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JAMAICA OBSERVER CENTRAL FOCUS



A-PLUS FOR VOLUNTEERISM

Projects Abroad makes a difference in Manchester and beyond.

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Mandeville, Manchester -Young Canadian university graduate, Addy Treleven couldn't decide whether to do a Master's degree in teaching or disaster management.

He liked both. So he opted to join Projects Abroad and work as a volunteer in Jamaica to help him come to a decision.

Treleven recently completed a two (2) month stint as a volunteer teacher at Villa Road Primary in Mandeville. Starting this week, he will work for another two (2) months in disaster management at the offices of the St Elizabeth Parish Council in Black River, before returning to Canada.

He is keeping an open mind but Treleven says he thoroughly enjoyed his time as a Physical Education teacher and Reading tutor at Villa Road.

"It's a great experience. The kids have so much energy," he said with a laugh.

Treleven is one of hundreds of overseas volunteers who have travelled to Jamaica to serve worthy causes and experience Jamaican culture since April 2008, thanks to Projects Abroad. It's a United Kingdom (UK) based company that arranges volunteer placements in

countries around the globe and has been operating in Jamaica since 2008.

Dr. Bridgette Barrett-Williams, Country Director, Projects Abroad Jamaica, says volunteers "normally stay between one to six months; that's the time frame, but most stay two months".

They hail from 24 countries mainly the UK, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Canada, USA, Belgium, Norway, Japan and China.

Volunteers serve in a range of areas including *children's homes, schools, hospitals, health centres, disaster management projects, the Parish Councils in Manchester and St Elizabeth* and in communities such as the Maroon Village of Accompong Town in the Cockpit country of northern St Elizabeth.

According to 2010 annual report for Jamaica, 78 per cent of volunteers were female. Most women worked in

the orphanages, schools, hospitals and at the parish council offices. Men were largely attracted to building, farming and sports projects and the Maroon Village.

Most volunteers are young, between the ages of 16-26 with the oldest being

a 62 year-old from the UK who worked in an orphanage.

Under the arrangement, volunteers pay Projects Abroad a fee and "then that fee covers all logistics,

airport pickups, social events,

the projects, the host family payments, their insurance." Barrett-Williams explained.

She says volunteers are usually "passionate about giving back. We have some professionals and



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non-professionals. The concept is that instead of going to Negril to lie on the beach (and experience) sand, sea and sun, they do work on the weekdays and then have their fun time on the weekends. They are really dedicated to making a difference in the destinations”.

Projects Abroad Jamaica is located in Mandeville - the only office in the Caribbean - and most volunteers live with host families in and around the Manchester parish capital as well as St Elizabeth.

‘Central to the success of the projects offered by Projects

Abroad Jamaica, are those described by Barrett-Williams as “our partners”.

Says she: “Our partners include our placement locations where the volunteers work: the children’s homes, the hospitals, the schools, the host families who accommodate the volunteers

while they are here and our drivers who are responsible for (transporting) the volunteers”.

Projects Abroad stays in close touch with its partners; a highpoint being last week, when a third annual partnership workshop was held at the Golf View Hotel.

“It’s a means whereby we have all our partners in a setting and we share what we have accomplished in the previous year and give an update of what will happen in the coming year and we get their input,” Barrett-Williams explained.



Dr. Bridgette Barrett-Williams(Country Director Projects Aboard)



Participants at Projects Aboard Partnership Workshop in Mandeville last week



Section of the Audience

Calling Youth Volunteers for Global Youth Service Day 2011

Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) is scheduled for April 15-17 and once again 20 Twenty Strategies Consulting and the Manchester Parish Development Committee have been assigned by GYSD as country co-ordinators. Global Youth Service Day is an annual campaign that celebrates and mobilises the millions of children and youth who improve their communities each day of the year through service and service-learning. Established in 1988, Global Youth Service Day is the largest service

event in the world, and the only day of service dedicated to children and youth. GYSD is celebrated each year in over 100 countries. Each year, millions of children and youth around the world work together with schools, youth organisations, nonprofits, community and faith-based organisations, volunteer and national service programmes, government agencies, faith communities, and other individuals to address the world’s most critical issues and change their communities on Global Youth Service Day.

Tell us how your organisation plans to make a difference on GYSD. Visit: www.gysd.org for more information. You are never too young to make a difference! Join us for Jamaican Youths: Embracing Opportunities & Healthy Lifestyles on Saturday, April 16 at the Cecil Charlton Park in Mandeville. For more information, contact Annette Salmon at (876) 620-8588 or (876) 470-8536 or Angella Edwards at (876) 625-9753.