

## Jamaican Independence Celebrations get underway in South Florida

Jamaicans in South Florida have begun to prepare activities to celebrate the nation's 49th anniversary of Independence across the tri-county area — Dade, Broward and Palm Beach.

As is customary, planned activities include a number of cultural presentations such as church services, galas and concerts to commemorate the celebrations.

This coming Saturday, July 30th, patrons will celebrate at the annual Grand Independence Ball to be held at the Hyatt Regency Bonaventure Hotel in Weston. Guest speaker will be Professor Jane Cross, Shepard Broad Law Center at the Nova Southeastern University in Davie. Proceeds will benefit the Needy Kids of Jamaica/USA.

Parishioners at the Kendall Community Church of God in Miami will celebrate the fifth annual Jamaica Independence Gospel Service to be held on Sunday, July 31. Officiating pastor is the Reverend Dr. Michael Curry, Senior Pastor at the church.

Later that day, the annual cultural performance "Culturama 2011 Mello-go-Round" takes place at the Coral Springs Center for the Arts in Coral Springs. The event will showcase a variety of Jamaican traditional folk art forms that include dance, song and drama performed by Jamaica Festival award winning students who will be joined by several local entertainers from South Florida.

Dubbed as a "premier family show" the annual showcase Culturama promises to be an exciting program of Jamaica's great talent, homegrown and from the Diaspora, according to Sydney Roberts, Director of Jamaica Awareness, Incorporated, a Florida based cultural organization. Culturama Mello-go-Round is a collaborative effort of Jamaica Awareness, Incorporated and the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC).

On Independence Day, Saturday, August 6, hundreds of Jamaicans and friends in the Diaspora are expected to join in celebration for the second annual Jamaica Flag Day to be held at the Lauderhill Sport Complex on Oakland Boulevard.

In a flag raising ceremony, officials of that City will present a proclamation to the Consul General to pay respect to the positive impact demonstrated by Jamaicans in the Diaspora. Lauderhill, a suburb of Fort Lauderdale in Broward County is home to one of the largest population of Jamaicans in Florida State.

Minister of Education, Hon. Andrew Holness will be special guest at the Premiere Independence Ball to take place, later that day (August 6) at the Renaissance Hotel in Plantation.

Jamaicans will enjoy the resurgence of an old cultural tradition of Independence celebration at the fourth annual "Black Gold and Green Street Jam" on Saturday night (Aug. 6) at the famous Truck Stop in Davie.

Reminiscent of the traditional street dances held at central landmarks in Jamaica, the revelers will enjoy a collection of Jamaican music including ska, reggae, dancehall and soca from as far as the early 1960s.

As is customary, the Consulate General of Jamaica in Miami will host the annual Ecumenical Church Service to be held on Sunday, August 7, beginning at 4 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of Fort Lauderdale, downtown Fort Lauderdale.

Guest preacher will be the Bishop Delford Davis, Pastor of the Power of Faith Ministries in Portmore, St. Catherine, Jamaica. The officiating Minister will be the Reverend Karl Francis, Pastor of the Living Word Open Bible Church, Cooper City.

Jamaica's Consul General Sandra Grant Griffiths will deliver the welcome remarks and will also read the Independence message from the Prime Minister, Hon. Bruce Golding.

Recitals during the Service will be performed by the South Florida Caribbean Chorale comprising choristers from several Jamaican congregations in the South Florida communities, the Jamaica Folk Revue, the Tallawah Mento Band and the Sierra Norwood Calvary Children's Choir.

Proceeds of collection will benefit three education outreach projects namely the Power of Faith Ministries basic education programme, the Food for the Poor, and the Coalition of Jamaican Alumni Associations (CJAA) in South Florida.

The evening culminates with the staging of Jamaica's 49th Independence and Cultural Celebration which will take place at the Miramar Regional Park in Miramar. The rich cultural explosion will feature the a variety of entertainment, music, food, and lifestyle of Jamaicans in the Diaspora.

On Sunday, (Aug. 14) the Christian Awareness Association, will hold its Mass of Thanksgiving celebrating the nation's anniversary of Independence at the All Saints Catholic Church in Sunrise. The Service will be officiated by the Reverend Father Walter Dorsey.

Other activities of celebration will take place in Diasporic communities across Florida State including Port St. Lucie, Palm Bay, Tampa and Orlando.