



MESSAGE FROM THE TEAM

Greetings from Team Jamaica! Welcome to another issue of our newsletter, which we have now redesigned and renamed the "Jamaica Vibes". Inside this issue, we have

some interesting features, including the focus on the Morgan's, one of our host families; as well as highlights on our outstanding volunteers.

from all over the globe including, Canada (12), Switzerland (3), Norway (1), Sweden (1), The United States (1), Germany (3), The Netherlands (1), Austria (1), China (3), Japan (1) and the United Kingdom. The volunteers from Canada participated in the Building Spring Break Project.

Volunteers were placed in traditional placement areas, including sports, care, music, medicine, building, agriculture and journalism. Journalism achieved a big accomplishment with the publishing of a newspaper spread by Allana Convey from Australia. Overall, volunteers continue to make their mark and taking their initiative to share their knowledge and skills.

We have to balance work with fun through exposing volunteers to Jamaica by showing them culture through various activities including the patois and dance classes as well as other social activities.

Our flagship project, the Belle Haven Centre for children with HIV/AIDS is making some new strides, with a new team member on board. We will soon engage our stakeholders to support our efforts in a meaningful way.

We cannot emphasize the value of volunteers selecting our destination enough. We are working to introduce a new component to the 'Volunteer of the Year' programme, which will include major prizes and recognition for the top male and female volunteers. Keep a look out for this one in future.

Overall, it's been another good month for Jamaica. We have to commend the team for stepping up to the plate and delivering in their areas. We invite volunteers to come, share and enjoy the flavours of Jamaica with us! One Love.



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Also of note is that Projects Abroad Jamaica is celebrating their 6th anniversary this year, and will be staging a week-long series of activities under this theme: "Projects Abroad Jamaica: Building Local Communities Through International Cultures".

In Jamaica, we continue to focus on enhancing the volunteer experience and ensuring that volunteers are satisfied with their placements. For the month of February, we welcomed 27 volunteers

Team Jamaica

Bridgette Barrett - Country Director, Cherricha Jacobs - Assistant Country Director and Administrator, Sanikia Powell-Morgan - Programme Development Manager, Stacy-Ann Barrett - Project Officer- Culture and Community, Collette Kerr - Project Officer (Medicine and Health Care, Teaching, Sports and Music) Carolyn Brown - Project Officer (Care), Shaneil Lawson - Volunteer Coordinator, Cecelia Bell (Marketing and Fundraising Manager)

Chloe helps to build a new home for a family

20-year-old Chloe Cheng, currently in her 2nd year at the University of Western Sydney studying Construction Management, wanted to gain more experience in her field while experiencing a new culture. With this in mind, Chloe signed up to spend 5 weeks volunteering at the Projects Abroad Building Project in Jamaica.

During her stay in Jamaica, Chloe worked on building a new home for a local unemployed woman and her 5 children, who was previously living in one precarious little room. "We built a one bedroom and bathroom house for Sheila and her children in a local community called Comfort. Though it is still not big enough, it is much better than the broken down place she and her children are sharing now. Hopefully, we'll give her a better life."

"When we started, there were only three walls up. Since then all the walls were built and we are now busy finishing off the walls and roof. We mix mortar, took out nails from wood for re-use, render the walls and prepared steel work. I play a supporting role under the guidance of Percy, who allocates tasks to be done," Chloe outlines. Percy being the elderly man in charge at the project site.

"I am happy when I see the tangible results of our work as you learn about yourself in the process. This is my first trip alone



Chloes helps to tie steel at construction site

overseas and it has taught me independence," Chloe says.

Except for the initial culture shock, Chloe has had fun experiencing Jamaica. She

shares light moments with the beneficiaries of her project, learns to cook her favourite Jamaica food, and has gone to church with her host family. "It is not only about constructing the house, every day we try to put a smile on their faces," she adds.

"It's been good. The host family trusts me and we spend time together cooking, worshiping and I came to love Jamaican dancing too!" she says, pointing out that in the overall experience, it is important for volunteers to build a good relationship with their host families.

"I love everything about Jamaica – the people especially talking to the taxi drivers. One time, I left my umbrella in a taxi and the driver turned back and brought it to me, even with the other people in the car – that's an uplifting feeling."

If you decide to come to Jamaica, "just book the plane ticket and don't look back! It has been the best six weeks of my life. I am definitely coming back. And most importantly, remember to pack a nice dress to wear to church," she smiles broadly. "I am already making plans with my friends to return at the end of the semester."

Matthew Gaal from the USA helps students with music

22-year-old Matthew Gaal, currently in his 4th year studying music education at Ohio State University, was determined to use his musical training and passion to positively influence the youth. With this in mind, Matthew decided to sign up with the Projects Abroad Music Project to volunteer for 3 months in Jamaica. "I was looking for an overseas program with a musical education component. I looked at Mexico and Bolivia as options but Jamaica was the only place that had a program in the school system," Matthew explains.

During the 3 months that he spent in Jamaica, Matthew volunteered at the May Day High School in Mandeville. On a typical day, Matthew would teach, grade assignments and assist the supervising teacher working with students from the 7th to the 11th grade with classes of over 40 students.

The experience at the Music Project has proven to be invaluable to Matthew as his time volunteering will be beneficial for his research paper on music education in Jamaica for university. Matthew says the school needs help due to its limited resources, adding that Projects Abroad brought a multi-cultural perspective that inspires learning in a positive way.

Matthew's most memorable experience is "always feeling welcome. I love that it's warm here... I was very surprised that random people would say hello and talk to me... I cannot



Matthew plays the flute while other volunteers look on during a social event.

complain," he adds. He identifies the language barrier as a small obstacle. Matthew learnt the hard way that he should have attended the Patois classes. In fact, that is his top advice to volunteers coming to Jamaica. "Ensure that you take the patois class!" he emphasizes.

Other marked differences for Matthew are taking "route taxis," where five passengers are

cramped into a sedan and how music is taught in schools: "Back home music is taught at an earlier level and there are big public buses to use or most people have their own cars. The food is a little different as well".

After 3 months volunteering at the Music Project, Matthew has this piece of advice for future volunteers: "Don't be afraid to jump right in; you are only here for a limited period of time."

Culture and Community

Building Project

A total of 18 volunteers participated at the building programme in February; 12 of whom were one-week Spring Breakers. The focus of the Building Project was the construction of a one bedroom house for a single unemployed mother, Miss Sheila and her five children. The one bedroom and one bathroom house was completed, painted and officially

handed over to the new owners. The Spring Breakers also started work on a bathroom and kitchen for an elderly couple – Mr & Mrs Miller in the Comfort community.



Farming Project

In terms of farming, there was one volunteer who assisted with tissue culture in the laboratory at the Christiana Potato Growers Association, and also worked in the Greenhouse to maintain plants. The volunteer also visited farms to get first hand knowledge of how certain crops are grown in Jamaica.

Care Programme

For the month of February, the Care portfolio had approximately 10 volunteers at any given time participating at the programme. These volunteers were spread across six placements, ranging from: the orphanage, care centres, the Infirmary, to a Special Education School for teenagers. This batch of volunteers spent between 6 weeks to 3 months at their respective placements. Volunteers assisted with the general care of the

children as these facilities. Specifically, they undertook activities such as feeding, one-on-one teaching sessions for those with disabilities, engaging in early stimulation and learning activities.

Journalism Programme



Volunteers with experience in writing or aspiring journalists, now have the opportunity to write articles that can be published in the Jamaica Observer, a local national newspaper. Allana

Convey was the first volunteer to embrace this opportunity; her article was published on February 10th of 2014. To see her article, you can visit the following link: http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/regional/A-helping-hand_15984412.

Generally, five volunteers worked on the project during the month of February. Minetta writes and recorded voice-overs for the Science news daily, while Mariama wrote an article for the daily 'History in a Moment Feature'. Volunteers have been recruited to write 13 episodes each for the following features: Everyday Science (daily science discoveries), Let's Talk Languages (German & Spanish lessons), The Inventors (featuring inventors), Techno (technological updates). They are required to write these episodes and then record a voice-over and edit them. Volunteers also got a chance to work on video and audio editing, writing articles on individual countries for the 'Around the World' feature and accepting and recording call-in requests in the Radio studio.

Teaching, Sports and Music

Teaching the Young

Students at the Villa Road Primary School have benefitted from the work of Projects Abroad Teaching Programme in February. Carina Obernesser is a Teacher Education Intern from Germany placed at the Villa Road Primary and Junior High schools. She works with all grade five

classes assisting teachers in Language Arts. Some of her accomplishments have been; teaching classes independently, creating motivational charts to reward the good performance of students and creating other visual aids for her lessons.

Sports Development

At the Villa Road Primary School, German volunteer, Lucas Hagen, has been assisting with the preparation of Sports Day and supported the continued training of the school's team.

Musical Education

Matthew Gaal, a Music Education Major from the US who is volunteering at the May Day High School has developed an initiative he has called: "The Journaling About Music (JAM) Project. This is a 5 -10 minute class activity to help students better identify various genres of music and motivate them towards pursuing music at the high-school final examinations level.

Niels Kappel from Denmark volunteered to deliver music lessons at McIntosh Memorial Primary School, until the second week in February before changing to building.

Medicine & Health Care Project

There were three volunteers at Mandeville Regional Hospital (MRH), three at the Percy Junor Hospital and one at the Mandeville Health Center. All volunteers assisted the nurses and doctors with general patient care. The highlight of February was the medical outreach held at the Richmond Primary.

Replacing the usual 'in hospital or health facility' outreach, medical volunteers, decided to do a different kind of

medical outreach in the month of February. They participated in a medical outreach at the Richmond Primary School which benefitted nearly 100 students. The aim was to build a mutually beneficial relationship between Belle Haven Center and the Richmond Community. The Belle Haven Center is located in Belretiro which is one of several districts in the Richmond area and is a low income farming community. Richmond Primary is one of two

schools in the area which is the hub for community activities.

The volunteers provided information and demonstration about personal hygiene, dental care and nutrition to students from grades one to six. The team comprised Izumi Tamura – Japan and Sarah Brunner - Germany; Nicole Desautles, USA and Vivienne Schmitz, Germany; and Carine Alusse, Germany.

The Morgans: A Host Family with High Marks

The Morgans - Errol and Donna Morgan and their two sons; 19-year-old Ramario and 13-year-old Kemaro - have been a host family for Projects Abroad since 2009, and over the years, have accommodated more than 40 volunteers from different countries.

"We go the extra mile," says Mrs Morgan, "we try not to be too hard on them as we keep in mind that they are from a different culture and we try our best to interact with them and to create a balance. We try to be flexible as we know we can't be too uptight."

Mrs. Morgan takes the job of hosting volunteers seriously. She often researches the culture of the volunteers based on their nationality so that she can better understand, interact and cater to their specific needs. "I go on the internet to learn about their cultures, so that when they come here we are informed", she explains.

"We get a sense of joy and fulfillment when we realize we are touching the lives of people from different cultures, and so it is important to us to make them feel welcome and enjoy their stay with us. We get more positive feedback."

Special moments

Mrs. Morgan and her family have shared many special moments with volunteers, but she fondly remembers the case of Rens, from The Netherlands, who she invited to a local funeral service. The volunteer was publicly singled out and acknowledged during the church service and that was a special moment for him. Mrs Morgan recounts another memorable occasion; the generosity of Alex, a music volunteer from the United States, who visited the local church with her family and then offered to assist in teaching the choir certain techniques. "The entire church felt good about that," she reminisces, pointing out that the volunteer had foregone his leisure time in order to work with the group. These are special moments which stood out, she noted.

If there is anything that the Morgans promise, it's a warm welcome. "We are flexible and warm and we genuinely care about the well-being of the volunteers in our care. If they are going out we would ensure they are safe and have their numbers to call or give them the number of a taxi to call to return home," she observed, adding that volunteers would

often enjoy the ambience and scenery of the location of their home in Mandeville.



The Morgan's family portrait



A view of the Morgan's residence in Mandeville

Projects Abroad Brightens the Lives Of The Poor

All hands were on deck for the "Dirty Day" on Friday the 21st, when the Projects Abroad Jamaica team led nearly 30 volunteers on a workday at the Manchester Infirmary in Red Ground in the parish, while the Good Samaritan

Elderly Home was the focus in St. James.

The Projects Abroad Jamaica personnel and volunteers, dressed in their Projects Abroad-branded green T-shirts and their "not so favourite" jeans or shorts, took the infirmary by storm, taking with them paint brushes, rollers, gloves and other material to undertake the day's work.

Some people took on the daunting task of painting the male and female dormitories, while others took on the endearing task of grooming the elderly. They combed their hair, cut nails and did other activities to enlighten the otherwise dull lives of the residents. Volunteers got their backs into the job of moving beds, bags, chests and other personal belongings of the residents, so that they could apply the paint to the walls.

Also joining the group in Mandeville was one-time volunteer Alex Domhoever, who was in the island on a personal trip. "I came because I wanted to do something good for the people... and I wanted to support the project – it is a good one," he noted.

The Manchester infirmary is home to 96 homeless, elderly or mental and physically-challenged poor people from the rural community. Though they get a subvention from Government to assist with their daily operation, they rely a lot on outreach activities such as this effort by Projects Abroad Jamaica, which is no stranger to them.

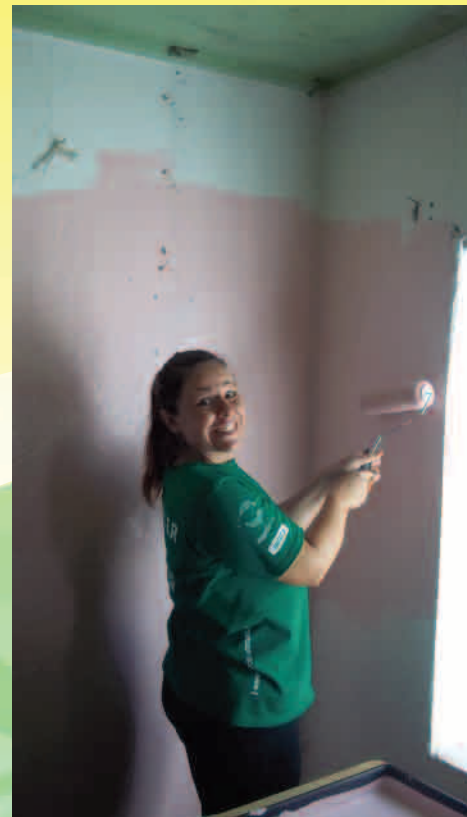
The visit was a welcoming one. Residents such as 60 plus year old Rachel, who hails from the parish of St. Elizabeth was happy for the attention paid to her. "You want to adopt me? Take me home with you nuh", she said while engaging some of the painters in conversation.

In thanking the volunteers, Matron at the infirmary, Mrs Grant said, "You guys have added some colour this morning." "We are pleased that you took the time out to come here. We are grateful for your visit," she expressed. Nurse Jarrett, owner of the Elderly home in St. James was equally pleased, adding her thanks to the team.

The visit at the Infirmary was one that was an emotionally stirring for some. The squalid conditions under which the residents lived was that evoked compassion and sympathy, so much so that



German volunteer, Lucas, vowed to undertake a clean-up exercise as an "unofficial" project. "We can come back another day. It does not have to be another Dirty Day project as we can maybe come during one of our afternoons off," he said, "then we can come and clean this place up."



Spotlight Turned on the Belle Haven Centre

There has been renewed focus on the Belle Have Centre, the HIV/AIDS-focused project that is being spearheaded by Projects Abroad Jamaica, in partnership with the BridgIT Water Foundation in Australia. The project seeks to build a multipurpose facility for children with HIV/AIDS in the parishes of St. Elizabeth, Clarendon and Manchester in Jamaica. The team welcomed Cecelia Bell, who has been recruited as Marketing and Fundraising Manager to focus on mobilising support and generate funds to help finance the project.

The Centre will deliver services to the community under three components:

1. The 'immunitative' component to provide love, care and support for children until they reach 18 years of age;
2. A halfway house to facilitate their transition into adulthood and into the world of employment, as well as accommodation for women living with HIV who will be employed to work at the facility.
3. A multi-purpose community resource centre equipped with computers and other amenities from which the residents can benefit.

Since January, efforts has been underway to finalise an annual fundraising and marketing plan, and to sensitise stakeholders about the project. Prelimi-

area, which is crucial if the project is to be successful. There have also been efforts to generally sensitise the community about the project to get



nary work has started on the development of a website, which is being undertaken by the Northern Caribbean University in Mandeville. The university is also helping Projects Abroad to conduct primary research in the areas where the centre will be constructed. The aim of this study is to assess the level of awareness of the residents about HIV/AIDS and how they feel about the centre being built in their

them buying and supporting it. In addition, there has been focus on fundraising and grant application in the month of February.

If you want to become involved with this project on any level, you may contact Cecelia Bell at ceceliabell@projects-abroad.org, follow us on [Facebook.com/BelleHaven](https://www.facebook.com/BelleHaven) or on twitter at [@BelleHavenJa](https://twitter.com/BelleHavenJa).

Five Ways You Can Help

1. Fundraising
Our target is
US\$300,000 in 2014.
Help us meet this
goal.

2. Professional Service
Let us know what you
do & the skills you have
to share.

**5. Continue having
heart & stepping up
for the causes like
ours.**

3. Spread the word
The Belle Haven
Centre needs all the
support it can get.

**4. Volunteer Sign Up with
Projects Abroad to volun-
teer in Jamaica, visit:
www.projects-abroad.net**



Patois Classes



In the month of February, volunteers also got a chance to learn the Jamaica dialect, Patois. After being taught phonetics in the dialect, they were given a 10-word spelling test. Needless to say not many people got 10 out of 10 in correct spelling. It is not that difficult to learn the Jamaican dialect, however, it is important to have an ear for the pronunciation. Feel free to go online or pick up a book if you are so inclined.

Volunteers take a patois quiz during a patois class

Hanging out with the Maroons

Volunteers also got a first hand recount of the experience of the Jamaican Maroons from Accompong in St. Elizabeth with a small delegation of Maroons visiting the Projects Abroad offices and shared aspects of their cultures, played drums and danced for volunteers. Maroons are escaped slaves who fought for their freedom and established free communities in the mountainous interior of Jamaica during the long era of slavery on the island.



Volunteers dance with maroons

Learning Jamaican Personalities

As it relates to learning about the Jamaican culture and in recognition of Black History Month, volunteers also learnt about noted Jamaican personalities and were given the assignment to make presentations on some of these personalities. Volunteers prepared their own PowerPoint presentations on Jamaicans such as academic and cultural icon, Professor Rex Nettleford, national hero, Marcus Garvey and comedian Oliver Samuels. They also learnt about, reggae icon Bob Marley, international recording artiste Shaggy, Jamaican song bird Tessanne Chin, olympian and world athlete, Usain Bolt, among others.

The presentations were judged on creativity, originality, interest and so on. First place went to the German duo Lucas Hagen and Manuel Menkhoff, who also got the prizes for most creative and most original for their funny amateur home video on Oliver Samuels - the comedian.



Jamaica_pon_di_map - Lucas (centre) prepares their presentation while Sanikia (left) and Manuel right looks on

Jamaican Dance is fun, say volunteers

The term "One-drop" doesn't mean much to the ordinary folks among us, but in Jamaica, it is the name of a popular Jamaican dance and volunteers have been learning the hard way that this dance is not as easy as it sounds.

One-drop is one of the many Jamaican dances that volunteers are exposed to during the regular dance classes in the volunteer's lounge at the Projects Abroad Jamaica office in Mandeville. The dance emerges from the heart of the Jamaican dance hall culture and

requires performers to 'flex certain part of their gluteus maximus', while moving their hands and one leg at a time. For the most part it seems like a complex aerobic workout, but volunteers insist that it is fun, while others feel it's awkward.



Volunteers Doing The One Drop Dance



Care Programme

During the month of February two care volunteers were in Montego Bay. Julia Stier, from Germany, is a Social Worker in training and is here on an internship. She is passionate about children and works with three different groups; babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers. Julia realises that her hard work and dedication to the project is what will make her time in Jamaica a huge success. Julia is doing a spectacular job and is meeting all her goals through her internship.

Jonas Paetzel is also from Germany and is working at Montego Bay Autism Center. He is having a good time in assisting the teachers and the children at lunch and in the classrooms. He uses his initiative and always ensures that he has something to do. He loves the time that he spends interacting with the children.



Veterinary Medicine and Animal Care Programme



Zanne Clausen and Rikke Mortensen from Denmark as well as Jessica Furlani from Australia were the three volunteers on the Veterinary Medicine and Animal Care programme for the month of February. They were hard workers and got to work before their allotted time due to their love a n d

passion for animals. From the outset, the volunteers knew what they wanted from the project and set out to achieve just that. They were captivated by many of the dogs at the Animal Haven but spent their days helping in the kennel; feeding the dogs, helping to rescue dogs that are in need of care and even find a little time to play with the animals and pass on the love.

The placement supervisor expressed pure joy for the job that Zanne, Rikke and Jessica are doing. She thanked Projects Abroad Jamaica for sending these beautiful people to her, who are passionate about animals and wants to look out for their wellbeing.

Montego Bay Social Events

Patois and Culture Class

Patois and culture class was held at the Projects Abroad office on February the 4th of 2014. Volunteers were welcomed to the first social event for the month. Volunteers were given questions and statements in English to complete and translate into Patois. They had a lot of fun while doing these activity and even stated that they are no good at it. The answers for the most part were correct and volunteers were shocked that they were able to pronounce some of the words. The volunteers were then asked to form two groups and do a role play of something that they have observed happening on a regular basis on the roads. The volunteers demonstrated how they experienced Jamaicans approach them and getting in a taxi. They recount all these experiences as being very funny.

Culture

Volunteers were given a quiz about what was celebrated in the month of February and Bob Marley's birthday came to be the most popular response. They were however advised that February is celebrated as Black History month, as well as Reggae month. Volunteers were given a brief summary on Black History in Jamaica and the different activities that is used to celebrate it like the Dennis Brown concert and Mello-Guh-Round. Volunteers were also told about the Bob Marley museum which they stated they want to visit during one of their weekends.

Reggae Dance Class

Reggae Dance Class was held at the Show-Jam Studios on February the 11th of 2014. Volunteers were welcomed to the class and were given a brief introduction of what the class will entail. Volunteers were advised that it is Black History Month and as such they will be exposed to African dances and cultural dances from Jamaica. Volunteers warmed up to the African samba and loved it from that point. The dance tutor went straight into teaching volunteers moves such as "Bobaraba" and many more from the African culture that led to "Kumina" and "Bruckings" in Jamaica. Volunteers were also taught Ska and the basics in Maypole without the pole. They were having so much fun and the tutor threw in some dance hall dances like the whine, willi bounce, blazey, one drop and broadout. Volunteers expressed that the class was lots of fun and asked if they can do the dance class again.



Rastafarian Village Experience



Volunteers and staff met at the Project Abroad office and travelled together to the rastafarian village in Irwin Dale, St. James. After being greeted by a tour guide, the volunteers and staff were given a general tour of the land, learned about the origin and culture of Rastafarians and even taken across the river into the village. The group learnt about various

indigenous trees, about their uses and then had the chance listen to the drummers and visit the herb/medicine garden while enjoying a tour of the cottages and the museum. Volunteers were pleased and enjoyed the day's activities.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Projects Abroad Jamaica

- March 30 to April 4, Information Week under the theme: "Projects Abroad Jamaica: Building Local Communities Through International Cultures"
- March 4 – Patois and Culture Class
- March 11 – Volunteer Challenge
- March 18 - Grand Olympics
- March 21 - Dirty Day

Facts About Jamaica

- Did you know that the first Jamaicans were the aboriginal Taino Indians?
- Did you Know the word "Jamaica" comes from an Arawarak word Xaymaca, meaning "Land of wood and water"?

National Events & Observances

- March 5 - Ash Wednesday Public Holiday
- March 8 - International Women's Day
- March 10 - Commonwealth Day
- March 25 – 29 Boys' and Girls' Athletic Championships, National Stadium

Testimonials

1. "Make sure you take the Patois Class" - Matthew Gaal (USA)
2. "Make sure you learn about the destination prior to your arrival and try to experience everything and be part of the group" - Allana Convey (Australia)
3. "Make sure you pack something nice to wear..." Chloe Cheng (Australia)
4. "You should come to Jamaica if you feel you really want to relax" - Lucas Hagen (Germany)

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