



Date: 5 August 2015
Contact: E. Patricia Ebanks
Tel: (345) 938-2209

Court Staff Spearheads Voluntary Community Project

A workplace project that has brought together public and private interests has resulted in a refurbished children's corner at the General Practice Clinic at the Cayman Islands Hospital.

The Judicial Department coordinating team formally handed over the completed project to the Health Services Authority in a brief ceremony today, Wednesday (5 August). As part of the ceremony, Court Administrator Kevin McCormac presented a plaque to Mrs. Lizzette Yearwood, Cayman Islands Hospital Chief Executive Officer (CEO), on behalf of participating organisations.

Mrs. Yearwood expressed her sincere appreciation to all involved: "It is very encouraging to see so many persons in the community taking ownership for their hospital and taking the initiative to enhance its environment," she said, adding that the children's corner will serve an important role in entertaining and distracting sick children while they wait to see the doctor.

It all began with a visit to the hospital by the Judicial Department's Acting HR Manager Shanna Wallace when she found it challenging, she said, to distract her active five-year-old, Caleb, while he was awaiting medical attention.

Now equipped with a new mural, furniture, books and toys, the clinic today offers an attractive diversion for little ones such as Caleb.

The project, which began last year, involved the coordinated effort of court staff; the Sunrise Community Church; Northward Prison; and local bookstore, Book Nook.

"It started as a very small idea, but evolved," said Ms Wallace, "expanding eventually to involve the other organisations."

Court Administrator McCormac, who is also a member of the Sunrise Community Church, said: "It has been very impressive to see the passion for improving facilities available and to see the way in which the different parts of our community work together."

Many of the organisations involved gave both time and money or other tangible contributions. In addition to time invested, judicial staff, from Judges to front line employees, dug into their pockets to donate funds to the project; the Sunrise Community Church donated funds and time; Book Nook very generously donated toys and books; and inmates at Northward Prison built the table and chairs.

Director of Prisons Neil Lavis said he was pleased that the Prison had had an opportunity to contribute: "We are always looking for ways that inmates of both Northward and Fairbanks can pay back the community through involvement in projects," he said, adding: "These opportunities

have the dual effect of enabling inmates to give back to society while bringing a sense of purpose to their daily work.” In addition, they improve prisoners’ skills and afford them a structured working day, the director said.

On the judicial side, key player Wallace helped coordinate the project generally, while Mr. Damani Gow, Acting Secretary to Clerk of Court Tabitha Philander, led the creative effort.

Putting his art training to work, Mr. Gow, now sharing his time between his work at the Judicial Department and the Law School where he is in his first year, evolved as team leader of a core group of painters. This group included Sunrise Community Church member Ms Dorothy Ojerio; her friend and fellow artist Ms Raidez Perez; Mr. Darcy Noon, a second-year law student at the law school; and court staffer Lacey Quesada, along with a few other volunteer painters such as Alexis McDonald, who was involved in the early phases.

For Mr. Gow, the project tested commitment as he juggled work and school while painting Sundays and later evenings as the completion deadline loomed.

The rewards, however, were many: he found himself strategising with team leader Wallace, developing his own leadership abilities and strengthening his time management skills. Importantly, he is now firmly committed to voluntarism, and is actively looking for other community project in which to become involved.

“This project has definitely helped me to improve my CXC art skills and has served to interest me in developing as a painter. I would certainly like to work on further projects from the perspective of personal development and as a way to help the public.”

From her perspective, Ms Wallace said that she is deriving satisfaction from having arrived at the finish of a project that expanded to include the diverse group that the project brought together. She feels a sense of pride in initiating a project that will benefit many other mothers and young children across the community.

Speaking on behalf of all the volunteers that made completion of the project possible, she said: “We all worked together to get to this point and I share that satisfaction with all the many contributors and thank them for their community spiritedness.”

PICTURES BELOW



Health Services Authority, Judicial Department, and Prison Officers flank Hospital CEO Lizzette Yearwood accepting a plaque from Court Administrator Kevin McCormac.

From Left: Project Painters Ms. Alexis McDonald, Ms Raidez Perez, and Mr. Damani Gow, Court HR Director Patricia Muschette; Court HR Assistant, Tatiana Hodgson (rear), Prison Director Neil Lavis; Ms Lacey Quesada (project painter); Mrs. Yearwood; Mr. McCormac; Court Project Coordinator Shanna Wallace (rear); HSA's Patient Experience Manager Tina McLean (front); HSA's Nurse Manager Joanna Rose-Wright (rear); Prison Acting Deputy Director for Rehabilitation, Mr. Richard Barton.



Painters and other supporters prepare to begin painting at the start of the project summer 2015

From left: Ms Shanna Wallace, (then Court Acting HR Manager) who initiated and managed the project; Caleb Wallace (Shanna's Son), HSA's Nurse Joanna Wright, Ravyn Rankin (Shanna's Daughter); Alexis McDonald; Alecia McDonald; Shannon Whorms, Ashley Josephs, Lacey Quesada.



Painters and other supporters prepare to begin painting at the start of the project summer 2015. The project started last year with much energy from a group of painters anxious to transform the HSA's Children's Corner.

Seen here are Alexis McDonald, Ashley Josephs, Alecia McDonald, Shannon Whorms, Lacey Quesada.



Against the backdrop of the new mural at the newly refurbished Children's Corner at the General Practice Clinic, at the Cayman Islands Hospital are a core group of painters who transformed the corner. From left: Ms Raidez Perez, Mr. Damani Gow, Ms Lacey Quesada, and Ms Alexis McDonald.

Other painters were unavailable for the photograph.



Court Administrator Kevin McCormac has some fun with one of the news toys at the refurbished Children's Corner at the Cayman Islands Hospital

Ends