

J'can Diaspora groups bring holiday treats to children's homes

Residents of three Children homes in rural Jamaican communities were feted at a Christmas treat hosted by Friends Reaching Friends, a group of volunteers from the Holy Sacrament Church in Pembroke Pines, recently.

The children were from Clifton Boys' Home in Darliston, Westmoreland; St. Monica's Children's Home, Chapelton, Clarendon; and the Granville Children's Home, Falmouth, Trelawny.

They received specially wrapped gifts donated by parishioners of the congregation, as part of the annual Christmas fellowship hosted by the volunteers during last week at all three institutions.

Now in its 20th year, the Friends Reaching Friends, each year, embark on its bi-annual mission to fellowship with disadvantaged children in Jamaica and other countries of the Caribbean, during July and December. Gifts of toys, food, clothing and educational supplies are provided each year. The volunteers also include medical professionals, who provide primary health care to the residents of the institutions.

Meanwhile, hundreds of children at several homes in Kingston were recently given similar holiday treats by volunteers from the Clint O'Neill Needy Kids Association, who also visited homes in Kingston and St. Andrew handing out gifts.

At a Christmas fellowship hosted by the volunteers at the Kingston Parish Church, gifts of toys, food and clothing were also presented to children from several homes, including Maxfield Park, Musgrave Girls', Glenhope, Alpha Boys' and St. Andrew Girls'.

Each year, the gifts are provided from the proceeds from the annual Grand Independence Ball, hosted by the Needy Kids Association in South Florida.

President of the Needy Kids Association, Elgeta Thompson Martin, expressed appreciation to the donors in the Diaspora who, over the years, have continued to support programmes of youth development in Jamaica.

Last year, the Association encountered financial setbacks caused by the global recession however she reported that, patrons were still contributing wholeheartedly to the efforts of the volunteers.