

## Wards of the State Embrace Drum Therapy Project

Children from six child care facilities monitored by the Child Protection and Family Services Agency (CPFSA) are expressing excitement and joy to the Drum Therapy Project, which was recently implemented in the facilities by the Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA) in partnership with the CPFSA.

Doreen Haye, caregiver of the Homestead Place of Safety in Stony Hill, St. Andrew said the Drum Therapy Project has been very therapeutic to the children in that home.

"They are into it and on to it. They are excited and thrilled about beating the drums. Many of them wake up in the mornings with excitement and ask if I was ready to start the drumming lessons," she said exuding with excitement.

For children at the Manning Child Care Facility in St. Elizabeth the drumming sessions is a welcoming break in their daily routine.



Some of the drums being used at the child care facilities.

"The experience is very good and learning the techniques in knocking those drums are enjoyable for the wards," said Christopher Adrian, caregiver at Manning Child Care Facility.

Warren Osbourne, caregiver from St. Augustine Place of Safety in Clarendon thought that the Drum Therapy Project would have been a 'walk

in the park'. He however had to reassess the activity as he realized that it involved learning a lot of techniques in beating the drum. Rosalee Gage-Grey, chief executive officer of the CPFSA said the partnership with the VPA is a welcoming one as the Drum Therapy Project has enabled the wards of the state to learn a new skill.

Professor Elizabeth Ward, chair of the VPA said scientifically, drumming has proven to have made a big difference in the lives of children as it is a form of therapy to those who have been exposed to trauma.

Persons can contribute to the project by donating on the GoFundMe platform at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/vpa-amp-cpfsa039s-drum-therapy-project-in-jamaica> or to the Violence Prevention Alliance (Drum Therapy), NCB account number 061-033-629.

## International Peace Day Celebrated On September 21

The International Day of Peace was celebrated under the theme **"Shaping Peace Together"** and was marked with virtual activities organised by the VPA and its members.

According to Professor Elizabeth Ward, chair of the VPA, this year's theme encourages everyone to stand together and shape peace. She said that throughout this pandemic, persons should come together and spread compassion, kindness and hope.

"The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the weaknesses in our societies, as marginalized communities suffer more than others from the pandemic's effects. Discrimination is on the rise and conflicts and violence in the homes have increased because of the pandemic," she observed.

Professor Ward said that data has shown that there is growing violence in the homes that are spilling over into the hospitals.

Violence starts 'when mouth mash up.' When quarrelling starts in confined spaces due to COVID -19 restrictions, violent injuries result," she noted.

The VPA chair however emphasized that conflicts can be resolved amicably and offered the following tips:

Stop speaking in anger when tempers flare. Step back and take a little time to cool off before continuing the conversation. Arguing out of anger is never constructive and often leads to lashing out.

In observation of the day, the VPA hosted a Facebook Live session on **'Music in the Homes'** in collaboration with the Child Protection and Family Services Agency.

The session showcased drumming pieces by wards of the state who have benefitted from the Drum Therapy Project, which was recently implemented in child care facilities.

### Inside this issue:

Police Urge to Use Technology to solve Crime	2
COVID-19 Pandemic Presents Opportunities	2
Child Resiliency Programme Resumes in September	3
VPA to Implement Community Advancement for Peace Project	3
Thousands Benefit from PSQJ COVID-19 Jamaica Response Fund	4
VPA Encourages Dialogue in Strengthening Families and Child Safety	4

## Police Urged to Use Technology to Solve Crime – Professor Ward

Professor Elizabeth Ward, chair of the VPA is urging the police to use accessible technology to improve their response time to crime.

The VPA chair made the recommendation while addressing the St. Andrew North Division's Conference and Awards Ceremony at the Constant Spring Golf Club where she was the guest speaker on July 31.

"You have to utilize the information that you have to aid with the response time. If you want people to give you the information, you'll have to be able to respond in a timely manner and use the technology," she said.

She highlighted that response time is critical in policing and that is why the police should use the available data to assist them in solving crime. Professor Ward informed that the VPA through the Kingston Violence Prevention Board has been doing its part to accumulate data to assist the police.

"We observed that hospital guidance and law informant maps are important for planning. You can pinpoint areas for violence prevention activities and you can look at the types of violence that keep occurring in certain areas and then you can make a decision to have targeted interventions and see over time if it works or if you need another intervention or experts to help," she stated.

Professor Ward said that this approach saves money as it is targeted investment and coordination. In addition, she also informed that more frequent police interventions reduce crime; assist with identifying the type of weapons used to commit a crime; pinpoint walk-



Professor Ward greets Corporal Michael Young. In the background are Assistant Commissioner of Police, Gary Griffiths (left) and Superintendent Aaron Fletcher.

walkways and identify school violence locations.

The Kingston Violence Prevention Board was established by the VPA with key stakeholders such as personnel from both the security forces and hospitals. The Board has been using the Cardiff Violence Prevention Model created by Dr. Johnathan Shepherd, a

surgeon and professor at Cardiff University in Wales in the United Kingdom.

The Cardiff Model utilizes a multi-agency approach to violence prevention that involves all the stakeholder that depend on pertinent incidents of violence information such as location, date, time and description of injuries from health and law

enforcement to improve policing and implement violence prevention programmes.

The Kingston Violence Prevention Board has been able to map violent injuries from the surveillance system at the Kingston Public Hospital and identified gaps in the existing surveillance system – ranging from technological to process deficiencies that are targeted for improvement. The data is routinely cross-referenced against police major crimes and combined to create hot spot models



## COVID-19 Pandemic Presents Opportunities, Says Psychotherapist

Dr. Sidney McGill, psychotherapist stated that the COVID-19 pandemic presents opportunities for unity on the rejection of racism.

"One of the benefits of the pandemic is that it has made us realize that we are connected. It is destroying the illusion that we are divided.

Dr. McGill made the observation while addressing the Steering Committee of the VPA in July.

He voiced that the pandemic has propelled the world into a new normal and has brought social and spiritual biases to the forefront, such as racism in North America and in Jamaica, the issues of classism and sexism.

"The pandemic forced us to be more family conscious, to be more introspective than being



*Dr. Sidney McGill, psychotherapist*

usually distracted by our normal daily routine. It has brought to the surface social diseases such as racism and mobilization of the Black Lives Matter Movement, which resounds across the globe," he pointed out.

He said Christian supremacy and any kind of hostility is spread based on prejudices, fear and biases.

He stated that as a country we have to learn to deal with opposite views and to engage those who have different religious beliefs far from ours.

"We need to move away from certitude where we think that we absolutely know, but do we really know? So, I want us to have a beginners' mind. Start fresh every day. Learn something new every day. Life is constantly changing," he said.

Dr McGill who is also a board member of the VPA was addressing the Alliance on the topic, **'Stress is what you make it'**. He encouraged persons to deal with their stress with activities such as prayer or devotion and exercises which he said can assist persons to deal with stress in a manageable way.



## Child Resiliency Programme Resumes

The Child Resiliency Programme resumed at the Boys Town location in September 2020 with 60 families referred from the following primary schools: Denham Town, Boys Town, St Alban's, Trench Town and St Annie's.

The referral criteria was adjusted to also include children identified to be suffering from anxiety and depression and needing mental health support in the COVID-19 context. The programme delivery was adjusted to include an extra afternoon with staggered attendance.

Phone calls, WhatsApp, teaching and home visits continue to play a large role in the delivery of the programme since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic in March. The Ministry of Health and the Public Health depart-



Children participating in a session

ment inspected the Boys Town location and ensured all protocols for safety against COVID-19 were met.

The parent phone survey conducted on all referred families revealed that many parents were afraid to send out their children due to the upsurge of violence in the area. It also revealed that less than 30 per cent of parents

had access to Wi-Fi or a data plan or access to a tablet to facilitate their children's online learning. The police partnership/presence has proven very useful to the success in attendance under all the constraining conditions, and both parents and children are extremely grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the programme.

In July 2020 the External Evaluation Report of the Child Resiliency Programme was completed and submitted by Manitou Inc on behalf of Comic Relief. End of year evaluation reports were also completed for all four

programme centres and are available on the website

[www.childresiliency.org](http://www.childresiliency.org).

The Child Resiliency Programme began in 2006 as an outreach programme of the Hope United Church, under the umbrella of the Hope Counselling and Wellness Centre.

It seeks to meet the needs of pre-adolescents and build on their physical, social, cognitive, vocational and moral competencies as the most effective strategy for preventing multiple problems including violence.

In 2014 the programme began operating out of the VPA and spread its wings to the Kingston YMCA; Boys Town, West Kingston and Falmouth All-Age School and in September 2017. The programme began operating in the parish of St James at the Sam Sharpe Teacher's College.

## VPA to Implement Community Advancement for Peace Project at KPH

In early September, the VPA was successful in securing funding to implement the Community Advancement for Peace Project, a violence mitigation initiative at the Kingston Public Hospital (KPH) and the Bustamante Hospital for Children (BHC). The project is being funded by the United States Agency for International Development through FHI360 Local Development Partners.

The hospital-based intervention is part of a three-pronged collaboration with the Peace Management Initiative (PMI) and the MultiCare Youth Foundation (MCYF) and targets medium to high-risk youth in the age group 10-29 years of age from the communities of Whitfield Town and Trench Town. The aim is to reduce the involvement of high risk youth in violence and reprisals from communities.

The VPA component is based on the Child Abuse Mitigation Pro-

ject (CAMP) model that was implemented at BHC, called CAMP Bustamante, from 2004 to 2008. In 2017 the model



Kingston Public Hospital

was adapted and implemented at the Cornwall Regional Hospital (CAMP Cornwall) to enable inclusion of older children and youth. This model will now form the basis for the intervention at the KPH and BHC, with the lat-

ter including the children ages 10 to 12 years.

Having identified youth attending the Accident and

Emergency unit with violence related injuries, a dedicated social worker and violence interrupter will conduct home, school and community visits, to help determine the risk level for reprisals and further violent encounters.

With consent, the medium and high-risk youth will be referred to PMI for follow-up and case management and the MCYF for psychosocial and skills development interventions. The VPA will also provide some business readiness and entrepreneurship training, including some start up grants for 10 projects.

CAMP Cornwall itself has not been able to avoid the impact of COVID-19. With the social workers at first staying home during the initial lockdown, they managed to contact some former clients and follow up on their progress using a short questionnaire developed by VPA.

The hospital underwent some changes to accommodate patients requiring hospitalisation due to the coronavirus. To ensure the safety of the CAMP social workers, adjustments had to be made and the use of telephones used to engage in 'virtual' home visits. With refocussed funding, the project faces further challenges and may not see any continuation beyond year end.

## Thousands Benefit from PSOJ COVID-19 Jamaica Response Fund

Seventy seven thousand (77,000) beneficiaries in 52 communities across the island have benefitted from the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica's (PSOJ) COVID-19 Jamaica Respond Fund.

Saffrey Brown, project manager of the Fund made the disclosure at the VPA Steering Committee meeting, in September where she was the guest speaker.

"The target of \$250 million wasn't met but we did raise roughly \$197.5 million and with that we were able to directly impact 77,000 beneficiaries. Many of the beneficiaries on the programme got their packages every two weeks for three months," she informed. Ms. Brown said that one of the successes of the programme was the mobilization of some 1,200 volunteers, which included members of the Jamaica



Saffrey Brown (left) and a member of the JCF present a package to a recipient in Bull Bay.

which she said assisted in distribution of the packages and benefitted from improved relationships with members of the communities that were aided by the Fund.

"Historically, as police, they would drive into these communities to arrest somebody or oversee an operation, but part of this programme involved walking and engaging with the residents. They also reported that as a result of the interactions the trust building was improved and they were getting more information from

the communities to assist in their crime fighting efforts," she divulged.

Ms. Brown who is also the chair of the Council of Voluntary Social Services noted that the Fund donated to 46 non-governmental organisations such as Eve for Life, the Jamaica AIDS Support for Life, St. Johns Ambulance, the Jamaica Association for the Deaf, the Jamaica Society for the Blind, among other groups.

In addition, 43,000 masks were donated to vulnerable communities and organisations that were on the front-line in the fight against COVID-19. This was made possible through a partnership with NovaMed and American Friends of Jamaica. Some 122 local organisations and individuals contributed to the Fund with another 949 overseas

donors.

Ms Brown said the Fund was in the final month of operation and will be doing its last set of activities which involve food kitchens through the Jamaica Council of Churches.

The PSOJ COVID-19 Jamaica Response Fund was an integrated national response to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Jamaica. The Fund aimed to meet the needs of citizens and mitigate the threats associated with the pandemic by distributing aid to individuals and areas that needed it the



most.

## VPA Encourages Dialogue on Strengthening Families & Child Safety

Professor Elizabeth Ward, chair of the VPA is urging organisations involved in peace dialogues to include family strengthening and child-safety provisions in their discussions and agreements.

She made the recommendation while addressing the Manchester Peace Coalition Civic Ceremony for World Peace Day on September 21, which was observed under the theme **"Shaping Peace Together"**.

"As we meet as stakeholders, representatives of civil society we must acknowledge the ills being faced in society, affecting our parish, use the data to guide accordingly and form/strengthen partnerships for catalyzing action.



Professor Elizabeth Ward

Close association and opportunities to strengthen ability of families to better safeguard children must be seized," she pointed out.

Professor Ward also mentioned that this approach is more important now in light of the vulnerability of children as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Recent research is showing that the home may not be safe for many families who experience domestic violence as it impacts both intimate partners and children. COVID-19 has caused major economic devastation, disconnected many from community resources and support systems and created widespread tensions, uncertainty and panic," she said.

"When mouths mash up, when quarrels erupt in confined spaces due to lockdown and quarantine, violence in the home spills over into our hospitals," she added.

The VPA chair said before the pandemic, the data showed that almost a quarter or 24 per cent of victims of violence related injuries seen at the hospitals were 19 years and under. Meanwhile, eight out

of 10 children ages two to 14 years, experienced some form of violent discipline. Another 30 per cent of students surveyed feared going to school because of bullying.

Dr. Clifton Reid, chair of the Manchester Peace Coalition said the lack of peace continues to be a stumbling block for a successful development of the country.

"The theme for this year's International Day of Peace, **'Shaping Peace Together,'** provides a grand opportunity to mobilize our people towards a common goal of designing, shaping and nurturing peace," he said.

The Coalition observed week of activities to mark the observation of International Peace Day.