

St James Infirmary aces earthquake drill

Christopher Thomas/
Gleaner Writer

WESTERN BUREAU:

STAFF AT the St James Infirmary in Montego Bay have proven themselves capable of managing the safety of 45 elderly residents in their care in case of an earthquake, following an earthquake evacuation drill that was held at the facility on Monday.

The drill, which saw staff members being tested on how securely they could relocate the residents from the infirmary building to the designated assembly point within a given time limit of five minutes or less, was part of a series of similar disaster



Tamoy Sinclair, parish disaster coordinator for St James Municipal Corporation, addresses the media during an earthquake evacuation drill that was held by the St James Municipal Corporation at the infirmary on Monday March 28.

preparedness exercises at more than 20 locations across St James, to include businesses and tourist sector sites.

Infirmary Matron Jacqueline Wilson lauded her staff’s capabilities in their successful passing of the earthquake drill, which was overseen by representatives from the St James Municipal Corporation and the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM).

“Today’s (Monday) earthquake drill was beautifully executed by my staff. They were prepared, they responded quickly and they maintained the safety of the residents,” said Wilson. “I think that in the event of an earthquake

or a disaster, this goes to show how prepared the infirmary staff members are.”

ODPEM Training Manager Novia Drummonds-Morgan likewise praised the infirmary staff’s success in the drill, especially when taking into account the limitations of the residents they had to move during the exercise.

“One of the things you have to take into consideration is the constraints and the unique nature of the residents here; they are senior citizens and they have different ailments, as some are wheelchair-bound and some are bed-bound, and so forth. Given those constraints, I think the exercise went well,” said Drummonds-Morgan.



Ann Marie Brown (left) and Tashauna Hume, staff members of the St James Infirmary, assist in moving a wheelchair-bound resident of the facility during an earthquake evacuation drill that was held by the St James Municipal Corporation at the infirmary on March 28. PHOTOS BY ASHLEY ANGUIN/PHOTOGRAPHER

Earthquake readiness at the infirmary and other locations within Montego Bay is crucial, as the western city was at the centre of a seismic tremor that rocked the entire island on March 1, 1957. That earthquake resulted in four deaths and damage to the St James Parish Church’s clock tower, plus damage to several bridges and utility poles.

In 2013, The University of the West Indies’ Earthquake Unit noted that Jamaica is located within an active zone of seismic activity and experiences more than 200 tremors annually.

Additionally, general disaster readiness is a matter of concern for Montego Bay given the city’s recent history with flooding as a result of heavy rains. That level of preparation would be needed if Montego Bay, a coastal town, should be hit with an earthquake, as quakes may also trigger tsunamis.

Tamoy Sinclair, the disaster coordinator for St James, noted that Monday’s parish-wide earthquake drills were designed to help the participating businesses identify how they can improve their disaster management strategies.

“The aim is to have as many businesses as possible within the business process outsourcing sector and the tourism sector participating in the drill so they can test their emergency procedures that they have in place, to identify the deficiencies and what is also going well. When they have identified those things, the municipal corporation and the Parish Disaster Committee will be able to come and assist them to create a standardised version of their disaster plans that they have in place,” said Sinclair.

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Recipients (L-R): Kevon Kidd, Michel Spence, Stuart Powell.

UWI MONA ACTUARIAL SCIENCE STUDENTS AWARDED IFOA FULLERTON-LONG CARIBBEAN SCHOLARSHIP

The University of the West Indies, Mona, Kingston, Jamaica, March 30, 2022. Students studying Actuarial Science who demonstrate academic excellence but face financial difficulties are set to benefit from scholarships established by two graduate of The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus - Andrew Long and Norbert Fullerton.

Mr Long and Mr Fullerton, who are also Ambassadors of the recently formed charity called the IFOA Foundation are actuaries based in the United Kingdom. Both established the Norbert Fullerton Actuarial Scholarship and the Long Actuarial Scholarship. The scholarships funded two deserving UWI Mona students - in the amount of USD \$2,125 each – the students were awarded in the 2020/2021 academic year.

In furtherance of their strong commitment to nation building, Messrs. Long and Fullerton have strengthened their commitment under the charitable arm of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries, the IFOA Foundation, to launch the IFOA Foundation Fullerton-Long Caribbean Scholarship Fund effective academic year 2021/2022. The scholarship will be awarded annually to Actuarial Sciences and Mathematics students who apply and meet the eligibility criteria - the goal being to award such students from The UWI Mona’s Faculty of Science and Technology (FST) each year. The three awardees for the 2021/2022 academic year are **Mr. Kevon Kidd, Mr. Stuart Powell and Miss Michel Spence.**

The IFOA Foundation is the dedicated charitable arm of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA), working with the global actuarial community to meet its philanthropic objectives for positive societal impact. In 2021, the Foundation pursued an exciting opportunity to launch a fund supporting the most gifted and highest performing young actuaries who are studying in the Caribbean at the University of the West Indies (UWI).

In response to the launch of this prestigious award, Professor Michael Taylor, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology stated that, “...the Faculty of Science and Technology is grateful to those who choose to partner with The UWI to ensure that the best and brightest of our region are afforded the opportunity to pursue a degree of their choice. In this case we are doubly proud.”

“We are proud of the scholarship recipients from our Faculty who distinguished themselves in their interviews. We are also proud of the donors who are both alumni of the Department of Mathematics. Messrs. Fullerton and Long have provided a good example of how one can honour persons and institutions that have helped you achieve by simply giving back once you are in a position to do so. The Faculty is grateful to them for their tangible investment in our University and the region,” Prof. Taylor said.

Reacting to the scholarship award, the sole female awardee, Michel Spence, in a Thank You Letter, expressed her gratitude to the interview panel, thanking them for their patience. Commenting on the selection experience, she said through the interview process she benefitted from an abundance of knowledge. “This garnered knowledge led to my further mental and intellectual enhancement and will most definitely stick with me throughout my lifetime as I continue to embody nothing less than a black woman of excellence”, she said.

Kartina Tahir Thomson, Chair of Trustees of the IFOA Foundation, commented “The IFOA Foundation is delighted to work alongside Norbert and Andrew on the IFOA Foundation Fullerton Long Scholarship Award”. The scholarship award aims to support Caribbean students in their academic career.

“Not only would the students benefit financially, they would also benefit from the opportunity the award brings. Thanks to the scholarship award, we will have an even more diverse workforce and membership in the actuarial profession. The addition of other supporters’ contributions to the fund going forward will mean that we are able to offer this highly coveted scholarship to even more promising students from the region,” Mrs. Tahir Thomson said.

Commenting on this generous gesture by the two UWI graduates, Head of the Department of Mathematics, Dr. Nagarani Ponakala stated that “The Department of Mathematics is extremely elated that through their generous donations of these scholarships, both Messrs. Fullerton and Long has impacted the lives of our students positively. Not only have they committed financial support, but additionally emotional support, through mentorship, which they have extended, not only to the Mona Campus, Jamaica, but also to the wider Caribbean as well.

“As sons of the Caribbean and alumni of our department, we are extremely proud to see how professionally they have blossomed, and on behalf of our Department, thank them wholeheartedly for their continued support,” Dr. Ponakala said.

About Donors

Mr. Fullerton is currently a Partner at Lane Clark & Peacock (LCP) and provides strategic investment advice to a range of pension funds and central banks across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Mr. Long is the Managing Director at Willis Towers Watson with expertise in pension risk management in the UK, the Channel Islands and the Caribbean.

About the IFOA Foundation

The IFOA Foundation is a recently formed charity that is raising funds to support our community and to achieve our mission of ‘Actuaries supporting others’. Our vision is to open every door for the next generation of actuaries and to empower the profession to be transformative in addressing the greatest challenges of our time.

The IFOA Foundation offers scholarship funding across various global regions as well as education grants designed to support actuarial students who need financial help through their studies. It is with thanks to our generous partners and supporters that we are able to fund these projects and grants, and contributions can be made to the Foundation at bit.ly/IFoA_Donate.

For more information about the IFOA Foundation, visit their website at www.actuaries.org.uk/about-us/ifo-a-foundation.

Channel temp teacher pay to basic, primary schools

THE EARLY-CHILDHOOD and primary education sector should receive a significant chunk from the \$1 billion being allocated by the Government to employ temporary teachers to help students recover from pandemic-induced learning loss, says Winston Smith, president of the Jamaica Teachers’ Association (JTA).

While noting that secondary education should receive sufficient disbursements, Smith said in a **Gleaner** interview that a concerted effort must be made to “solidify the quality of education available to children in the early childhood-primary sector and to incorporate students with special needs”.

On the question of whether the sum set aside was sufficient to address the significant fallout in learning, Smith said it was difficult to give a definitive response at this time without first examining a number of issues.

The JTA president said that he would have to review the breakdown of the allocation in relation to the qualification of the teachers who are being engaged, their experience, how long the engagement will last, and the institutions that are being targeted.

“If you are in a volatile or

remote area, you have to factor in remote allowance or inducement allowance, all of those little nuances would have to be worked out to know whether or not the \$1 billion will amount to anything significant,” he said.

Executive director of the Early Childhood Commission (ECC), Karlene Deslandes, indicated that the sector was not spared in terms of learning loss.

She told **The Gleaner** that a number of children were missing from the learning space in the early-childhood sector since the onset of COVID-19 in March 2020.

Deslandes pointed out that the early-childhood sector also grappled with issues such as access to the Internet and lack of devices.

The ECC said last week that the agency had not received its approved budget and, as such, would not be able to say if there is an increase in the sum allocated to the sector this year.

However, the ECC said it has submitted an increased budget for approval this year.

In the meantime, the ECC is reviewing the recommendations of the Orlando Patterson report to determine the proposals to be implemented in the short term.

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CLOSURE NOTICE



The Forestry Department wishes to advise customers that our nurseries islandwide will be **CLOSED** for our 2021/2022 financial year End-of-Year Stock Count for the following periods:

Tuesday, March 29, 2022 (8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)
Wednesday, March 30, 2022 (All day)

We regret any inconvenience this closure may cause.

We will re-open for regular business on Thursday, March 31, 2022.

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