

Dr. Robert Clarke, MD Founder, HELP Jamaica Medical Mission Honored

By Mark Milward

Dr. Robert Clarke, MD, OD was among the honorees at Kings House, to receive National Honors on Heroes Day, October 16, 2023 in Kingston, Jamaica. He was the recipient of the Order of Distinction (OD) Medal, Officer Rank, for his work in Medicine and Philanthropy. Dr. Clarke was born in Kingston, Jamaica. Raised by a single mother and grandmother, along with four siblings in an environment known for gangs, crime, drugs, and harsh living conditions. He attended Trench Town Primary School and Kingston Technical High School.

As a young man growing up under challenging conditions, he admits having not always been on the straight and narrow; however, his desire to succeed in life lifted him above the negative influences that surrounded him. He was gifted in mathematics, and at the age of 10 years old the idea of becoming a physician began to manifest itself in his mind.

In his late teens, he migrated to the US, attended Seton Hall University and after graduating with a

degree in mathematics, was accepted at the University of Medicine and Dentistry in New Jersey, and where he completed his residency in Internal Medicine in 2003.

In 2010, and while working with the Caribbean Medical Mission team, Dr. Clarke founded HELP Jamaica Medical Mission (HELPJAMM) with the assistance of Dr. Rudolph Willis. Dr. Clarke's objective in forming HELPJAMM was wholly centered on establishing medical missions to Jamaica and providing free medical care to the underserved citizens and communities in Jamaica, often venturing into remote locations throughout the island.

Since its inception HELPJAMM has gone to more than 50 communities, treating over 40,000 patients while providing free medications for blood pressure, diabetes, and other health conditions, often giving patients a year's supply of medications.

The Honour of the Order of Distinction has two ranks: Commander (CD), and Officer (OD). It is conferred upon any citi-

zen of Jamaica who renders outstanding and important service to Jamaica. The ceremony was conducted on October 16, 2023 under the administration of The Prime Minister, the Most Honorable Andrew Holness, ON, PC, MP and The Governor-General, the Most Honorable Sir Patrick Allen, ON, GCMG, CD, KSt. J.

That evening after the ceremony, family and friends gathered at the Pegasus Hotel to honor Dr. Clarke in a private dinner. Senator the Honorable Kamina Johnson-Smith made a brief appearance and offered remarks praising the work of HELPJAMM and the effort Dr. Clarke has put forth with his team of doctors, nurses and supporters over the years.

Also in attendance was Mr. Earl Jarrett, CEO Jamaica National Bank who spoke and recognized the contribution and sacrifices being made by Dr. Clarke. Video congratulatory messages came from actor/comedian Oliver Samuels, CD, Dr. Rudolph Willis, GHOSTS TV star Danielle Pinnock and her husband, as well as a thor-



Dr. Robert Clarke, MD, OD, Founder, HELP Jamaica Medical Mission

ough review of Dr. Clarke's journey medical mission in Jamaica done by his first cousin, US NY September 7 – 20 and with many of Congresswoman Yvette Clarke. Also his medical team present, Dr. Clarke on hand for the dinner were Dr. delivered praise and his sincere Clarke's uncle and his aunt, New expression of thanks for the help and York's first black councilwoman, Dr. support he received from those in attendance and those who were unable Una Clarke, PhD.

Having just completed a

to attend the affair.

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Effective Parenting Deemed A Deterrent To Criminal Activities



Chief Executive Officer of the National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC), Kaysia Kerr, says effective parenting is a deterrent to criminal activities in society. (Photo: Dave Reid)

By Rochelle Williams

Chief Executive Officer of the National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC), Kaysia Kerr,

says effective parenting is a deterrent to criminal activities in society. Citing data from the Social Development Commission (SDC),

Kerr said it was determined that ineffective parenting is one of the key drivers of crime.

She emphasized the importance

of good parenting practices in correcting antisocial behaviors in the society.

"We believe that when we solve the issues that relate to parenting in Jamaica, we would have inadvertently solved many of the maladaptive behaviors that we see," Kerr added.

She was addressing the launch of National Parents Month on Wednesday (November 1) at the ATL Automotive Group in Kingston.

Meanwhile, Kerr advised that the NPSC will be engaging with parents islandwide to equip them with effective techniques to guide children towards healthy outcomes."

Once parents are empowered, once they are given enough information and are supported to understand the information and apply it in their practice of parenting, then they will be more effective in their practice," she pointed out.

National Parents

Month is observed annually during November under the auspices of the NPSC.

This year's theme is 'Participation for Purpose.'

Throughout the month, the agency will be hosting parenting education training programs that emphasize the need to instill strong values in children in the home environment.

Persons will also be encouraged to enroll in classes hosted by the Commission to build their parenting knowledge and skills.

The NPSC will also be placing greater emphasis on parental involvement in school as a critical component of their children's academic success.

Kerr said these activities will better equip persons with the requisite effective parenting skills.

"We believe that when parents are skilled, when they have good information, when they are supported... then their skill sets will improve and they will be more effective in their practice," she added. (Source:jis.gov).

Dr. Clarke Receives OD



Dr. Clarke, MD at Kings House, JA National Awards ceremony receiving the Order of Distinction (OD) for services in Philanthropy and Medicine.

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Dr. Clarke is also the chief medical advisor for the US Northeast Diaspora and the immediate past president of the National Association of Jamaican and Supportive Organizations (NAJASO). He is the recipient of numerous other awards, including the congressional award for outstanding and invaluable service to the community and also recognition from the New York State Assembly.

The fund-raising efforts for next year's medical mission to

Jamaica is currently underway with a Black Tie Affair being held at Hanover Manor, East Hanover, New Jersey, November 11, 2023. The Honorees for the Gala are: Mr. Patrick Reid, Sonia Goodrich, NP, Dr. Andrew Baddoo, MD, Dr. Mercy Otieno, DNP, and Dr. Lucy Ankrah, DNP, APN.

The great Jamaican icon Oliver Samuels, CD will be the MC for the Black Tie Affair Fundraiser, and Consul General Alson Wilson, OD will be guest speaker. **Contact the following for further info:**

Margaret Douglas (862) 202-9934, Dr. Rudolph Willis, (973) 373-3000, Angella Palmer (201) 953-0044, Celia O'Gilvie, (973) 449-4852, Jahmal Peart (973) 619-3852, and Dr. Robert Clarke, (973) 619-3852.

HPL's The American Place Receives \$450,000 To Support Citizenship Instruction

(Hartford, CT) Hartford Public Library's The American Place (TAP) was awarded \$450,000 by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to expand its successful citizenship instruction and naturalization application services to immigrants. Hartford Public Library (HPL) was the only public library in the country to be awarded funds through USCIS' Citizenship Instruction and Naturalization Application Services grants program.

"We are so appreciative of this recognition. Public libraries have a unique role to play in this space and USCIS' continued support of our program validates our effectiveness in this role," said Homa Naficy, executive director, HPL's The American Place.

"Since 2000, TAP has been at the forefront of welcoming immigrants and providing the opportunities and support they need to become fully engaged citizens."

USCIS' Citizenship and Integration grant funds help prepare lawful permanent residents (LPRs) for naturalization. USCIS focused this year on reaching remote, underserved, and vulnerable communities per Executive Order 14012, Restoring Faith in Our Legal Immigration Systems and

Strengthening Integration and Inclusion Efforts for New Americans and the corresponding Interagency Strategy on Promoting Naturalization. This is a two-year grant program.

"The United States has a long history of welcoming refugees and immigrants, and we are stronger for it. Becoming a citizen is no easy feat, but the services offered by The American Place ensure more people in the Hartford community can achieve their dream of American citizenship.

It's great to see federal dollars go toward this incredible program, and I'll continue pushing for funding that supports Connecticut's vibrant immigrant community," said U.S. Senator Chris Murphy, nurse. Husna and her family are refugees from Afghanistan. Husna has recently applied to be a U.S. citizen. She was also instrumental in helping her parents and two older brothers apply, as well.

"Hartford Public Library holds a proven track record of success in assisting immigrants and refugees from across the region," said HPL President and CEO, Bridget E. Quinn. "Connecticut has the 10th highest percentage of foreign-born residents in the nation, with the highest concentration in the metropolitan Hartford area.

These funds will allow us to grow our current program to include

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HPL's The American Place

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an additional 200 students,” said Quinn. “Helping our neighbors navigate the citizenship process is just one example of the critical work we do each day at Hartford Public Library to meet the needs of the community.”

HPL’s TAP offers an integrated one-stop system where clients can conveniently access both legal and educational services. “TAP offers these services at no-cost and during hours that accommodate most adult work schedules - week-ends and evenings.

It is also through the Library’s range of educational, workforce readiness, and recreational activities offered in a highly supportive environment – open to all - that keeps our newcomers connected to us,” said Naficy.

While USCIS’s investment in Hartford Public Library’s TAP program has resulted in a steady increase in the rate of naturalized citizens in Connecticut’s capital city, the need for affordable citizenship education and naturalization services remains great.

Approximately 62% of Hartford’s foreign-born have not naturalized. For many, their literacy levels are insufficient to meet the English language requirements for naturalization further exacerbated by Hartford’s high poverty rate of

32.75%, with 46.3% of children living in poverty. This vulnerable population is at highest-risk of experiencing immigration fraud and most susceptible to misinformation.

“Hartford has a proud history of welcoming immigrants with open arms and this \$450,000 federal grant for The American Place will bolster access to educational and legal services to help hundreds more people on their path to citizenship.

The Hartford Public Library is the only library in the country to receive this award – a true testament to the outstanding services they provide.

We are a nation of immigrants and I see the impact of programs like The American Place firsthand every week at naturalization ceremonies across Connecticut.

I am proud to have fought for these funds and will continue to support programs that offer a beacon of hope for Connecticut’s immigrant community,” said U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal.

Help Imagine the Future!

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Please join the Hartford Public Library at a Community Meeting as we discuss a vision for the future of the Albany Library!

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WHERE : Artists Collective
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UNICEF And Other Stakeholders Commended For Taking On Mental Health Issues

By Sherika Hall

The Jamaica Youth Advocacy Network (JYAN) has commended the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and other key stakeholders for taking steps to address mental health issues affecting persons locally.

Speaking during the recent National Youth Mental Health Summit, hosted by UNICEF at the AC

Hotel by Marriott Kingston, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator at the JYAN, Shanielle Allen, said, “we serve as an advocate, essentially for youth, adolescents, children and young adults, and we understand the importance of mental health and we are excited for conversations like this.”

“We have also established ... that young people are the future,

as they serve as a catalyst for change; and so we are grateful for these conversations,” she added.

Ms. Allen took the opportunity to thank UNICEF and its partners for creating a safe space where mental health issues can be tackled openly and without judgment.

“We love when mental health is a conversation that we can have, understanding that it affects

young people just as much as any other age group, and that it is a real thing,” she said.

The Policy and Advocacy Coordinator also pledged JYAN’s assistance in addressing this issue.

“We commit our support. So our network, UNICEF, is your network, and our platforms are your platforms. We are committing our support and we reiterate that mental health

matters,” Allen said.

The Summit saw the whole-some contribution of approximately 100 students who will help to construct a more robust and comprehensive approach to mental health.

(Source: jis.gov)



Students and members of youth-led organisations gather for a family photo at the end of day one of the National Youth Mental Health Summit. UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Jamaica Youth Advocacy Network (JYAN) to give young people a platform to present their recommendations for improved mental health services to policy makers.



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