues to make his indelible contribution to the community as a Justice of the Peace for the parish of Kingston and as First Vice President on the EduCom Co-operative Credit Union Board. Additionally, he serves as Assistant General Secretary of the Jamaica Confederation of Trade Union (JCTU) and is chairman for the Strategic Committee of the Caribbean Union of Teachers..

Dr Nicely says the 60th anniversary of the JTA, in two years, will be a watershed moment and a critical date in the life of the organization. He wants to ensure that all its achievements are protected and recorded and its way forward mapped out. To that end, he has already established a Sixtieth (60th) Anniversary Committee. This, he feels, will provide adequate time for planning a series of activities befitting for such a celebration.

He is a Deacon at the Sydenham Baptist Church which is apart of the Gregory Park Circuit of Churches. Dr. Nicely credits his mother Jennie Webb-Connor, for helping to build his character. "She has been a major moral compass and a mentor helping me to develop good qualities," he said. Dr. Nicely is a proud single parent of two girls, Abbigel and Amiya. He considers them a part of life's greatest blessings.

His brother, Marlon has provided valuable support for which he is grateful.

He is also grateful for good friends who have sacrificed and stood up for and with him. "I am cognizant of the fact that I do not stand alone; they stand with me, persons who are divinely sent," said Dr. Nicely. We all grow, as together we 'Unite and Serve.'



St Thomas Parish Association

*By Kaydiann Woodcock
St. Thomas Parish Association
Report 2021-2022*

The St. Thomas Teachers' Association Executive consists of 21 members. This includes the presidential core, elected members, committee chairmen and the four District Association (DA) presidents and presidents elect. The team meets every third Thursdays for general monthly meetings and maintains constant dialogue via a WhatsApp group to share vital information. We welcomed our new Regional Officer, Petal Marie Thompson-Williams, in November. She replaced Basil Benji.

Elected members were President, Kaydiann Woodcock; President Elect, Roymane Robinson; IPP, Jacqueline Hendricks-White; Secretary, Chereen Murray-Forsythe; Treasurer, Gelecia Beckford; Membership, Denise Sewell-McKenzie; PRO, Loyette Lee; and Sports, Nickeisha Hudson Bowers.

The objective of Team St. Thomas was to work as a unit to serve the members of the Parish efficiently, in a reasonable and timely manner. To be successful, we remained committed adhering, at the same time, to the National Association's guidelines.

The members were our priority as we kept them abreast by participating in all major National activities and ensured that they were kept informed using media such as WhatsApp, emails, forums, meetings, and calls that were essential. We were very keen on delivering excellent service, maintaining the integrity of the association, providing professional and social support and generally empowering our members while contributing to the development of education.



(Left- right) Kaydiann Woodcock (Parish President), Roymane Robinson (President Elect) and Itena Williams representing St. Thomas Teachers' Association at the 2021 Roll of Honor function at the Pegasus Hotel.



(Left- right) Kamesha Russel, Roymane Robinson, Itena Williams and Chereen Murray-Forsythe. Members of the Parish Executive supporting the Central District Association Mask Ball.

COMMUNICATION

As a team, we understood the task that was there before us, and we wasted no time. In Au-

gust, we met and strategically selected 11 competent members to spearhead committees that would serve to achieve the man-

dates of the National President and those of the Parish.

We also:

- Redesigned the Parish's letter head
- Reactivated the Parish's Facebook Page
- Modified the Parish's Logo

The Parish Association started the conference year 2021-2022 with a church service at the Christ Chapel United Church in Morant Bay on Sunday, September 4, 2021, hosted by Pastor Pauline Wellington and her team.

Given the COVID-19 restrictions, only a limited number of teachers and members were permitted in the church. However, we had the service streamed and hence it was accessible to many more.

When the opportunity presented itself for us to participate in the Region 2 International Literacy Day celebration, the Parish Association sponsored trophies for the top students from the primary group in the essay competition, and the Parish President Kaydiann Woodcock brought greetings on the day's celebration.

The theme was "Literacy for human-centred recovery: Narrowing the Digital Divide." Committees were activated and got on the ball with the mandates with which they were presented. The Women's Caucus committee had the launch of the "St. Thomas Women's Caucus Empowered Women of the Bible Series" via the Zoom platform. Each month a video was shared and uploaded on the Parish's Facebook Page and YouTube Account. The videos featured empowered women of the Jamaica Teachers' Association pointing to women in the Bible that were empowering. There was also the "Good Morning in any Language" series.

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St Thomas Parish Association

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Each Morning we were taught how to say good morning in a different language. The Women's Caucus team online Prayer Breakfast was held December 11, 2022.

The guest speaker Rev. Suzanne Hemmings Bryan encouraged us to be bold and keep our prayer line active. Proceeds from this activity went towards feeding families for Christmas.

Sometimes we are so caught up with all the little things that are not going in our favour that we forget we've constantly been a blessing to others. So each day we were challenged by the Women's Caucus team to show gratitude in a different way. "The Thirty Days Gratitude Challenge."

Some of our colleagues experienced loss of loved ones or suffered illness. The members of Parish Association committee extended themselves to give support. We prayed, sent encouragement and sympathy cards, made calls, and did visitations and attended farewell services.

EMPOWERMENT

In aiding to empower our members and parents, several work shops were coordinated by the Professional Advancement Committee and Teachers Welfare chairman, Roymane Robinson; Membership Chairman, Denise Sewell McKenzie; Special Education Chairman, Althea S Burke; Awards Chairman, Veronica Facey; Collaborating with JAGCE Jamaica Association of Guidance Counsellors in Education (St. Thomas Chapter), Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (St. Thomas), National Commercial Bank and the District Associations. Some of these activities included:

- E-Portfolio Training
- Unsung Heroes Awards
- Mental Health Sensitization
- Parenting Symposium
- Empowered to be Empowered

In addition, we participated in empowerment sessions, of which there were many, hosted by the national body.



Roymane Robinson- President Elect making donation to the Yallahs New Testament Basic School. The Parish Association on Read Across Jamaica Day read across the parish and donated books to approximately 10 schools, including primary and early childhood institutions.



West DA champions of the Parish Association netball rally competition.

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. We made time to have fun and to entertain our members.

We had our Retro Vybz & SIP Virtual Party with DJ Claude, Kevin Genius and DJ Lus. Our DAs also hosted parties and socials to keep the members balanced. Some of the events were: Mask Ball, River Cookout, and Red and White Affair.

SPORTS

The Sports Committee headed by Nickesha Hudson-Bowers was instrumental in ensuring that we played. The team hosted a Virtual Sports Day. It was an afternoon of fun and heated bat-

tle for the championship. The teachers were competitive. West DA emerged champion at the end of it all, but the teachers were the champions.

For the first time we hosted a Teachers Netball rally in the parish. This aided in selecting the team that represented the parish at the JTA National Netball Rally. West DA emerged champion followed by East DA and third went to Central DA.

Athletics at a point seemed impossible but when we learnt that it was on, the Sports Committees of the DAs and Parish redoubled our effort and worked assiduously to have their District Association

Sports, where it was possible, and Parish sports. We had a team of 80 athletes participating at the JTA/Sagicor Athletics Championship.

This Championship was a great success for team St. Thomas, as we emerged second place. We were first in boys and 3rd in the girls section, amassing a total of 256 points. We walked away with two overall champions-Mario Ross, Champion Boy under-13 and Xavier Walker Champion boy under-11.

Study Circle Committee headed by Chairman Elaine Britton was active. She collaborated with the District Association's Study Circle convenors to host circles via the Zoom platform once per week.

For the month of December, we had our Season's Greetings telegram. Each day we distributed a season greeting from members of the executive, our regional officer or principals to cheer the members during the Season of Christmas. The telegram was in the form of songs, poems, or shout-outs and greetings.

For Read Across Jamaica, we agreed to have members from the four DAs going out to at least five schools in close proximity to read and donate books. Kingston Bookshop aided in this effort.

On Teachers Day, teachers of the parish received virtual certificates from the Parish Association expressing its appreciation for the contribution they have made to the development of education in the parish and the support they have given to the Parish Association.

As we celebrated Child's Month, as committee, we agreed to "gift a shoe box" with goodies to needy children in the four DAs. We were able to donate two boxes in each DA. Thanks to our committed committee members who made this a success.

As great as the task was, we never crumbled. There were dark days and the way forward seemed impossible at times.



St Andrew Parish Association

The St Andrew Parish President Marlene Foster is a quiet and hardworking leader. She attended Saint Joseph's Teachers' College and went on to complete a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education. She is also Acting Principal of Golden Spring Primary. Her philosophy is, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

She has taught Grade One students for fourteen years. She loves children and encourages them to love themselves and to be the best they can be.

Born in St Andrew, she proudly served her parish as president overseeing eight District Associations.

She became a part of the Association in 2001, and sits on both the General Council and Central Executive. As a member of the Association she has organized outreach activities and social events.

For the conference year 2021-2022, the executive met online due to the difficulties caused By COVID-19 and the protocols used to fight it.

Although the executive met online the meetings were productive. The District Presidents always gave reports and the meetings were informative and productive.

"Being President made me more knowledgeable about the association and built my professional Skills," said President Foster.

Executive Body

In addition to the President, the executive core that led the St Andrew Parish Association was: President Elect, Stephon Brown; Secretary, Tanya Lynch Davis; Treasurer, Tamashella Smith; Sports Coordinator, Marbracq Harris, and PRO, Nyla Louza.



Marlene Foster
President

The year was good despite the many challenges. We continue to give praises to the Almighty God for taking us through another year of dedication to the service.

Outreach Project

The Parish's annual outreach event was on Wednesday, December 15, 2021. Members of the executive visited Homestead Home in Stony Hill. The members sang Christmas Carols and brought cheer to the residents.

Twenty four children were treated with individual Christmas packages. It was an overwhelming experience for the members to bring Christmas cheer to the children who were very appreciative.

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Celebrating victory as national champion



National President Winston Smith and Vice-President Group Marketing, Sagicor Alysia Moulton White join the St Andrew team to celebrate victory at the JTA Sagicor National Athletics Championship 2022

St Andrew Parish Association

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SPORTS

The National Netball and Football rally was held on March 12, 2022. The St Andrew netball team entered and was placed second.

The St Andrew team went to the JTA Sagcor National Athletics Championship 2022 as defending champions.

We carried our crown from the previous staging of the championship, in 2019, as there were no games for the following two years.

We successfully defended the title on June 10 and 11, 2022. Mabraq Harris, Sports Coordinator and his team worked hard and well with the athletes which made us victorious in winning the championship, scoring 272.5 points.

West Central DA

By Keida Wilks-Betty
President

On November 26, 2021 West Central District Association hosted its first fundraising activity for the conference year, 2021-222. Pasta Friday was a success. The patrons were satisfied with their meals and the proceeds were used to purchase Christmas tokens for each contact teacher and DA advisor.

A total of twenty 2022 diaries were purchased and customized with the role and name of each recipient.

In April 2022, another fundraising activity was done – “Bun For A Cause” which was also another success.



St Andrew Executive performing for Children at the SOS Children's Home, Stony Hill.



A wonderful set of gifts secured for St Andrew's Outreach project.



St Andrew Netball team.



West Central District christmas treat



Kingston Parish Association

Life is an amazing journey for everyone. But it is even more amazing for us teachers. As volunteers, we come with our skills, education, advice, experience, friendship, vision, leadership, our dreams and personal aspiration. That is commendable.

However, when we give our time it is a priceless commodity. There is no praise or monetary exchange that can adequately compensate us. Yes, as teachers we display a heart of mission, compassion; a selfless service that ignites the hearts of our students, colleagues and community and brings change

and hope to our students.

It was an amazing year of challenges and goodbyes. Yet, despite all of this, we all chose to give ourselves and the world the best we have -- commitment. Remember, our good works are like stones cast into a pool of time. Though the stones themselves may disappear, their ripples extend to eternity. Strive to be that ripple, and mankind will call you blessed.

We cannot let fear of failure or fear of comparison or fear of judgment stop us from doing the things that will make us great. We cannot succeed without the risk of failure; we



Glenroy Williams
Kingston Parish
President

cannot have a now without the risk of criticism. We cannot love without the risk of loss.

It was a rewarding experience working with the JTA Kingston executive, other teachers and the JTA staff and our Regional Officer, Basil Benji, and later Petal Thompson Williams who continues to epitomize effective leadership and communication skills.

I want to say to us all that, "If you want to touch the past, touch a stone, if you want to touch the present, touch a flower, but if you want to touch the future touch life."



Kingston East DA honouring long serving stalwarts.
From left: Norma Reid, 21 yrs; Jacqueline Bailey, 28 yrs; Marcia Purcell, DA President; Hermin Wilson, 32 yrs, and Sheryl Barnaby-West, 21 yrs.

Sheryl Barnaby West, Kingston East DA President Elect 2022-2023, Jacqueline Bailey Kingston East DA President Elect 2021-2022 and Marcia Purcell Kingston East DA President 2021-2022.



Members of East Kingston DA Executive at our Church Service in October at the Pentecostal Tabernacle

Kingston Parish Association

Kingston Parish Association Activities

The New Year started with several members from the Kingston Parish Association attending the New Year's Church Services held January 1 and 2, 2022 at the North Street Seventh Day Adventist Church and the East Queen Street Baptist Church, respectively.

Numerous members were also in attendance at the JTA Education Conference held at the Ocean Coral Spring Hotel in Trelawny.

Members were also in attendance at the Helen Stills Professional Development Day at the Holiday Inn, in Montego Bay, St. James.

The Kingston Parish was also represented at the South East Region's Labour Day Project at the Clifton Primary School in East Rural St. Andrew.

The Kingston Parish participated in the JTA Sagcor National Parish Championships held at the National Stadium in June. The preparation for the meet was very challenging. However, with the help of the Almighty God, the Parish Coordinator Saskia Lee and her team overcame the adversities and, in the end, the Parish retained fifth place from the previous championship.

Kingston Parish is proud to be the parish with the most members honored in this edition of the Golden Torch awards, held at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel.

There were also activities within the DAs. For example, the Kingston East DA Executive started the Conference Year with a church service at the Pentecostal Tabernacle at 111 Windward Road and also attended the play "God's Way".



The Regional Officer and her team at the New Year's Church Service at the East Queen Street Baptist Church



The Regional Officer and her team at the Clifton Primary School in East Rural St. Andrew on Labour Day



National Play Day: Halima Jackson-Wilkins and Sheryl Barnaby-West join the children at play.



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Reflections - JTA Future Leaders Conference

The JTA Future Leaders Conference, held June 14-16, 2022 at the Holiday Inn Resort, in Montego Bay under the theme – ‘Exceeding Limits: Redefining Boundaries,’ met and exceeded my expectations.

The guest presenters were among the best in their chosen fields and the information they presented was well researched, relevant and timely for the occasion. The participants that were carefully selected were treated to a plethora of rich information that would rival any United Nations Conference, which is the world standard.

I felt honoured and privileged to be among the participants selected to be at the conference.

I have learnt the rudiments of trade unionism and how to take active leadership roles at all levels within the JTA. The three-day residential conference was rigorous and intensive and took me on a personal and professional development journey that sparked self-reflection, innovation and collaboration. It has provided me with the flexibility to adopt an agile approach to apply the new



By Donovan Edwards

skills in teacher advocacy at all levels.

The conference has given me the requisite empowerment skills to become a strong advocate for teachers in the public domain. I have learnt leader-best practices, negotiation and communication skills that would set a positive tone for interactions with administrative staff, peers and other stakeholders. In addition, I gained greater understanding of the education laws, policy issues and how to make representation through my union.

The conference has also provided me with the opportunity to

network with my colleagues across the country. As a result of my engagement and participation in the conference, I have seen tremendous growth and improvement in my knowledge, skills and technical competencies as a contact teacher and President for my District Association.

With the conference theme as my compass and the skill sets I have acquired and honed, I was able to utilize them in organizing and executing an elegant Awards Ceremony, held on July 14, the first in the history of the Portmore District Association.

Contact teachers, executive officers, past presidents and sports coaches were recognized for their work and worth. This awards ceremony has renewed much interest, pride and joy in the JTA among teachers. As a result of this renewed interest among teachers within the Portmore District Association, the incoming President and the President-Elect designate said that they will make the awards ceremony a calendar event for their respective administrations.

Globally, a confluence of factors has resulted in a steady decline in membership among trade unions. This state of affairs brings into focus, the need for rejuvenation, revitalization and recalibration of trade unions in order for them to be relevant. The JTA, using hindsight, insight and foresight, sees it prudent to recruit and train young leaders for future leadership roles within the union.

The conference signals the Association's commitment to succession planning and the inclusion of all in the growth and future development and relevance of the JTA. Much gratitude and appreciation to the top tier leadership of the JTA for providing this opportunity to young leaders.

It is now incumbent upon me and my fellow participants to play our part in the reformation and sustainability of teacher unionism in Jamaica and, by extension, the wider Caribbean. To whom much is given, much is expected (Luke 12:48). We now have a moral responsibility to contribute to the continued growth and development of the Jamaica Teachers' Association. Long live the JTA.

JTA Portmore District Association Report

Under the leadership of President Donovan Edwards, the Portmore District Association for the 2021-2022 conference year had tremendous successes and many firsts.

According to Mr Edwards, “we started the Conference Year with a very ambitious and audacious mandate, 12 portfolios of responsibilities assigned to 12 Chairmen with their respective mandates.”

The bank account which was dormant for three years was reactivated in order to get funds into the coffers of the DA. In addition to subsidy from HQ, funds were sourced from sponsorship and a raffle. These funds were used to finance the business activities of the DA.



President Donovan Edwards presenting plaque to Christine Nembhard Contact Teacher of the Year

For the period September 2021 to June 2022, 10 monthly general meetings and 10 executive meetings were held along with two special delegates' meetings. High profile guest speakers invited to address topical issues at the monthly meetings resulted in

record breaking attendance at these meetings. Seventy-two new teachers were recruited to become members of the JTA.

Achievements included:

- Public Relations Portfolio Redesigning of the letterhead,
- Creation of a logo
- Redesigning of a Facebook page
- Creation of flyers announcing monthly general meetings
- Facilitation of online polls
- Creation of banner that acts as a backdrop for meetings and special events

A Sports Committee was established and successfully executed Primary Sports on April 29 and participated at the Parish Sports on May 19.

The Parish Champion Girl is Neisha Campbell from Ascot Primary School.

The Portmore District Association for the first time in its history held an awards ceremony on July 14, where contact teachers, officers of the Executive, sport coaches and past presidents were recognized for their work and worth.

The DA. Retreat was held at Ascot Primary School on July 28, where the conference year was reviewed. At the retreat, Margaret Campbell, Early Childhood Committee Chairman and retired principal of the Marline Avenue Basic School in Breaton was recognized, with a citation, for her work and worth.



St Catherine Parish Association

Paula Duncan Frater is the consummate professional and teacher who exemplifies hard work as an educator. She is an extraordinary leader and director who is committed to making a big difference in the education system. She received her teaching certification from the Shortwood Teachers' College and later completed a Master of Science Degree at the University of Technology.

She recently received her Professional Qualification for Principalship (PQP) from the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL).

Mrs Duncan Frater has been employed at the Troja Primary and Infant School in St. Catherine for the past 23 years,



**Paula Duncan Frater
President St Catherine**

giving high quality and dedicated service. As a nation builder, she has been performing yeoman service to the Jamaica Teachers' Association, St. Catherine Parish Association

and the Troja District Association of Teachers, working in various capacities over the years. She is the President of the St. Catherine Parish Association and is doing a tremendous job.

She has won the respect and support of her colleagues at all levels of the education system. Her compassion for people has seen her going the extra mile to assist others in whatever way she can. Her mantra is "service above self." She is also an ardent prayer warrior.

Mrs Duncan Frater is the recipient of several prestigious awards such as the JTA W.B.C. Ben Hawthorne award, the RC. Tavares award for outstanding service to education and the Jamaica Teaching Council Ex-

cellent Teacher Award, among others. She recently participated in the JTA Future Leaders Workshop.

Team St. Catherine, "Together Everyone Achieves More" has been our tag line. We have been doing a tremendous job and thank all members for their support and assistance throughout the conference year 2021-2022.

We thank God for all our achievements and His many blessings as we come to the end of a successful year.

We encourage all educators to be the change they wish to see and put the JTA first as they continue to "unite and serve."



Top Row (L-R): Paula Duncan Frater, President; Tameika James Roberts, President-Elect; Lavern Johnson, Immediate Past President; Chevienne Rowe, Secretary; Devoney Chambers, Assistant Secretary; Sharlene Mills, Treasurer; Sean Vaughn, Sports Coordinator; Chinnese Morrison, Public Relations Chairman, and La Sonja Harrison, JTA President-Elect.

Middle Row (L-R): Donovan Edwards, President, Portmore DA; Raia Richards Peart, President, St. Jago DA; Heather Mothersill, co-opted Member; Maurine Davidson, Secretary, St. Jago DA; Adane Campbell-Lewis, President, Guy's Hill D.A.; Latoya Willis-Miller, President, Troja DA; Janine White, Secretary, Guy's Hill DA; Donna Greenwood, President, Linstead DA; Marcia Evans, President, North East DA; Shernett Powell, co-opted member; Annette McCormack-Smith, Secretary, Troja DA; Marvalyn Napier, secretary, North West DA; Sandra Hunter, Secretary, Linstead DA; Shernett Facey Reader, President, North West D.A.

St Catherine Parish Association



MEN IN LEADERSHIP AWARD: The St Catherine Parish Association held its Men in Leadership Award Ceremony on July 2, 2022, in recognition of the outstanding contribution of many of the male members of the Association at various levels and in different communities. The JTA was represented by National President-Elect, La Sonja Harrison, and Regional Officer, Petal Thompson-Williams. Rev. Denzil Jack was guest speaker, and Mark Jackson, Principal of Ascot Primary was the chairman. Honourees: Donovan Edwards, Jeremiah Edwards and Sean Vaughn.



FOOTBALL: The St Catherine Parish Association football team won the football competition held at the Manchester High School on Saturday, March 12, 2022.



CRICKET: The St Catherine Parish Association Cricket team won the cricket competition held at the Ultimate Sports Grounds, St. Ann on Saturday, April 29, 2022



PARISH OUTREACH: The St Catherine Teachers' Association Parish Outreach Programme was led by the Women's Caucus Chairman, Judith Spencer Jarrett, and the members of the Executive who visited the Women's Center on April 28, 2022. We adopted two teenage mothers and their babies and presented them with gift packages. Members of the parish executive returned for a follow-up visit on June 30, 2022.



PRAYER BREAKFAST: The Association held their Women's Caucus fundraising prayer breakfast on Thursday, December 2, 2021, at the Church of God of Prophecy Church Hall, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. The theme for the prayer breakfast was "Unite to end the Violence against Women and Girls". Approximately thirty (30) persons were in attendance at the physical location and about fifteen on the Zoom platform. The message was brought by Rev. Annett Brown.



Clarendon Parish Activities

Leading by example and supporting and showing up when it matters are among the guiding principles JTA Clarendon Parish President Shaunette Baugh-Wilson embodies.

Ms. Baugh-Wilson is no stranger to leadership, having served as President of the May Pen District Association twice and having been awarded DA President of the Year for Clarendon 2021-2022, by the JTA South Central Region, and Regional Parish President of the Year 2021-2022.

Ms Baugh-Wilson attributes her success to her hard working executive members, mainly DA Presidents and Committee Chairmen, who have gone above and beyond to ensure that all mandates set out by the DAs and of the Parish were achieved.

Some activities in which the Parish has participated or that it initiated were:

A JTA Clarendon Parish Regional Retreat at RIU Negril, Sports D.A Invasion, Clarendon Speaks 'Fi Wi Union' Membership Committee, Pinning and Re-branding of all District Associations, Christmas Cheer, Paediatric CPR and First Aid Training.

Also there was participation in and representation at: Understanding the New JTA Subsidy Template, Become Your Own Boss; JTA Clarendon Parish in Collaboration with JTA Whitehouse D.A Women's Caucus, Floral Arrangement Workshop, Chillaxing on the Beach, Team Building, Powered Up Activities and Lyme and Awards Social. Members of the Parish and Executive have participated in almost, if not, all JTA National events.

JTA Clarendon Parish South Central Regional Retreat- covered topics such as:-



Shaunette Baugh Wilson
Parish President Clarendon
(2021-2022)

members also participated in a Women's Caucus Session entitled 'Chillaxing on the Beach' under the theme 'Destined for Greatness'.

Pinning Ceremonies

Vere District Association

Members of the Vere DA were out in their numbers at the Pinning Ceremony. Members in attendance were encouraged to continue to support the initiatives within the DA and Parish Association. Regional Officer South

Ceremony Frankfield District Association - President Andrea Ricketts congratulated the New Executive Members. She charged them to work as a team, as, by doing so they will achieve more.

May Pen DA- Executive Members of May Pen DA were pinned by Regional Officer South Central Georgia Waugh Richards at a ceremony held in December 2021.



JTA Clarendon Parish Executive 2021-2022



Rebranding of JTA Chapelton District Association and Pinning and Presentation of Instruments of Appointment. In photo (l-r) Dianne McFarlane, President Chapelton DA; Kemar Bailey, Council Representative; Shaunette Baugh-Wilson, Parish President; Winston Smith, JTA President, and, Elsa Craig Principal Wood Primary and Infant.

roles and responsibilities of executive members, conducting meetings, parish constitutions, pinning and presentation of instrument of appointment, birthday club celebration and team building sessions. Executive

Central Georgia Waugh-Richards was the guest presenter. Also in attendance were Shaunette Baugh-Wilson Parish President and Michael Huggan Parish Sports Coordinator.

DA President Sophia Laidlord thanked members for accepting the awesome responsibility in working together to achieve mandates for the conference year. *Continued on page 35*

Clarendon Parish Activities

Continued from page 34

Winners of the Betta Vibes Relay Vere District Association

-Betta Vibes Relay an initiative to bring awareness of taking care of self was conceptualized by Michael Huggan JTA Clarendon Parish Sports Coordinator. The Event was held under the theme: 'Wellness Fi Life'.

The event was run over a distance of one thousand four hundred meters (1,400) from Ivy Store to the gate of Clarendon College. The event was held in honour of a colleague and friend Egunando Williams.

TA Netball and Football Rally Congratulations to the JTA Clarendon Team who placed 3rd in the JTA Football and Netball Rally

Mocho DA Primary School Spelling Bee Competition- Mocho DA hosted its first staging of the Primary School Spelling Bee Competition. The competition saw participation from all ten primary schools within the DA. President of the Mocho DA Yanique Parkes thanked all sponsors and well-wishers.

Kellits DA Invasion-The initiative from the Sports Coordinator Michael Huggan was gladly welcomed by all. First up was Kellits D.A and oh what an afternoon it was, packed with engaging activities for teachers. President Stacyann Sharrier was excited and thankful for the invasion.

Retired Teachers' Association Clarendon Chapter-retired and relevant members of the Retired Teachers' Association led by President Lawrence Dyer visited and read for students at Mitchells Hill Primary School on Read Across Jamaica Day. Students were also treated to snacks, ice-cream, cake and a token.



Winners of the Betta Vibes Relay- Vere District Association



Mocho DA Primary School Spelling Bee Competition



Retired Teachers Association Clarendon Chapter



Clarendon was represented at the Vilma Lawes Run Walk in St Mary



Manchester Parish Activities

President's Message

As President of the Manchester Parish Association for the conference year 2021-2022, I am honoured for the opportunity to express my thoughts through this wonderful magazine.

I must give commendation to our team members and hasten to let you know that you were divinely chosen to be a part of this executive at a time when we were forced to operate outside of the norm.

For 2021-2022, Manchester continued to collaborate with members and



Eaton McNamee
President

partners to guarantee that the professional needs of the teaching community were heard and understood. Together, we operated with a

strong presence at the key functions and ceremonies where the Association's commitment to professional development of its members is measured.

Success and preparation are inextricably linked and therefore it behoves us to be prepared for success. The benefits gained from this experience were totally dependent on the efforts each member was willing to exert.

As we continue to grapple with the effects of the pandemic on education, we must ensure that we continue to upskill ourselves to take

advantage of the myriad opportunities presented. We must also, as a union, re-imagine the way we operate to keep our members at the centre of our operations, ensuring that their rights are protected.

I therefore wholeheartedly stand grounded that professionalism and integrity are the great pillars on which our strong and resilient Association is built. We embrace the emerging changes as we celebrate our successes as we continue to unite and serve.

Manchester Recognizes Immediate Past President

Recognition for one's service is the least that can be done for an individual who has served. It is against this background that the Manchester JTA chapter instituted its Immediate Past Parish President Appreciation Function, in the conference year 2019-2020.

This event saw the Parish coming together to recognize the work and worth of the Immediate Past Parish President. To date we have successfully honoured two, the most recent being parish president 2020-2021 Helena Walters, teacher at Winston Jones High School in Manchester.

The event which took on an intimate setting was held on April 30 at the Church Teachers' College Lounge. Our guest speaker was Dr Mark Nicely, newly minted Secretary General of the JTA. Dr Nicely commended the executive of the parish for the initiative and endorsed it as a



Presenting the Citation: (l-r) Parish President Eaton McNamee; IPP Helena Walters; Rosemarie Thompson Collins and Secretary General Dr. Mark Nicely

signature event. He said events like these epitomize the true meaning of what the JTA is about -- service above self, as stated explicitly in our motto 'Unite and Serve.'

He also praised the parish of Manchester for representing well at the national level of the Jamaica Teachers' Association, producing nine national presidents. Immediate Past President for the parish Rosemarie

Thompson-Collins read the citation and presented it to Miss Walters.

The immediate family members of Miss Walters were in full attendance and spoke highly of her as an icon in the family. Also sharing in the celebration were Clarendon President Shaunette Baugh-Wilson and her team. Members from the Winston Jones High School, where Miss Walters serves as senior teacher and head of Mathematics Department, were also in attendance.

Parish President Eaton McNamee was the master of ceremonies.

In her response Miss Walters lauded the Manchester Chapter of the JTA for hosting the event in her honour and stressed the importance of showing appreciation to individuals while they still can enjoy the moment. She received a citation and plaque.

Manchester Parish Activities



Lavern Raynor-Jones

Chairman of the Year Manchester

I am a teacher at the Sanguinetti Primary School and have given twenty years of service and experience in helping to develop productive students. I am a graduate of Holmwood Technical High School and St Joseph Teachers' College.

My love for sports especially athletics began from an early age when I represented the parish of Manchester at the Blue Cross JTA Primary meet. That experience has propelled me to become involved with sports. It has always been my dream to give back to my parish and so when the opportunity presented itself for me to help in the development of our young athletes I took on the challenge.

As a member of the JTA I have served as contact teacher for my school, DA Secretary, Sports Coordinator and am serving as the Manchester Parish Sport Coordinator. As Sport Coordinator I have organized and supported the many sporting activities in which the parish took part.

The parish reached the semi-finals in both the JTA football and netball competitions. I am a transformational leader and my philosophy in life is that if I can dream it then I can achieve it, with hard work and dedication. I look forward in continuing to work with our sports programme so that I can contribute to the development of our young athletes for the future.



Parish executive members share lens



Dr Mark Nicely addressing the Manchester IPP



Manchester finished second in the Errol Miller Cricket Competition

We hopped on the cricket train and we crushed Clarendon and stamped out St Elizabeth to take the regional title. We then smashed St Mary, when parish president Eaton McNamee, playing the first cricket match of his life was called in on the team to secure a victory. And then, we went on to face St Catherine in the final. We gave them a hard fight leading to a nail biting finish where they emerged winners.

Giving at Windsor Lodge

President Eaton McNamee accompanied by members of the Parish Association visited Windsor Lodge Children's Home on June 2, 2022. The team presented toiletries and cleaning supplies which were well received by Captain Moliere.

St Elizabeth Parish Activities

Meet Howard Ledford



Howard Ledford
President, JTA St Elizabeth

President of the St Elizabeth Parish Association Howard Antonio Ledford is a consummate, hardworking and committed educator and community leader. He was educated at Bethabara Primary School, Manchester High School and Bethlehem Moravian College.

In 2013, he obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Primary Education at the International University of the Caribbean. He has been in the teaching profession for twelve years and is a

senior teacher at the Braes River Primary School.

He is an advocate for teachers and is the Jamaica Teachers' Association contact teacher for Braes River Primary School. He also served as President of the Central District Association. Mr Ledford is a member of the JTA Central Executive, General Council and National Sports Committee.

Ledford is a community oriented individual who has made significant contribution to

the Braes River community and its environs and, by extension, the society.

His strong leadership qualities and volunteerism are also demonstrated in his role as a Justice of the Peace.

Mr Ledford has received several accolades for his sterling contribution to nation building. These include the 2019 Governor General's Achievement Award for Excellence and the JTA's R.C. Tavares Award in 2021.



Executive members of the parish Seated (l-r) Steve Jones, Howard Ledford, and Mark Smith. Standing (l-r) Andrea Deer Samuel, Julian Williams, Natasha Peart, Jacqueline Brown, Veneshia Brooks, O'Keshue Bigby, Tafari Lynffat, Estella Bennett Williams, Iesha Hart, Stevan Sheriffe, Georgia Dehaney Stewart, Fiona Powell, Teddy Blake and Elizabeth Wallace.

By Taneisha Ritchie
Member PR Committee
St Elizabeth

It has become a practice for the St Elizabeth JTA executive to meet every second Tuesday of each month at the Santa Cruz Primary & Junior High School.

Amidst the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the executive members demonstrated a high level of resilience in the execution of their

duties to ensure that the business of the Parish was carried out and the relevance of the organization was maintained.

The members of the executive epitomized the true essence of volunteerism through their hard work and commitment. These members stood to the task even if it meant utilizing the virtual space as the main modality for communication and interaction.

The Parish is led by a strong executive consisting of: President Howard Ledford; IPP, Steve Jones; Sports Coordinator, Patrick Malcolm; President Elect, Mark Smith; PRO, Tafari Lynffat; Secretary, Fiona Powell; Membership Chair, Veneshia Brooks; and all District Association (DA) presidents and their secretaries. The parish consists of seven DAs, all of which are active.

MEETINGS

As a parish association, we were determined to start the conference year on a positive note, cognizant of the fact that most of our meetings would have to be conducted using the online platform. As a result, the JTA St. Elizabeth Parish purchased a Zoom account which was shared with all District Associations to host their meetings and seminars/workshops.

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St Elizabeth Parish Activities

Continued from page 38

The JTA St. Elizabeth Parish had its pinning ceremony for executive members in November 2021. Each executive member was pinned and received his or her instrument of office.

On November 17-18, 2022, the JTA St. Elizabeth Parish executive participated in the South-Central Retreat/JTA Clarendon Parish which was held at RIU Negril. The costs of the participants from St Elizabeth was subsidized by our Parish association.

On November 22, our Half Yearly meeting was held in a hybrid manner, with a number of the executives at St Elizabeth Technical High School and others on our Zoom Platform. Over 150 teachers participated online and listened to our National President, Winston Smith and guest speaker, Dr. Marsha Smalling, Principal of Glenmuir High School and author of the book, 'Powered Up: "Leveraging 6 Pillars To Live Out Loud."'

SELF-CARE & FUN

In December 2021, the executive members of the Parish Association were invited to an evening of entertainment, sumptuous meals and pure clean fun by the South Central Region.

On April 13, 2022., teachers were treated at Munro College as we believe in self-care and the importance of taking time out to relax, rejuvenate and re-energize. This event was free to each member and all in attendance expressed gratitude for a time well spent.

The JTA St. Elizabeth Parish hosted a workshop entitled "Conversation on the New Appraisal Instrument and the Teachers' Professional Portfolio." We had close to 250 teachers participating in this workshop. Guest speaker was Dr Ewan Williams, Senior Education Officer Region 1.

The Early Childhood Committee hosted a workshop on May 11, 2022. This was well received. Five teachers from the Parish at-



Teachers Night at Carisbrook Primary - giving support to principal, staff and family members of a fallen teacher.



St Elizabeth football team that placed second

tended Future Leadership Seminar held at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Montego Bay. They were educated on the importance of unionism and on their roles as union activists in the JTA and the education landscape.

The Annual General Meeting was held on June 1, 2022 at Santa Cruz Primary & Junior High with over 200 teachers present. Guest speaker Rose Johnson-Smith shared the importance of self-care and highlighted the self-care kit. National President Winston Smith provided very important information for all teachers.

Two of the three candidates for President-Elect candidates were present and were able to address the teachers.

The association had its first fundraising event in the form of a Cake Sale on December 20, 2021. This was a very lucrative venture.

On May 27, 2022, the St. Elizabeth JTA successfully staged its cook out.

SPORTS

Heartiest congratulations to the St. Elizabeth Parish football and netball teams who did exceptionally well at the JTA's netball and football rally held at Manchester High School on March 12, 2022. Our football team placed second.

The celebrations and good team spirit continued at the JTA/Sagicor National Athletic Championship. The parish placed fourth and was again the winner on attendance --having the most spectators at the championship since the inception, for over five years.

Our parish association had a good representation at the New Years' Day Church Services

which were held at the Goshen Seventh Day Adventist Church on January 1, 2022 and on Sunday, January 2, 2022 at the New Eden Moravian Church. Georgia Waugh Richards and Dr. Charmaine Gooden Monteith worshipped with us on Saturday. Secretary General, Dr. Mark Nicely, was with us on the Sunday.

Two members of the Parish association participated in the Study Circle Training which was held at Holiday Inn from January 20-22, 2022.

St. Elizabeth Parish continued its membership drive and visited several schools across the parish seeking to recruit new members.

St. Elizabeth Parish attended the JTA Education Conference in April. The attendees gave a positive feedback on the event and spoke about the wealth of information garnered.

TRAGEDY

Tragedy struck when a young member of the teaching fraternity Chanel Smith, from Sandy Bank Infant, was shot dead at the school gate. Regional Officer Georgia Waugh Richards and Parish President Howard Ledford and Manchester President Eaton McNamee visited the school to give moral support to the principal Erna Black Neil and staff members. The Parish Association continued to lend support and stand in solidarity with colleagues and family members of teachers or relatives of teachers who have passed. Our presence was seen and felt at funerals and wakes.

Special thanks to seven District Associations, all the principals, teachers, and everyone from the entire parish of St. Elizabeth who helped us to navigate this conference year. We express profound gratitude to our diligent and enthusiastic Regional Officer, Georgia Waugh-Richards, for the guidance and support that she provided during these times of uncertainties.

Westmoreland Parish Activities

Westmoreland's Longest Ever AGM - over 300 teachers attended 7-hour long AGM

A little over 300 teachers congregated face-to-face for the first time in two years for the Parish Association's Annual General Meeting. The dreaded COVID-19 Pandemic had rendered all meetings of the JTA to be held in the virtual space.

Hence, with the original COVID-19 protocols lifted, the members turned out in great numbers, on time and stayed until after 4:00 p.m.

The meeting officially ended after JTA's President Elect La Sonja Harrison answered the final of myriad of questions.

The AGM which commenced in the Methodist Church Hall had to be relocated to the church's sanctuary as the former venue could not hold the number of teachers who turned out.

The day's activities included: Reports from the Presidents of the seven District Associations, and from the portfolio heads of the Parish executive, presentations from two of the three President-elect candidates, prizes and surprises led by our exhibitors, election of a new executive, lunch - courtesy of the Parish, entertainment and the JTA Speaks.

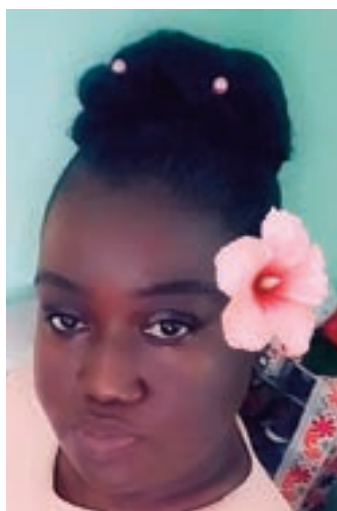
Guest Speaker Kaydeen Miles-Campbell motivated and encouraged the teachers to get rid of stress and adopt a more holistic approach to life which will result in good health and better quality of life.

How the year began & progressed

The 2021-2022 conference year began with the Parish Recognition & Awards Ceremony,



Westmoreland JTA Parish Executive



Floryce Campbell
Contact Teacher
of the Year

held virtually on November 14, 2021, under the theme, 'Celebrating Our Teachers...Heroes Extraordinaire'. JTA's President Elect La Sonja Harrison was the guest speaker.

Thirty-five teachers were awarded for their contribution to education and the JTA over the years.

Besides those, Past President Jean P. Brown had initiated the 'DA of the Year and the 'DA President of the Year' Competitions while IPP Camille Davis-Williams in her year initiated the 'Contact Teacher of the Year' Competition.



A section of the packed gathering at the marathon AGM

The End of Another Chapter
As the 2021-2022 conference Year closed we saluted the per-

son who took over the baton in September 2021 as Parish President.

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Congratulation!

Westmoreland's President Fayonia Graham received the JTA / Sagcor's Award for her outstanding contribution to Sports. Miss Graham served the parish as Assistant Sports Coordinator and Sports Coordinator for several years before becoming Parish President in 2021. She gave full support to the activities this year, guiding the Sports Coordinator and her team as the parish prepared for and participated in the JTA / Sagcor's National Athletics Championship.

The Parish Association extends sincere congratulations to her.

Westmoreland Parish Activities

President Fayonia Averil Graham: Energetic and hardworking

Energetic and hardworking are two adjectives used to describe Parish President Fayonia Averil Graham, who led the Parish of Westmoreland during the 2021-2022 Conference Year.

Fayonia holds a Diploma in Primary Education; a Bachelor's Degree in Primary Education and Masters of Science: Majoring in Reading and Language Arts. She has completed the Professional Qualification for Principalship with the National College for Education Leadership (NCEL). She is a trained mentor and lead teacher with the Jamaica Teaching Council.

She became a member of the JTA in 2004 and for several years worked with the DA and Parish in preparing sports teams. In 2018, she was nominated and elected President of the Darliston DA and Sports Coordinator for the Parish of Westmoreland.

She has served the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA) in numerous capacities including contact teacher, DA Sports Coordinator, Assistant Parish Sports Coordinator, Parish Sports Coordinator, DA President, Parish President, Member of Central Executive and General Council, National Chairman of Study Circle Committee and



Fayonia Averil Graham
Parish President

member of the National PAC and International Relations Committees..

She is the recipient of the '2022 JTA / Sagicor National Athletics Championship Award' for her outstanding contribution to Sports over the years. She embraces the motto: I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13).

She expressed sincere gratitude to the members of the Parish Executive and other JTA members and Officers who guided her in achieving excellence over the years.



Team Westmoreland prepares to leave for Kingston

Continued from page 40

National Athletics Championship

After its absence for two consecutive years owing to the COVID-19 pandemic; the JTA/Sagicor National Athletics Championship returned to the National Stadium on Friday June 10 and Saturday June 11, 2022. Westmoreland was determined to shine. After weeks of training the Parish Sports was executed on May 14, 2022.

The Whitehouse District Association emerged Cham-

pions followed by Darliston and Savanna-la-mar respectively with Little London in 4th position. The parish team was then selected and trained.

A total of 66 athletes along with the Sports Coordinator, Nikeisha Thorpe and her team of coaches, advisors and administrators drove into Kingston on the evening of June 9.

At the end of two days of competition Westmoreland's athlete, Jahleel Mathews of New Hope Junior High, Whitehouse DA was crowned Under 15 Champion Boy.

"Return to Happiness"

The Parish also hosted its first "Return to Happiness" event, during Term 1. Allison Solomon of the Jamaica Teaching Council was the guest presenter.

JTA's Football and Netball Rally

Westmoreland was present at the JTA's Football and Netball Rally in Manchester. The teams played with all their might but were unable to retain/regain their pre-pandemic glory.

They have used this humbling experience to carve out a



Jahleel Mathews,
Under 15 Champion Boy.

new foundation for the upcoming conference year.

Badging Ceremony and Pre Christmas Social

The Parish Executive was badged at the only face-to-face meeting, held in December 2021. This was also our Pre-Christmas Social. The Guest Speaker was Public Health Inspector, Rowan Stephens

THE GOLDEN TORCH AWARD:

Reflecting On Celebration Teachers Who Make A Difference

The 1990s was a period that saw an eruption of accomplishments and political upheavals. Early in that decade the Golden Torch Award was conceptualized by the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA).

It was born out of the view that teachers were not being adequately recognised for their contribution to nation building. Ray Howell, in 1993, pioneered the "The Golden Torch Award" as he sought to highlight the positive elements of education.

Driven by a passion for service to teachers and teaching, Mr Howard felt that they should be lauded on a national level for pedagogical fortitude spanning over 35 years of service. Sponsorship was sought and acquired from Alcan Bauxite Company (then), who provided support for 20 years; The Jamaica Teachers' Association Credit Union and The TIP Friendly Society.

The naming of the award was collaborative, with Basil Benjie (former Regional Officer, South East Region) suggesting the term "Golden" and the committee assisting with the planning adding the word "Torch", thus coining the title "The Golden Torch Award."

It was earmarked for the first Thursday in July 1993. Since then, thousands of teachers have been recognised and have come to appreciate the accolades given to them, using it in some cases as a connecting tool with batch mates they have not seen for decades.



**By Sandra Hunter
Chair of the JTA
Membership Committee**

*Education is the most
powerful weapon
which you can use
to change the world.*
-Nelson Mandela

This celebration of teachers has been held annually since its inception, except during the restrictions of the COVID -19 pandemic. The brief discontinuation could not remove this significant activity from the calendared events of the JTA and as soon as the pandemic allowed for the congregating of hundreds of individuals in one place the Association resumed hosting the event.

One can acknowledge that the benevolent and significant roles teachers play in assisting schools to improve students' performance and educational outcomes, prioritizing and contributing to the development and implementation of school policies should not simply be taken for granted. Teaching is a phenomenal career, with myriad activities that can be demanding, punctuated with constant pressure to produce great results, and with this consciousness, educators should never be taken for granted.

This long service award remains a gesture of recognition to thank teachers for their efforts in contributing to the positive growth of the education system. The ultimate aim of the award is to show gratitude for their dedication towards the teaching service.

At the same time it acknowledges teachers' value and substance in scaffolding graduates of merit who contribute to the sustainable development of their communities, nationally and internationally.

Successful teachers have always left the educational space better than they found it, dotting it with pockets of excellence. "Excellence is potential chiselled into a more perfect state through vision, dedication and determination" <https://www.successories.com/resources/popular-award-messages>).

We must never forget the interruption that provides economically challenged citizens

with a bright future through academics, technical and mechanical skill sets or physical prowess. While we continue to suffer economically, as successive governments seem to have an aversion to the payment of liveable salaries, sincere gratitude somehow lessens the pains inflicted.

Length of service is inviolable as today's workers are mobile and change profession and nationality regularly. The retention of high quality professionals is a tough job and those who continue to stabilize the profession with their service are important to any vision of education.

It is therefore imperative that the vision of Mr Howell continues, as it is inextricably linked to the sense of heartfelt and genuine gratitude of the celebration of our peers for their unwavering loyalty, commitment and longevity. It is hoped that the Jamaica Teachers' Association will continue to support teachers in their efforts to provide high quality service, and faithfully host this much recognised and valued ceremony.

At the most recent one held on Thursday July 7, 2022 at the Pegasus Hotel in Kingston, Paul Adams, Past President and Trustee, who was replying on behalf of his colleague award-ees, made a pitch that the award should be named after the conceptualizer of the award-- Mr Ray Howell --- what do you think?

My Top 8 Self Care Strategies

By Melissa Hamilton

The demands and challenges of everyday life can really take a toll on your physical, mental and emotional health. Now more than ever self-care is critical in navigating all the spheres of our environment, and neglecting it inevitably will have ramifications that significantly impact not just our productivity but also our relationships. So, what really is self-care and why is it important? Continue reading to gain more insight. In addition, my top eight strategies that I find beneficial are outlined.

What is self-care?

It is intentionally taking action to improve your overall well-being. This involves activities that help you to take charge of your body, mind and spirit. Before proceeding any further, let us debunk one of the largest misconceptions:

Self-care is not selfish

We all have so many roles to fulfill in our daily lives. Sometimes we may feel like we are being tugged in a million directions. Quite often, we may feel drained and exhausted. If we consistently neglect to attend to our personal needs then we won't have the energy required to function well in our various capacities.

The whole idea is to nurture yourself so that the best version of you is available to all those you love and care for.

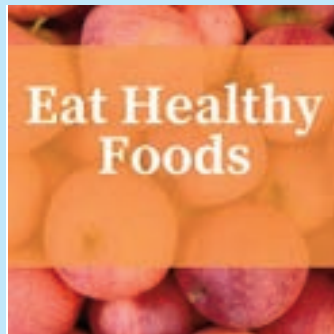
Why is self-care important?

Lack of self-care may increase irritability, anxiety and depression. So essentially it has an impact on mental health. Taking the time to —recharge and to focus on yourself can help you to have a different perspective on reality. It can help you to gain clarity on challenges you may be experiencing and subsequently find resolutions more easily. This, in effect, could reduce stress significantly.

MY TOP 8 STRATEGIES

1. Pray. Meditate. Breathe

Prayer helps me to connect to my source-- God. It helps to keep me centered and grounded. Praying is food for my spirit. Meditation can



be viewed as checking out to check in with yourself. It doesn't have to be long. It can even be as short as three minutes. Take the time, when you can, to rein in your thoughts if you feel they're getting out of control. Practice breathing exercises. They help your body to regulate nervous tension. One of my favorite breathing exercises is the 5-5-5 method. Breathe in slowly on the count of five. Then hold your breath for 5 and then slowly release for 5.

2. Exercise. This doesn't have to be strenuous. You can start off by walking. You may be saying "I don't have the appropriate physical surroundings to go walking." Well.... Did you know that there are walking exercise videos on YouTube that you can do at home? Pretty soon you'll want to include other types of exercises.

The benefits of exercise are tremendous. Make it non-negotiable. Do it even when you don't feel like it. Warning: You won't feel like it most of the time. Don't let your feelings rule you. Don't even think about it. Just start before your mind can figure out what your body is doing. By that time, you would be finished and you will feel awesome. You won't regret doing it but you will regret

not doing it.

3. Gratitude Journal I make note of the things I am grateful for. This has helped to change my mindset significantly. Let me be honest with you. My mind has a tendency to lean more towards negative thoughts. So, if something goes wrong during the day, that thought tends to dominate my mind.

Forcing myself to be thankful for even the simplest things helps me to train my mind to focus on positivity. Think grateful thoughts right through the day especially if you are experiencing a stressful moment. I also try to find the teachable moments of negative situations. I often ask myself what



can I learn from this?

4. Learn to say no. Say no to things that pose a threat to your mental stability or derail any progress you have made. Don't be afraid of what others may think if you don't agree to some requests, especially if they are unreasonable. Would you rather please them or save your sanity? When you say no, this may lead to judgements and negative criticisms. Don't give life to these things by dwelling on them. Develop the habit of not keeping offense but learn from each situation so you won't be blindsided.

5. Make time for fun and be intentional about it. Recharging and rejuvenating is important.

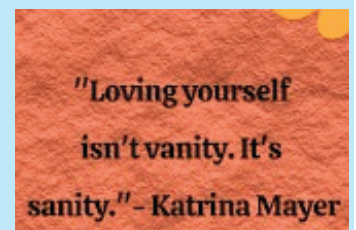
Fun doesn't have to be expensive. Watch a funny movie. One that literally makes you roll on the floor with laughter. Comedies not your thing? Then find movies in the genres that you love which will help you to relax.

Don't like movies? How about some music? You probably have lots of favorites. Crank up the volume, sing along and dance. Not feeling up to it? Fake it till you feel it! Do you live close to the beach? Throw on your swimsuit and head on out. Do what you love and what works for you.

6. Dress up and show up. Do you like to get your hair and nails done? Go for it. Take out those outfits you've been meaning to wear and just wear them already! When you feel good about yourself you tend to perform better.

7. Eat right but treat yourself. Denying yourself 100% of all the things you love to eat will make you 100% miserable. Ice cream and cake (just about any kind) take me to my happy place so once in a while I indulge. Just don't overdo it. Moderation is key.

8. Sleep. Studies show that lack of sleep causes deterioration in mind and body. When you get enough sleep, your cells are able to regenerate and your body has the opportunity to repair itself. Getting more snooze time in, may



be a difficult one because of your schedule. However, ultimately, for your good, you will have to force yourself to say good night at an earlier time.

Have you been practicing self-care? If so, how do you self-care? If you haven't been doing it, what's the first action that you would take? Why not start today. Small steps lead to big results.

Melissa Hamilton works at Montego Bay Community College and is a member of the Montego Bay II District Association



Prime Minister's Medal of Appreciation:

Governor General Sir Patrick Allen (4th left) leads the dignitaries in this picture with some of the awardees at the Prime Minister's Medal of Appreciation 2022, for education, in September. Beside him is Prime Minister Andrew Holness (3rd left). Others in the photo are, (from left) Minister of Education & Youth, Fayval Williams, MP and wife of the Prime Minister, Juliet Holness; Opposition Spokesman on Education & Training, Senator Damion Crawford and President of the Jamaica Teachers' Association, La Sonja Harrison.





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