



“Empowering People, Changing Lives”

Dream 2000

The Diagnostic & Literacy Support Centre 1998-2007

In 1998, the Ministry of Education [MOE] decided to run summer literacy ‘catch-up’ classes for the Grade 4s in Jamaica. They had discovered that over 40% of pupils in Grade 4 students were functionally illiterate. The public were invited to help out in their local schools. We found there was no classroom, or area equipped with educational material to cope with underachieving students at Point Hill All Age School. The Principal, Elaine Allen, School Board and Staff of the Point Hill All Age school asked Jane Taylor, a retired teacher living in Point Hill, to help them erect a reading room.

Food for the Poor [FFP] were approached and demanded a blueprint for a 20’x 30’ room. Architectural drawings were commissioned. An exciting complex was designed, which would not only help the staff and children if Point Hill, but lift the whole tone of the school and community. FFP were unable to follow through with any financial aid.

The Point Hill Community Alumni Association was formed and in 1999, adopted the building project. As a community based group, the Alumni gave the project credibility in the eyes of funding agents. Project Proposals were formulated and agencies were approached. We quickly realised that each funding agency had its own very specific mandate and we had to find the correct ‘window’ through which we could persuade them to release funding. Interest was shown, but no money was forthcoming.

Meanwhile The Point Hill School [which had been upgraded to a Primary and Junior High] and the community were engaged in their own fund raising efforts for the Centre. Brunches at The Alhambra, Easter Monday Fun Fairs, raffles and school collections raised over \$400,000.

A Building Committee and an Educational committee were formed. The hard earned money was used to erect a foundation, [6' x 40' x 60'] a water tank, and a cesspit. Guttering was put up to feed into the water tank. The foundation was built for 5 containers, which would be converted into classrooms. This was abandoned in favour of a block & steel building. We approached the M.O.E. to create a design for our Reading Centre on top of this foundation, keeping the ideas first projected in the architect's original plans. Back came a 2-storey building. The 2 extra classrooms on the second floor have been designated 'for future development'. The M.O.E. gave us \$2 million to help us with construction. One of the alumni [Caleb Cooper] who owns an engineering company was approached to put up the shell of the ground floor. The Jamaica Social Investment Fund [JSIF] put the finishing touches to the inside of the Reading Centre at a cost of \$1.9 million. [2004] This consists of 3 administration/resource rooms, a large computer room and a large literacy classroom, which was divided into smaller rooms. We are very proud of our flush toilets!

The Scotia Foundation undertook the funding of staff salaries - \$7.5 million JaD over 3 years [terminated March 2007]
A Board of Directors was formed in 2003

Staffing at the Centre: 2004 - 2008

A Unit Director with literacy and Special Education skills was employed by The Board of Directors. The MOE paid for a literacy teacher. 2 teachers' aides, a Peace Corps Volunteer, a caretaker/security person and a cleaning lady completed the initial staffing. Presently - 2008 - we have added an Administrative Assistant, a Payroll Clerk, 2 Computer Technicians and 3 National Youth Workers have been seconded for a 6 month practicum. It is a happy and busy place to be!

Our original teachers' aides have both been accepted at Moneague Teachers' College to pursue a degree in Literacy Teaching.

Computer classes and CXC night classes have been added. See our brochure.

An Educational psychologist started diagnostic work in 2007.

The Diagnostic & Literacy Support Centre is becoming a resource centre for the staff of the adjoining Point Hill Primary and Junior High School, students and surrounding communities. Eye and ear tests are conducted for students and members of the community.

We are proud of our Business/ Computer Centre, which helps finance the JPS and C&W bills. The Internet café and office procedures facilitate locally what could only be obtained in Spanish Town.

We run Summer Camp for children and teenagers [now into its third year]

Without our generous supporters and sponsors we could not have achieved so much in such a short time.

See our website for a list.