



PRESS RELEASE

20th March 2009

Joanna Clarke Award Committee Members Visit John Gray

GEORGE TOWN, Grand Cayman – Members of the Joanna Clarke Excellence in Education Award (JCA) Committee recently visited John Gray High School (JGHS) to touch base on the literacy initiative they awarded in 2008, as well as to raise awareness for the 2009 JCA application process currently underway. Through the JCA, dms Organization Ltd. (dms), grants up to \$12,000 KYD annually to a worthy recipient(s).

The JGHS “Blueprint of Literacy” initiative aims to ensure that all high school students, upon graduation, will be able to perform at their grade levels and pass at least four external exams. The JCA grant facilitated the purchase of books for classroom libraries, books for book club members and audio books for classroom use and leisure reading.

On March 16th, JCA Committee members, including iconic educator and patron of the award, Ms. Clarke, met with members of the JGHS Literacy Committee who provided them with a progress update – sharing a list of reading materials and promotional materials on order, as well as the initiative’s implementation plan and metrics for measuring results.

Explaining that the initiative was going to promote the motto “The More You Read, The More You Know”, JGHS Literacy Committee members are working to develop an inventory of books that appeal to the students’ variety of interests. Commented Chairperson of JGHS Literacy Committee and Reading Specialist Reina Jefferson, “Getting a book in a student’s hands is one thing - but will they read it? There is where the challenge lies. It’s about engaging students’ interests in reading, as well as improving their reading ability.” The “Blueprint for Literacy” programme aims to make reading part of students’ everyday lifestyle, rather than a scheduled programme that they participate in at school. Ms. Jefferson added, “If we get some students to model the importance of reading, other students will in time also buy into it.”

Ms. Clarke commented, “I am pleased with the progress of the initiative and look forward to hearing more about the fruits of their labor in time. I was very impressed by how passionate the educators are about instilling our youth with the joy of reading.”

For more information on this press release please contact Laura-Anne Howard, public relations & communications coordinator, dms Organization Ltd., at 946-2368 or lhoward@dms.com.ky.

Recognizing the importance of private sector support for education, dms introduced the award to honour Ms. Clarke, and publicly acknowledge the efforts of all persons and organizations that contribute to education in the Cayman Islands.

"This award has allowed us to launch and implement our school-wide literacy programme, Blueprint for Literacy. With the funds received, students and staff will benefit from high-interest literacy materials, incentives, and rewards specifically provided for John Gray High School," remarked JGHS' Acting Head of English Amber Bothwell. "We are grateful for the funds made available to us – 'Blueprint for Literacy' has received a much-needed boost and is off to a great start."

Applications for the 2009 Joanna Clarke Excellence in Education Award are currently being circulated throughout Cayman Islands' schools and are available at the award web site www.joannaclarke.ky. The deadline for applications is 17 April 2009. For further information and to obtain an application contact Kim Fellman, dms Marketing Coordinator, at 814-4279 or kfellman@dms.com.ky. Any person or body involved in or affiliated with education is eligible for consideration, including but not limited to; teachers/teaching departments, students, PTAs, and schools.

The JCA Committee will carefully review all applications submitted, and if several worthy projects are identified, they may provide grants to multiple organizations up to \$12,000 KYD in total. The JCA Committee consists of the celebrated Ms. Joanna Clarke; President of dms Organization Ltd., Don Seymour; Literacy Education Specialist, Tanya Marie Dwight; Red Bay Primary School's Literacy Coordinator, Anne Briggs; President of Savannah Primary School's PTA, Mark Scotland; John Gray High School's Reading Specialist, Lydia Warren; and News Director of CITN, April Cummings.

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Photo Caption 1: John Gray High School students and members of its Literacy Committee met with members of the Joanna Clarke Excellence in Education Award Committee to discuss progress on their 2008 grant. (L to R) Ms. Joanna Clarke, Jeremy Manyeh, Saleicia Samaroo, Abigail Bush, and Ms. Reina Jefferson

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