

# THE E-NEWSLETTER

USAID/Jamaica Basic Education Project

August-September 2012

## Message from Chief of Party/Project Director



Jean Beaumont, Ed.D

Following last year's successful debut of Camp Summer Plus, I am happy to announce that the team has done it again. Approximately 1,000 Grade 3 children from three regions of the Ministry of Education were impacted by the activity.

In Region 1, the Camp was located at the Queens High School and Shortwood Teachers' College; In Region 4, campers journeyed to the Petersfield and Irwin High Schools; while in Region 6, the Camp was located at Charlemont, Innswood and Vere Technical High Schools.

Camp Summer Plus 2012 was a joint initiative of the Ministry of Education and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The team at the Jamaica Basic Education Programme provided training for the instructors and throughout the camp, we visited and gave guidance to ensure objectives were being met.

Camp Summer Plus 2012 sought to raise the educational achievement levels of disadvantaged Grade 3 students by providing a rigorous academic program focusing on reading and mathematics and an array of enrichment activities from July 9-August 12 during the summer holidays. I must offer congratulations to the teams from

USAID and the Ministry for their whole-hearted support of the Camp and for their confidence that it would help the students. The individualized instruction and parental involvement also played key roles in the successful outcomes. The Project team is now completing the assessment process and preparing the student reports which are to be shared with each region and the participating schools. We aim to provide important feedback to the regions early in the new school year so that schools can prepare programmes for these students who will need continued support.

As many of you are aware, the Project will shift gears early in the new academic year, with a focus on reading, as the Ministry of Education will adopt responsibility for the numeracy component. The team is looking forward to begin the implementation of the USAID Reading Strategy in Regions 1, 4 and 6, targeting 174 schools, of which 110 are new schools.

USAID seeks to improve reading skills for 100 million children in primary grades worldwide by 2015. This will be achieved by means of several successful reading programmes which were developed through research carried out in India, Liberia and Ghana. Informed by this, USAID will focus on improving reading instruction through three types of interventions:

- (1) Improving teacher effectiveness
- (2) Increasing availability and use of reading materials
- (3) Strengthening classroom and school management

The Project team is excited to be a part of this initiative.

*Jean Beaumont is the Chief of Party/Project Director of the USAID/Jamaica Basic Education Project.*

### MISSION STATEMENT

The USAID/Jamaica Basic Education Project supports the Ministry of Education in its goal of achieving quality education through the Education System Transformation Programme.

### VALUES STATEMENT

We value excellence in:

- \* The achievement of students and teachers
- \* Performance Management of school leaders
- \* Accountability in teaching and learning

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## Education Minister & USAID Mission Director give ‘thumbs up’ to Camp Summer Plus 2012

Jamaica’s Minister of Education, the Hon. Rev. Ronald Thwaites and USAID Mission Director Denise Herbol have given the thumbs up to the 2012 edition of Camp Summer Plus. Both were speaking at the official launch of the Camp held at the Minister’s Kingston offices in July.

Rev. Thwaites said Camp Summer Plus 2012 was just the kind of activity needed to give at-risk children a boost during the summer, noting that many of them did not have the benefit of organized recreational activity during the summer holidays. Mr. Thwaites said the Camp Summer Plus 2012 experience in three of the Ministry’s six regions was a timely intervention in the development of the children.

Ms. Herbol is also excited about the impact that the Camp will have on the children and noted that it was another chapter in the long and fruitful partnership between the Mission and the Ministry of Education to boost education in Jamaica.

Ms. Herbol stated that the Camp aims to deliver a multi-faceted curriculum which would have a positive impact on the children leading up to the new 2012/2013 academic year.



Hon. Reverend Ronald Thwaites, Minister of Education-welcomes Denise Herbol, USAID Mission Director in Jamaica to his offices at National Heroes Circle in Kingston. The occasion was the official launch of Camp Summer Plus 2012.

## Jamaica National donates books to Camp Summer Plus 2012



Hon. Reverend Ronald Thwaites, Minister of Education (right) and Denise Herbol, USAID Mission Director in Jamaica (left) are pleased as they accept books for the Camp from Alicia Young of JNBS.

The Jamaica National Building Society (JNBS) again underlined its reputation as one of Jamaica’s leading corporate supporters of education through its donation of books to be used by children at Camp Summer Plus 2012.

Sales Development Specialist at JNBS Alicia Young handed over the material at the official launch of the camp.

### CAMP HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ *Comprehensive Reading Curriculum*
- ✓ *Hands-on Mathematics Curriculum*
- ✓ *Individual Instruction*
- ✓ *Computer-based Interactive Activities*
- ✓ *Fun Outdoor Activities and Field Trips*
- ✓ *Enriching Environment*
- ✓ *Daily Breakfast and Lunch*

## Photo Highlights from Camp Summer Plus 2012 Launch



Ms. Herbol, Ms. Young and the Minister hand over books to Mr. Michael Sutherland, principal and students from the Central Branch All-Age School.



Ms. Herbol (right) share a moment with USAID-Jamaica Basic Education Project Director Dr. Jean Beaumont (centre) and National Coordinator for Camp Summer Plus 2012, Sonia Glanville.

## Photo Highlights from Camp Summer Plus 2012 Site Visits



USAID Mission Director Denise Herbol has a wonderful time with two campers during her visit of Camp sites at Vere Technical High and Innswood High Schools.

Campers at the Innswood High School site show the signature 'to the world' sign during a visit by USAID Mission Director, Denise Herbol.



Jeanette Vail, Supervisory Programme Officer, USAID Jamaica, enjoys a great deal of fun sharing a lesson with Camp Summer Plus 2012 participants at the site at Queen's High in Kingston School.



## Highlights from Camp Summer Plus 2012

### *Master Teacher, Monique Reynolds Reflects*

Camp Summer Plus 2012 can be viewed as an elevating experience for the children who participated and a 'miracle' as one parent said. I thought myself fortunate to be selected, along with other teachers, for an opportunity to impact positive change in the lives of the students who were in the camp. I was even more pleased and appreciative of the fact the Ministry of Education was more involved in the project, in partnership with the USAID. I prepared to work with the direction of both partners with the sole objective being to assist the students who would not normally get such an intense and holistic opportunity, to grow both academically and aesthetically. The pre-camp training experience carried out by the USAID/Jamaica Basic Education Project team was fruitful and helped us in the actual process of implementation.

Students looked forward to the "Read Aloud" sessions in the mornings, and they enjoyed predicting and finding evidence in the stories to support or discard their predictions. They started to participate well in activities geared towards fostering skills in phonics and identifying sight words. The skills learnt in those sessions were evidently transferred in the guided reading and writing sessions as we would observe students as they moved their lips silently while using syllabication or chunking strategies to spell or identify words.



These students were hyperactive and thus appreciated the activity-based math lessons. They were excited to use manipulatives, and to transfer their knowledge of mathematical concepts into games and real life scenarios. Additionally, they appreciated using real measuring instruments and we enjoyed some of the moments when their expressions showed that they finally grasped what was being taught. These experiences led to foundational improvements in both reading and math and gave me a sense of satisfaction.



Master Teacher, Mrs. Monique Reynolds taking her students through a Math lesson.

#### SCENES FROM THE CLASSROOM



## Highlights from Camp Summer Plus 2012 *Master Teacher, Monique Reynolds Reflects*

The enrichment sessions allowed them to transfer their academically acquired skills through creative and relaxed channels. I observed that no one was absent on Thursdays as that was their day to go to the computer lab and do reinforcing animated and multisensory activities. They always returned to class excited to share what they did. It was a pleasure to view their interpretations of the various themes in reading and math through pieces of art, poetry, songs, cultural dance and music.



The confidence of some students soared and thus motivated them to try harder and they began to taste success. I was keen to observe two of the boys. While one remained reserved and slowly completed each task, the other took off like a rocket with much excitement and energy. I soon realized that the main issue affecting the first boy was that he stuttered and this lowered his self-esteem. Sometimes he became mindful of his stuttering and would tell me his answer or question and I would share it with the class until some students started to show compassion and I explained that it was alright for him to try to express himself because the others were not going to make fun of him. This showed a lot of maturity and a sense of bonding in the class. It was even more interesting hearing the students participate in intellectual discussions in the guidance, health and safety sessions as they displayed growth in positive moral values. It was also evident that their reasoning skills had heightened as well.



The opportunity the students received from their exposure in the camp and the impact it had on them gave me a sense of pride to know that I had a part to play in helping them to develop. I will be forever grateful to USAID and the Ministry of Education for giving us such an opportunity and I hope that the plans to track the students' performances going forward will materialize.

# Camp Summer Plus 2012 Reflections



“My child is a changed child. I had to go to the school to see for myself what was going on because I have never seen my child take such an interest in anything before.”

“I have spent every day of the five weeks at this camp and I am better for it. My child and other children have benefitted. It is a joy to see them grow every day.”



A student was asked - “What do you like best about Camp Summer Plus 2012?” He said:

“Mi love mi teacher.”

“My teacher loves me.”



## OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- Field Trips to:
- Rose Hall Great House
  - Rhodes Hall Plantation
  - Ebony Park HEART Academy
  - Hope Gardens & Zoo
  - Port Royal
  - Devon House



## Upcoming Events

### SEPTEMBER

- Sept 3      **New Academic Year Begins**
- Sept 5-7    **Team Retreat**
- Sept 10     **Camp Summer Plus 2012**
- Student Performance Reports**

### OCTOBER

- Oct 1        **Camp Summer Plus 2012 Regional Reports and Reflections**
- Oct-Dec     **USAID Reading Strategy Rollout**

### USAID/Jamaica Basic Education Project

*Supporting Educational Transformation in Jamaica*  
 Grant Hall, Caenwood Centre, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5  
 Tel/Fax: (876) 967-5192  
 Website: [www.usaidjamaicabasiced.com](http://www.usaidjamaicabasiced.com)