



The Advocate's VOICE

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Office of The Children's Advocate

·MISSION·

COMMITTED TO PROMOTE THE RIGHTS AND BEST INTERESTS OF CHILDREN THROUGH VIGILANCE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, AND THE PROVISION OF TIMELY, EFFICIENT AND QUALITY SERVICE TO OUR CLIENTS.

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The Office of The Children's Advocate (OCA) is a Commission of Parliament established under the Child Care and Protection Act (2004) in 2006. The OCA is charged with the mandate to enforce and protect the rights and best interests of all children in Jamaica.

Mission

We are committed to promoting the rights and best interests of children through vigilance, strategic partnerships and the provision of timely, efficient and quality service to all our clients.

Vision

Children in Jamaica enjoy their rights to survival, development, protection and participation, as well as consideration of their best interests at all times.

OCA In The News**Press Releases**

May 27, 2013

- *OCA clarifies inaccuracies published in The Sunday Gleaner on May 26, 2013*

May 30, 2014

- *OCA condemns killing of children: Office calls on parents, guardians and caregivers to seek assistance to cope with their grief*

Interviews

April 8-9, 2014

- *Conference on Children Who Live and Work on the Streets of Jamaica* (TVJ, CVM, RJR, IRIE FM, CEEN, LOVE FM, CNS, NCU)

May 15-30, 2014

- *Armada* (RJR, Nationwide News, Impact, 18° North)

June 3, 2013

- *Violence Against Children* (CVM at Sunrise, TVJ)

Conference on Children Who Live and Work on the Streets of Jamaica

The Office of The Children's Advocate hosted the Conference on Children Who Live and Work on the Streets of Jamaica on April 8, 2013. The Conference brought together stakeholders from several government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to discuss and address the issue of children who live and work on the streets of Jamaica. The event was also attended by children in this vulnerable group to participate in the discussions.

The 2002 National Survey of Street Children, the most current census on street children despite it being a decade old, estimated that there may be as many as 6,500 children living and working on the streets of Jamaica. Children's Advocate, Diahann Gordon Harrison, emphasized that the issue of street children is a "national problem" that has different complexions depending on the particular parish or town in which the problem was uncovered. Mrs. Gordon Harrison added that street children face heightened challenges due to the environment within which they are forced to survive, which can negatively affect their rights and best interests.

Keynote speakers for the conference were: Irwin Elman the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth in Ontario, Canada, and Louise Meincke the Director for the Consortium for Street Children in London, England. Ms. Meincke in her comments said that "the street is a central reference point and one that plays a significant role in their lives and identities." She added that "the greatest



(L-R) Rob Fuderich, UNICEF Country Representative; Diahann Gordon Harrison, Children's Advocate; Irwin Elman, Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, Ontario (Canada); The Hon. Zalia McCalla, Chief Justice of Jamaica; Louise Meincke, Director for the Consortium for Street Children, London (England); Tarik Perkins, Cuso International Country Representative; Marie Legault, Counsellor and Head, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) .

challenge is for the child to be treated as a rights holder." For his part, Irwin Elman said "when we give an opportunity to children to talk about their life experiences, when we involve and listen to children, we are helping them therapeutically...It is important to involve them, not just ask them, but we need to give children as much control over their lives as possible."

PICTORIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Conference on Children Who Live and Work on the Streets of Jamaica



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OCA installs Receptacles in Juvenile Facilities



Children's Advocate, Diahann Grodn Harrison, speaking at a media briefing about the OCA receptacles installed in juvenile facilities.

Four (4) Juvenile Correctional facilities were fitted with receptacles courtesy of the OCA. The receptacles which are made from aluminum have been installed at the:

- Horizon Adult Remand Centre
- Diamond Crest Juvenile Correctional Centre
- Hill Top Juvenile Correctional Centre
- Rio Cobre Juvenile Correctional Centre

The receptacles have all been secured on the walls of the institutions, at a designated area where all the children have access. The receptacles are for the children to submit notes to the OCA regarding any matter they choose. The boxes have been secured with safety locks, which can only be opened and cleared by OCA Investigation

Officers. Staff of the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), or any other entity or individual, have no access to the receptacles.

Prior to the installation of the receptacles, the children at the facilities were told about the boxes and the rational for installing them. The information was well received by the children, and they were reminded to take care of the receptacles as this is another avenue for them to make contact with the OCA and advise the Children's Advocate of any concerns they may have.

The receptacles for the Metclafe Street and Fort Augusta facilities will be installed at a later date.



The OCA is now on social media. Join us online as we continue the discussion at:



Office of The Children's Advocate (Jamaica)



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