

## NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED

Dr. Elizabeth Ward, chair of the Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA) is recommending more available counselling and anger management sessions as strategies to stem violence against children. She made the suggestions while giving an overview of the National Plan of Action for an Integrated Response to Children and Violence (NPACV) at the official launch of the NPACV at the Emancipation Park in Kingston in October.

“We will have to increase the capacity of all of our caregivers, our teachers, our social workers, our guidance counsellors so that they can address and prevent violence,” she said.

“We need much more focus in the areas of counselling, conflict resolution and anger management,” the VPA chair noted, while adding that the tendency for persons to lash out when their adrenaline surged, was unacceptable.

Highlighting outcome three of the NPACV, she said families will have to be strengthened and the capacities of communities re-enforced so that they can address violence related issues.



VPA Chair, Dr. Elizabeth Ward flanked by students in attendance at the official launch of the National Plan of Action in Emancipation Park.

Dr Ward further explained that the livelihood of families will have to be increased so that they can adequately support their children.

She however noted that, for the NPACV to be effective, outcome four was critical as it speaks to the enhancement of public education, sensitization and training in violence prevention and the care of victims of child’s rights abuses.

Additionally, outcome five of the Plan was equally important, she said, as it points to the need for the establishment of an integrated framework for the effective coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the NPACV.

“One of the things that we have to understand is that, violence is preventable. But we all have to breakdown the silos using the integrated framework of NPACV,” she pointed out.

Rosalee Gager-Grey, chief executive officer of the Child Protection Agency and Family Service Agency (CPFSA), whose Agency hosted the launch said, the NPACV signaled the commitment and course of action as a country in achieving one of the Sustainable Development Goal of reducing violence against children. “Each year we read a scroll of the names of more than 60 children who have died due to tragic and violent circumstances. The aim is, after this Plan, we may never have to host another vigil. “We must work together so that Jamaica can be a place to raise families in a harmonious environment,” she said.

Pointing to police statistics on the number of children killed since the start of the year, Mrs. Gager-Grey said that 77 children have lost their lives tragically for the period October 2018 to October 2019. “Our children are facing too much hurt often by those close to them charged with the responsibility to love and protect them. We need to break the culture of silence and speak out against child abuse,” she noted.

In commending the country for the launch of the NPACV, Ms. Mariko Kagoshima, country representative of United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) said UNICEF stood ready to assist Jamaica in the implementation of the National Plan of Action.

Natasha Javed, partnership officer of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children congratulated the Government of Jamaica for their leadership and support of partners to successfully established the National Plan of Action.

A copy of the National Plan of Action was presented to the Hon. Floyd Green, State Minister in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Agriculture and former State Minister of Education, Youth and Information, who gave a commitment that the relevant ministry will work with the necessary stakeholders to implement the National Plan of Action.

A Technical Working Group comprising of more than 15 government agencies and other stakeholders made the NPACV a reality.

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## POLICE IMPROVE TRUST LEVEL WITH THE SALT SPRING COMMUNITY

The trust between the police and members of the community of Salt Spring in St. James has been improved through social intervention programmes initiated by the police in collaboration with other stakeholders. According to Constable Shantel Watson of the St. James Community Safety and Security Branch as a result of the different collaborative social intervention programmes the police and citizens have not only developed a better relationship but also many of the negative myths relating to the police are being debunked. Constable Watson made this disclosure while addressing a violence prevention and peace-building symposium at Montego Bay Community College, recently. The symposium was organized by the VPA in partnership with the Ministry of National Security under the theme, *'Collaboration and Evidence-driven Interventions: Making a Difference Towards Achieving Safe and Violence-free Jamaica'*.

In an effort to regain trust and to rebuild peace, she said that the St. James Division partnered with both internal and external stakeholders to start several programmes some of which are: the Breakfast Feeding programme, Youth Empowerment Summer Camp and Community Renovation. Through the Youth Empowerment Summer Camp, Constable Watson said that young people and children, who were enrolled in the programme, were exposed to life skills and social etiquette. "Conflict resolution is vital and the youth were taught how to manage everyday conflicts that normally result in violence. These sessions provided the opportunity to bridge gaps

between families who were at war or who had been alienated by feuds through their children," she pointed out.



Constable Shantel Watson of the St. James Community Safety and Security Branch.

Meanwhile, for the community renovation projects, which entailed the development of the community through beautification and enhancement of life in

the community. Constable Watson explained that they gave residents and the police a great avenue to

work together in achieving this goal. "In Salt Spring young men from the community all came together putting aside their differ-

ences to renovate their garbage receptacle, repair the schools fencing and to build tank stands for the schools," said Constable Watson. Through these projects, she observed, a mutual understanding of trust and peace was practiced in an effort to make a common goal a reality and that was in the beautification of their environment. "Persons saw the efforts being made and then joined in as they wanted to be a part of the process of change," Constable Watson emphasized that to develop trust and peace in any community there must be a mutual understanding between all parties involved and a willingness to work together. "There must be an open line of communication between all parties as no relationship can strive without this."

## WINNERS OF TREES FOR PEACE COMPETITION TO BE ANNOUNCED IN MARCH

Schools islandwide were given up until November 2019 to register for the 2019/2020 Trees



Students from the 2018 Winners, Prospect Primary in St. Thomas.

for Peace Competition. To participate in this Competition, schools were encouraged to share a picture of the planned area that would be converted

into its peace garden along with a registration form via email to [vpajamaica@gmail.com](mailto:vpajamaica@gmail.com). Registration forms were accessible on the VPA website at [www.vpajamaica.org](http://www.vpajamaica.org). The VPA again collaborated with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, in promoting **Trees for Peace Competition**, which focused on respect, tolerance, care for the environment and each other.

Peace gardens will be judged in February to March of 2020 and cash prizes and trophies will be given to the top three schools. Parish winners will be given plaques and all schools will receive a certificate of participation.

The 2018 competition was a success with the winning school being Prospect Primary in St. Thomas; second place winner was Naggo Head Infant School in Portmore, St. Catherine and Holy Family Primary School in Kingston, which placed third. In 2018, the Trees for Peace Competition was supported by: main sponsor, CB Facey Foundation; JN Foundation; Sandals Foundation; Forestry Department; National Environment and Planning Agency; the Broadcasting Commission of Jamaica; Jamaica 4-H Clubs; Trees that Feed Foundation; Early Childhood Commission; Mona Geoinformatics Institute; Nature Preservation Foundation, Food for the Poor and Child Protection and Family Services Agency.



# CHILD RESILIENCY PROGRAMME



Carol Williams (right) presents students with behaviour prizes at CRP, YMCA during their Christmas Party.



Children from the CRP in Trelawny were treated to a field trip to Jamaica Swamp Safari in Trelawny during the Christmas Season.



CRP Christmas Party , Boys Town.



Prizes handed over at the CRP Christmas Party, Falmouth.



A student beamed with pride after receiving her prize at the CRP Christmas Party, Falmouth.



One of the students accepts his prize at the CRP Christmas Party, Falmouth.



Dance performance at the CRP Christmas Party at Sam Sharpe Teachers College.



Children of the CRP displaying their gifts at Christmas Party held at Sam Sharpe Teachers College.



Teachers from the CRP Sam Sharpe Teachers College in Montego Bay take a group photo after their Christmas Party.