

# LOVE IN ACTION

Volume 1, Issue 1

The Quarterly Newsletter of the  
Stella Maris Foundation

February 29, 2004

## Message from the Board of Directors

*"Moving ahead with God's guidance"*

### Stella Maris Foundation

Patron: The very Rev.  
Michael Lewis

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#### Background

The Stella Maris Foundation is a non-governmental, nonprofit organization founded under the auspices of the Catholic Church.

Founded in 1997 by **Monsignor Richard Albert**, the Foundation endeavors to develop the inner-city community of Grants Pen through a process of empowerment with the provision of skills training and social development activities necessary to effectively facilitate the self-help process.

On behalf of the Board of Directors I salute the readers of our inaugural newsletter.

After contemplating the possibility of closure in 2002, The Stella Maris Foundation went through a much-needed restructuring process in 2003.

Thanks to the financial support of The Stella Maris Church, USAID, HEART, Burger King, The Embassy of Japan, Teens for Technology, CIDA and our many personal donors, we now have four skills training programmes (Woodwork, Computer, Papier Mache & Sewing) and three Community Development Programmes (Child Care, Community

Empowerment & Housing Assistance), administered by our professional staff namely; Mr. Omar Frith (Community Liaison Officer), Mrs. Coretta Johnson (Counselor), Mr. Mark George (Accountant), Miss Andito Wilson (Nurse), Mrs. Andrea Hanson (Administrative Assistant), Miss Kerry-Jo Lyn (Project Manager) and Mrs. Ann-Marie Thomas (General Manager). We now have an organization that can effectively serve the Grants Pen Community.

This year the Board of Directors' main challenges are: (1) to realize financial stability and (2) to purchase the property from which we operate. Consequently, we will be launching our Finance Committee within the next two months.



Mr. Gregory Mair (Chairman)

The Board of Directors meets monthly, every 1st Thursday at the Foundation. I invite you to visit and/or join us if you so desire.

With God's guidance and blessing, and your support the Foundation will continue to serve, creating opportunities for the less fortunate of our society.

## HOUSING PROJECT: BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY

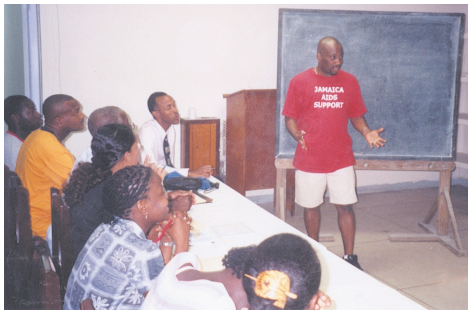
Among the various programmes advanced by the Foundation, Stella Maris Church Community has embarked on a Housing Project, which seeks to assist residents with repairs to their homes and further provide communal facilities that they may require.

The male members of the Church Community who carried out surveys and provided the necessary supervision originally spearheaded the programme. A number of "burnt out" residents benefited immensely from this programme. Further, a homework school as well as communal sanitary conveniences has been made

possible as a result of this programme. At present, the community liaison officers are advancing a needs assessment instrument in order to identify candidates that are in need of this assistance, as well as arrive at some agreement with the community as to an ideal location for a communal facility.

## US Ambassador's Fund for HIV/AIDS

What are the challenges facing an inner-city resident who is diagnosed with HIV/AIDS? How can communities work together to support persons living with HIV/AIDS, their families and friends? What roles should the media, churches and the medical community play in an effort to increase awareness of the subject in a bid to reduce the stigma and discrimination



Community HIV/AIDS Team being trained by the Jamaica AIDS Support.

against persons living with HIV/AIDS?

These are some of the questions we sought to address under the US Ambassador's Fund for HIV/AIDS.

The project aimed at creating a core group of residents from various churches in

Grants Pen with the special assistance of the Stella Maris AIDS Ministry (Mrs. L. Turnquest).

This Core Group [Community HIV/AIDS Response Team (CHART)] received two weeks of training by the Jamaica Aids Support (Technical Sex Education as well as Technical HIV/AIDS Education) and the Management Institute for National Development (MIND) in Group Facilitation.

The team will further conduct outreach in the respective churches and the community by extension.

## Daycare Centre

(Brings joy to Grants Pen)

The Daycare has been in operation since August 2003. The unique programme that the Nursery has formulated has been promoting positive childhood development through intricate creative play behaviour.

The toddlers between ages one (1) to two (2) years of age, receive excellent care in a safe stimulating environment. Opening hours are; Monday to Thursday from 9 am to 5 pm and Fridays 9 am to 4 pm. Loving Hands



Nurse Wilson with children in Nursery.

Nursery also offers after school care that assists children with their homework and other related needs.

In extending the Early Childhood development Programme to the residents of Grants Pen and the surrounding environs, we also con-

duct Parenting Workshops. These workshops has been educating parents in understanding the different stages of their child's development.

A collaborative effort between Ms. Andito Wilson (Childhood Development Officer) at the Stella Maris Foundation and Nurse Golding of the Edna Manley Health Centre has allowed Ms. Wilson to conduct Lamaze classes every third Thursday of each month with pregnant mothers at the antenatal clinic.

## PAPIER MACHE PROGRAMME: ARTISTRY IN ACTION

Sponsored by Burger King (Mrs. Lois Sherwood) and steered by artisan Mr. Devon Garcia, students in the Papier Mache programme manipulate pure paper in order to create a variety of intricate and artistic items.

The project has been represented at several expos and bazaars, the most recent of these being the annual Art and Craft fair hosted by the Forestry department.

The Papier Mache Programme has epitomized the concept of productivity through partnership by bringing together a talented artist, a visionary from the business sector and a grounded administrative agency serving the Grants Pen Community.

In recognition of her invaluable contribution to the Programme, Mrs. Lois Sherwood was honoured at the Stella Maris Catholic Church on February 13, 2004.

Mr. Devon Garcia was also recognized for his partnership with the Foundation.



Mrs. Lois Sherwood and Mr. Devon Garcia showcasing Papier Mache work at Stella Maris Church Hall (Feb. 1, 2004).

## CARPENTRY: 32 WOODWORK GRADUATES AND COUNTING.....

In an effort to furnish residents of Grants Pen and the neighbouring environs, with requisite tools to function in the competitive market economy of the modern world the Foundation also offers training in carpentry.

The programme is made possible through the associated funding of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), HEART Trust NTA and the Kingston Restoration Company (KRC).

The Foundation has trained and graduated thirty two (32) students with the HEART NTA Pre-Level One Certification. Most recently (September 2003), fourteen (14) boys were certified in Cabinet Making, of which we (with the assistance of the (KRC) , we have already placed ten (10) in full time jobs.



Stella Maris Foundation's Carpentry Graduating Class (Sept. 2003)

## SMF HELPS THE YOUNG AND THE ELDERLY

In addition to the empowerment programmes and projects that we have spearheaded in an effort to 'bridge the gap' between the Community and the Foundation, we also extend services in response to some basic needs which exist.

Thirteen students from Grants Pen were awarded scholarships from the American Women's Group (AWG). Of the 13, 12 attend High school and 1 attends primary school. These students are beneficiaries of the Foundation's educational support programme.

The foundation has assisted over 100 students with back to school preparations for September 2003, defraying expenses of school fees, books and basic provisions necessary to attend school.

The elderly has benefited from the weekly feeding programme advanced by the Stella Maris Church. Over 70 lunches are delivered every Wednesday to the needy. Further, the Lions Club of Kingston sponsored a GSAT evening school for 50 students preparing to sit the exam. All students passed their exam and have been placed in high Schools. The Community

Liaison and Childhood Development officers are constantly interfacing with the community, offering technical assistance to residents including job applications/referrals, medical aid and counseling.

**'The foundation has assisted over 100 students with back to school preparations for September 2003, defraying expenses of school fees, books and basic provisions necessary to attend school...'**

## Sewing Programme: JAPAN GIVES US A STITCH IN TIME

The Sewing Programme sponsored by the Embassy of Japan, is a skills training programme which educates men and women from the Grants Pen Community, ages 18 and over in the art of embroidery and sewing.

Headed by tutor Ms. Brenda Vernal, training is offered in construction of household items as opposed to garment manufacturing. Residents learn to make drapery, bedspreads, shower curtains, duvet covers to name a few.

The first batch of students commenced training in May 2003 and ended February 2004. This marks the end of the Fund made possible by the Embassy of Japan.



Students of the Sewing class displaying some of their work.

Efforts are therefore underway to enlist the support of HEART trust NTA in a bid to have the

programme certified through the NCTVET as well as facilitating the defraying of training expenses for the upcoming period.

The household items ably designed by the students are available at the Foundation at a reasonable cost.

Stella Maris Foundation  
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Michael Lewis

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*"Doing What Love Requires"*

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Community Liaison Officer

## Board of Directors

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## Community Empowerment Project (CEP) (BUILDING A LASTING PEACE FOR GRANTS PEN)

The Stella Maris Foundation forms the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) of the Community Empowerment Project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The PCU comprises the Project Coordinator/Manager (Ms. Kerry-Jo Lyn), the Financial Manager/Accountant (Mr. Mark George) and Community Development Specialists. The PCU coordinates the implementation of Work plans and work with associated entities, in particular the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) to realize the project outcomes.

Currently, the project is working with a Domestic Violence Work- Group and the Ministers Fraternal to increase public awareness on the issue of gender-based violence.

Plans are afoot to begin various sporting competitions starting with Dominoes as well as a number of sub-community trainings on the rights of the citizen, parenting skills and other community-based strengthening components, in an effort to support the PERF activity in Grants Pen.

The CEP seeks to facilitate the overall PERF effort aimed at reducing crime and violence by stimulating a new and positive relationship between the Community and the Police as well as strengthening the community's problem solving capacity.



Youngsters painting messages of peace at the recently held pre-Christmas Bazaar at the Shortwood teacher's college. The collaborative effort of PERF and Stella Maris Foundation is funded by the USAID