



The Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad Jamaica

February 2013 Issue No. 51



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

MESSAGE FROM THE TEAM	3
STEPHEN FRENCH TACKLES SPECIAL EDUCATION IN JAMAICA	4
CARE PROJECT UPDATE	5
CULTURE AND COMMUNITY PROJECT UPDATE	6
MEDICINE AND TEACHING PROJECT UPDATE	6
DONATIONS	7
HIGHLIGHTS	8
SOCIAL EVENTS	8
WHAT IS ON THE CALENDAR	9
SOCIAL MEDIA CONTACTS	11
PROJECTS ABROAD JAMAICA CONTACT DETAILS	11

## Message from the Team

Happy New Year from the team at Projects Abroad Jamaica; we have achieved much in the past year of 2012 and find ourselves looking forward to providing better service and the warmest environment for our volunteers.

The year began on a good note starting with the thirty one (31) arrivals during the month of January which set the scene for a full and eventful month which saw everything in full swing. In January we had volunteers working in Care, Medicine, Sports, teaching, SIGHT- C, Music, Disaster Management, Building and Farming. Volunteers coming to Projects Abroad travelled from 14 countries such as Sweden, Norway, Germany, Canada, and the US, Denmark, Australia, the UK, Netherlands, Belgium and Austria. With New activities in store for the volunteers throughout the month of January we can only hope to make things better as we move further into the year. From Patois and Culture Class, to Reggae Dance Class and even a Cultural Fashion show, social events have been experiencing a new twist.

To all our prospective volunteers we reiterate that there are many projects in Jamaica that are in need of as much aid as is possible. Destination Jamaica strives to stay updated and we work hard to provide meaningful work at placements of which we have such a wide array that there is no doubt you will find something of interest to you. Whether you want to work with infants, adolescents or adults, in building, teaching, medicine, disaster management, sports, journalism, farming, maroon or care, there is something for you in Jamaica.

We have new placements that will include a Veterinary Medicine and Animal Care as well as an HIV project in Montego Bay set to commence March 2<sup>nd</sup>. No doubt as you follow our newsletters we will be updating our readers as to what is new and fresh. Jamaica as a destination will satisfy the most curious of travelers and our local dishes will prove to be any epicureans delight. Not to worry, however, as even though Jamaica is a developing country we do have many of the amenities that are enough to make you feel right at home.

Come work with us and explore with us, there is no doubt that you will experience professional and personal growth while you volunteer your time with us. 2013 is your year to help, learn and explore with Projects Abroad Jamaica.

Team Jamaica is waiting...

Regards,  
Team Jamaica

(Bridgette B. Barrett- Country Director, Cherricha Jacobs- Assistant Country Director & Desk Officer, Sean Baugh- Information Manager, Collette Kerr- Project Officer (Teaching & Medicine), Stacy- Ann Barrett- (Office Assistant & Project Officer (Culture & Community), Patrina Thomas-Morrison- Project Officer (Care), Sanikia Morgan- Volunteer Liaison Officer, Pettia Williams- Volunteer Coordinator,)

## Indiana University student Stephen French gains valuable experience in special needs education in Jamaica



(Stephen French at the Woodlawn School of Special Needs)

Stephen French, a 20-year-old student from Indianapolis, travelled to Mandeville in Jamaica to volunteer with the Projects Abroad Teaching Project. He was placed at the Woodlawn School of Special Education, a school catering for children with special needs and intellectual disabilities. As a Business Management major with a minor in Education, and with no prior experience in teaching, much less in special needs, Stephen took the plunge and came to Jamaica while taking a semester off from University. "After doing some research on Mandeville, I found it was one of the places that I could come to and not feel like a tourist. I wanted to take some time off from school and do something productive with my time," he says.

When it comes to his daily activities at the school Stephen describes it as, "I assisted the teacher in most daily tasks, creating lesson plans, reading to the kids and helping them with English. The teachers gave me so much freedom and flexibility to just learn through experience." Working with children who have behavioural and developmental problems is a major challenge, "The experience had me working with children of varying personalities that may be quite inconsistent, but not at all in a bad way. You just have to have an open mind. Special needs can be a lot of work and it would be great if we had other volunteers here at the Woodlawn School of Special Education," Stephen says, describing what inspired him to volunteer in Jamaica. "Most of my family works in special needs education, so I thought I'd give it a shot and see what it was really like."

Despite the challenges, Stephen found the experience to be very worthwhile; "I found the little things to be absolutely rewarding, for instance it took me three days to teach a child with developmental problems to write within the lines in a notebook. It's the smiles and feeling of satisfaction you get when you know you have gotten through to them." In addition to his work at the Woodlawn School, Stephen enjoyed a diverse array of activities on the Island, such as "Hanging out with my host brothers at home, watching the news together with my host parents, exploring the town of Mandeville and travelling. I have been to Negril and Kingston, and I have also taken a trip to the Blue Mountains, Jamaica is a beautiful place!"

“There are not many organisations or choices for Jamaica. I knew that I specifically wanted to come here. I had never travelled or worked abroad before, but Projects Abroad came highly recommended and now that I am here I can see why. You definitely feel like you are in a safe environment knowing there are folks you can call,” Stephen reports.

Stephen has this bit of advice to give to future volunteers who are interested in the project: “Working with special needs children is certainly challenging, but expect the unexpected and you will be rewarded. Although I did not have any experience beforehand, I learnt a great deal and am proud of the work I did.”

We hope great stories like these inspire others to help Projects Abroad continue to make a difference, and by doing so, learn something themselves along the way.

### Care Project Update



(Projects Abroad care volunteers wearing their ‘wings’ for the Broken Wings project)

The Care project in Jamaica started the New Year with a bang. Not only did we have 16 volunteers but we had volunteers at placements whose diversity could be said to equal the variety of nationalities that come to work with Projects Abroad Jamaica. Volunteers worked with the children and the elderly in various capacities; from teachers, to caregivers, from protectors to mentors, from counselors to best buddy - all volunteers enjoy the work they do.

The important thing is that each volunteer mended something that was broken - the broken heart of a child who is abused or neglected, the broken spirits of a child who cannot read or who is ill, the broken bones of an elderly person or the broken will of a toddler learning to walk. The enthusiasm and willingness of the volunteers was mirrored in their attitude towards work and their level of dedication.

One of the most significant contributions of the care volunteers came through a hospital outreach on January 17, 2013 dubbed “Broken Wings.” The objective of this care activity is to visit the children in the hospital and bring some joy through games, story reading, conversations and general affection and attention. This was a truly wonderful and meaningful project enjoyed by all care volunteers. We are happy for the time and contribution of all our volunteers and hope that they will always have a special place for Jamaica in their hearts



(Left: Building volunteers transporting lumber for use at a building site)

## Culture & Community Project Update

January 2013 saw the Culture and Community project comprising of 3 volunteers on the building project that concentrated heavily on completing the project begun previously in Portland. The project based at the Windsor Primary School has Projects Abroad volunteers building

bathrooms to replace defective and outdated pit latrines that are currently in use.

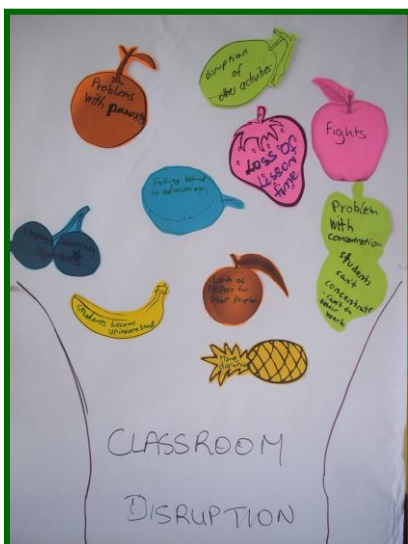
For the Building Project at this time there is much travel required to Portland where the actual project is currently located; we must be mindful of the nature of the building project to see volunteers out of parish due to our moving where there is a real need for the services of building new bathrooms and fixing dilapidated houses for the less fortunate. Projects Abroad Jamaica volunteers worked side by side with local masons and craftsmen, mixing cement, and cutting lumber for use in the structures they are helping to erect. We are proud of the hard work being done by the building and disaster management volunteers at this time.

We have one volunteer based at the St. Elizabeth Parish Council working in Disaster Management. This project has volunteers concentrating on awareness and educating locals on how to adequately prepare for a disaster and what to do after a disaster. Jamaica is prone to hurricanes and flooding. We recently recognized earthquake awareness week.

## Medicine & Teaching Project Update

During the Month of January there were 8 volunteers in Medicine and 7 volunteers in Teaching Projects. For Medicine, There were volunteers at both the Mandeville Regional Hospital and the Percy Junor Hospital in Spalding. Projects Abroad Jamaica volunteers on the medicine project follow and assist doctors and nurses and may dress wounds, assist with the feeding of patients, drawing blood and getting a first-hand view of how illnesses are treated in Jamaica.

The Project meetings in January concentrated on Peripheral Vascular Disease, Hypertension and the effects of Stress providing volunteers with an in depth look at 3 conditions they are highly likely to see in Jamaican hospitals. Volunteers looked at causes, symptoms and treatment of both diseases. These project meetings, especially those that concentrated on diseases and their recognition and treatment, are designed to aid volunteers to identify the symptoms of various diseases, especially those that are common in Jamaica.



For Teaching, Sports and Music we have Simon and Sarah working hard with the children of Villa Road primary and Junior High School, and Carolin Cloes doing sports with the children of Villa Road Junior High. Stephen French has also been making a major impact in the area of special needs at the Woodlawn School of Special Needs.

Working with children who have developmental or psychological problems is a major challenge, kudos to our volunteers who take the plunge and provide much needed valuable support to the staff at their placements. Indeed all schools will have children that have some developmental problem, Projects Abroad volunteers ensure that there is some one on one with the children that will aid in the learning process.

(Left: Diagram displaying classroom disruption at Project Meeting)

In the project meetings for Teaching, Sports and Music volunteers learned Effective Classroom Management, including various types of approaches that could be utilized as well as Motivating Children to learn. Motivating children to learn included ways within which to capture and maintain a child's attention. These project meetings seek to better equip our volunteers with some basic knowledge to keep in mind while working and teaching in Jamaican classrooms. Projects Abroad Jamaica volunteers were actively involved in teaching children how to read, supporting the classroom teacher in maintaining order, writing and executing lesson plans as well as teaching music in the case of 2 Music volunteers at Villa Road Primary and Junior High School.

## Donations

Within the month of January, quite a few of the new volunteers who came to work on projects in Jamaica did not come empty handed. They brought with them several gifts/ donations for their various placements. Two past volunteers (Zerin and Thomas) also sent donations for their placements. The items received were as follows:

- **Alice Goulden** for New Hope Children's Home:

- 1.) 4 packs of pencil crayons
- 2.) 5 alphabet books
- 3.) 1 alphabet mat
- 4.) 1 numbers board set
- 5.) 1 pack of blocks
- 6.) 1 skipping rope
- 7.) 1 story book
- 8.) 1 numbers book

- **Zerin Osman**

\$290.00 AUD = \$27,242 JMD

- 1.) 7 pairs of shoes for children

Medication for 2 children with skin conditions

- **Vivienne Clement**

6 New Teddy Bears to the CDA

- **Thomas Daschinger**

- 1.) 1 Story book
- 2.) 3 pairs of football shoes
- 3.) 22 t shirts
- 4.) 8 shorts
- 5.) 10 sport bibs

To these volunteers Projects Abroad Jamaica says a big Jamaican Tenky – thank you.



## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Dirty Day:** In the month of January Projects Abroad Jamaica made significant strides in the construction of the house we are all building for Bill. This is everyone's project and we should all be proud of our accomplishments thus far.
- Within the month of January we welcomed newcomer Pettia Williams to the team here at Projects Abroad Jamaica. Pettia will be working with us as the new volunteer coordinator for Montego Bay.
- In January we visited Accompong to take part in the Maroon Celebrations there. The maroons are descendants of runaway African slaves and indigenous peoples. They remain for the most part steeped in culture that is quite different from what we know as the typical Jamaican culture. We were able to conduct various interviews with Maroons and get some insight as to this way of life.
- We were visited by two French journalists who came to Jamaica to promote the work of Projects Abroad in this destination. Each Project Officer had the opportunity to take the journalists to visit each project and facilitate interviews so as to accurately represent Projects Abroad in Jamaica and all the work our volunteers do within the destination.
- The Care Project rolled out a new project called 'Broken Wings.' Broken Wings was designed to engage all care volunteers in a unified project to provide support for young children at the Mandeville Regional Hospital. This is truly a remarkable new addition to Care as many of these children are alone at the hospital for most of the day. Care volunteers took their books, colouring books and pencils and crayons to read to and play with the children providing a much needed escape from the realities of their conditions.

## Social Events

**Patois and Culture Clas** was held on Tuesday January 8, 2013 at the Projects Abroad Office.

The class began with a popular icebreaker, the human knot. Our volunteers were asked to get in groups of 6 or 8 and would use their right hand to grasp the left hand of another volunteer adjacent to them. They then had to untangle this knot and revert to a circle without speaking. The patois segment of the class got really interesting this month as our volunteers began to get some insight into the basic phonetics of patois, regarding pronunciation while examining the similarities and differences of the language to English.

Volunteers viewed a short video on our cultural dance called Brukins, which was explained to have been a part of popular culture since the days of slavery where it was used to mimic the British in ways that included strong sexual overtones. Projects

Abroad Jamaica volunteers received an introduction to the indigenous languages of Jamaica, of which there are three. Many persons believe only Patois is spoken in Jamaica but there is also old time Patois and Kromanti, a descendant of the Akan languages of Ghana that are all still in use today.

Patois and culture class was definitely an informative hit during the month of January.



(Making authentic Jamaican Jerk sauce)

## Reggae Dance Class



(Above: Reggae Dance class in session)

Reggae Dance class was held on January 15, 2013.

Reggae Dance Class featured some interesting dances in January; "Wounded Dog" was a popular hit with a dance that was very simple and easy to learn. Not to mention the catchy lyrics of the song.

There was quite an energetic reaction from our volunteers who quickly caught on to the dances. Expressions of surprise melded with curiosity when it came to dancing for certain songs like, "wounded dog" for example. Overall our volunteers enjoyed the experience and equated reggae dance class to a workout session. It is true that reggae and dancehall tend to entail multiple steps and require much concentration and coordination especially for those who are not used to dancing to our music.



(Dance teacher Alex Williams demonstrates the 'wounded dog')

## Dirty Day



(Laura and Sanikia transporting rock and marl)

Dirty Day was held on Friday, January 25, 2013.

On Friday Morning we made the all too familiar trip to St. Elizabeth where our volunteers were quickly mobilized into gathering and packing the fully completed foundations for Bill's new house. It was a rough day indeed that involved much heavy lifting and digging.

As you know from following our newsletters, we started this Dirty Day project in November, slated to run for five months. In the months of November and December we had dug out the foundations to Bill's new house and then we had actually cast the foundations and blocked it to a level so as to prevent rain and dirt from washing into the work space.

So far we have completed the foundations for the house; we have also gone ahead and packed the foundation with stones and dirt. After sitting for one month, rain would have aided in the compacting of the stones and earth in the foundation making it safe for flooring with cement.

For the upcoming Dirty Day in February, we will be mobilizing our volunteers to mix cement, aid in the compacting of the earth within the foundations as well as blocking the main structure. We are hoping to get much done in the next month so that we near completion of the project.

## Cultural Fashion Show



(Cultural Fashion Show)

The Cultural Fashion Show was held on January 22, 2013.

The Fashion Show consisted of our volunteers dressing up in their interpretation of Jamaican wear, whether it was cultural or modern wear.

The venue, The OMG Restaurant and Coffee Bar, was transformed into a catwalk much to the delight of onlookers and the Projects Abroad staff. Each volunteer was shown how to use the runway, where to pause and pose and there it began.

Projects Abroad Jamaica volunteers took to the catwalk one by one, being judged by Patrina (Project Officer for Care) on originality, poise and best in show. Congratulations to all our participants.

## What is on the Calendar?

### Upcoming Projects Abroad Social Events February 2013

- Reggae Dance Class - during this class volunteers will be taught the latest reggae dance moves that are sure to wow patrons at any party, club or social gathering. Tuesday, February 26, 2013.
- Patois & Culture Class - you have not been to Jamaica until you have spoken Patois and of course our volunteers must get the full and complete experience of Jamaican life, so we must teach Patois; and of course it is crucial that they learn about Jamaican culture. Tuesday, February 5, 2013.
- Projects Abroad Rising Stars Edition- Come show off your talent, whether it

is singing, dancing, poetry, or even a group display. There will be prizes for the winners. Tuesday, February 12, 2013.

- Dirty Day - Dirty Day February 15, 2013 will see staff and volunteers alike, working hard to finish construction of a house for an elderly gentleman known to many simply by the name of Bill.

### Upcoming Events for Jamaica January 2013

- Bob Marley's Birthday Celebrations- February 3-6, 2013 will see numerous stage shows island wide in memory of the legend that is Bob Marley.

For More Information, please visit:

<http://keepitjiggy.com/other-good-info/jamaica-2012-events-holidays/>

- The 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Hague Agricultural Show-

February 13, 2013 will see a showcase of numerous agricultural products; always held on a Wednesday. This is the perfect show for anyone interested in local produce with an interest to support Jamaican farmers and farming on a whole.

For More Information, please visit:

<http://jas.org.jm/hagueShow.html>

- "Fi Wi Sinting"-

February 17, 2013 marks the annual celebration of Jamaica's rich African heritage. It is the largest African History Month event in Jamaica held at the Somerset Falls in Hope Bay, Portland.

For More Information, please visit:

<http://www.fiwisinting.com/>

- Jamaican Fatta Tyre Biking Festival- With the date TBA, the Biking Festival is a weeklong mountain biking extravaganza set to highlight Jamaica's most Exclusive Mountain trails.

For More Information, please visit:

<http://smorba.com/jamaica-fat-tyre-festival.html>

## Social Media Contacts

Social Media is the current trailblazer for interactive, instant and irie information. Projects Abroad Jamaica is certainly trendy and has logged on to the latest social media offerings get your slice of the pie or perhaps we should say pudding.



Facebook - Offers the unique opportunity to know what is happening in Jamaica and with our volunteers during any day. Our Facebook page is full of photos, daily/ weekly updates, our calendar of monthly events and comments from our adventurous volunteers. Here is our link, don't forget to check us out...

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/projectsabroad.jamaica/> join the official group.



Mytripblog- There is no time like the present to start blogging, and so in order to keep you connected to our many adventures and volunteer stories we have been blogging just for you. Check out Jamaica here...

<http://www.mytripblog.org/pg/groups/266/jamaica/>



Twitter- Get real time updates on what is happening in destination Jamaica right now. Follow us on twitter we are sure you will love our tweets;

[https://twitter.com/Proj\\_AbroadJM](https://twitter.com/Proj_AbroadJM)

## Projects Abroad Jamaica Contact Details

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Facebook group: Projects Abroad Jamaica

Blogsite: <http://blog.projects-abroad.net/mytriblog.org>

If you would like to contribute an article to this newsletter please email it to [seanbaugh@projects-abroad.org](mailto:seanbaugh@projects-abroad.org) by the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the month so they can be vetted and included.

One Love



(The Jamaican Swallow- Tailed Butterfly)

# THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



Catch yuh lata...