



PRESS RELEASE

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DMS Announces Finalists for 2011 Joanna Clarke Excellence in Education Award

GEORGE TOWN, Grand Cayman – Five years celebrating education, dms Organization Ltd. (DMS) is pleased to announce the finalists for its cornerstone education initiative – the Joanna Clarke Excellence in Education Award (JCA). Congratulations are in order for Early Years Task Force, School Counselor’s Group, Catch Up Literacy, Speech and Language Therapy Department and the Harmony Learning Centre that have each been selected from a strong response base of 20 applicants.

A milestone year, this marks DMS’ fifth year celebrating the exemplary service of longtime local educator Ms. Joanna Clarke, whereby DMS grants up to KYD \$12,000 annually to a worthy education initiative(s). The application process came to a close on April 1st and on April 7th the JCA Committee, comprised of nine reputable members of the local business and education communities, selected the five finalists after much deliberation.

Chairperson of the JCA Committee Ms. Joanna Clarke commented, “It is inspiring to see such a pool of deserving initiatives. We had a wider range of applicants this year than in the past, including many non-profit associations, clubs and organizations in addition to the schools that applied. While it is challenging to determine between such impressive initiatives, ultimately we determined the finalists due to them being the strongest in aligning with our distinct criteria, particularly that of sustainability. We have always been inclined to offer grants and support initiatives that we are confident will continue to grow and flourish for many years. Interestingly, three of our five finalists were literacy initiative candidates, which is key to children’s education and development. We certainly have a hard decision ahead of us.”

A synopsis of each finalist’s project is:

Early Years Task Force has requesting funding for its *Preschool Educational and Training*

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Assistance Programme whereby it plans to provide literacy and phonics kits to all 30 registered preschools throughout the Cayman Islands. The project will also provide the relevant professional development and training workshops for teachers.

School Counselor's Group applied for the grant to support its mission to use guidance counseling to expose and build awareness in social skills, human development, self-identification and how to make decisions based on facts. The funding will assist in purchasing a wide variety of learning materials which will enhance the counselor's teaching of social skills and human development.

Catch Up Literacy requested funding for its *Catch Up Cayman* programme which seeks to address the problem of underachievement that is often rooted in literacy and numeracy challenges. In 2010 literacy coaches underwent training to offer the programme which is based on a proven literacy model that enables and supports the sustainable use and embedding of the *Catch Up Cayman* intervention for 'at risk' students across Cayman's public schools. They require funding to continue the programme.

The Speech and Language Therapy Department is seeking funding to set up a *Training Assistance Programme*, which is intended to train and support parents and caregivers of children with language delays to understand how they can assist with language development. Parents and caregivers will undergo a 12-week training programme to become language facilitators and understand how to maximize children's daily routines, even playtimes.

The Harmony Learning Centre, based in Cayman Brac, is dedicated to supporting people with developmental disabilities and their families through increasing their opportunities to make choices and decisions about the quality of their lives and responding to their changing needs. The centre requested funding to launch its *Day Programme* which will be modeled on the ASDAN *Towards Independence Programme*. ASDAN provides workbooks that facilitate tracking the progress of each stage of teaching young students independent living skills.

This award is not limited strictly to education initiatives, but rather it seeks to enrich the lives of Cayman's youth, whether that is through a traditional academic endeavour or to fund an extracurricular activity that keeps our youth focused and active. Last year's JCA recipients were Cayman Prep and High School for its Marine Science Programme, George Town Primary School for its Digital Visual Media Club and John Gray High School for its Scuba Diving Club.

The five finalists will each have the opportunity to present their project and partake in a question-and-answer session which will be considered against the award's criteria previously established by the *For more information on this press release please contact Laura-Anne Howard, Corporate Communications Coordinator, dms Organization Ltd., at 749-2458 or lhoward@dms.com.ky.*

committee members. The 2011 winner(s) will be announced Saturday, May 14th at the Grand Old House. If several worthy projects are identified, the committee may provide grants to multiple organizations up to KYD \$12,000 in total.

DMS Vice President and a JCA Committee Member Krista Pell commented, “DMS continues to be committed to giving back to our community through various donations, sponsorship and volunteer efforts, and in particular - Cayman’s youth. This award is one that we cherish and hold in the highest regard as it brings to the forefront how many deserving initiatives there are locally that require the support of the private sector to be successful. Corporate social responsibility is key, and we take that responsibility seriously.”

The JCA evening is open to the public for ticket and table sales to raise funds for the Joanna Clarke Scholarship Fund, an extension of the JCA, granting financial support to an aspiring or existing teacher looking to further his/her education. The JCA evening will begin with a champagne reception and silent auction at 6 PM, followed by dinner and the unveiling of the 2011 recipient(s). Additionally, enlightening guests about past recipients’ progress, 2010 JCA winners will share an overview of what has been accomplished over the course of the last year. Tickets are \$100 each, and for educators, \$75.

Ms. Pell added, “We hope the business community joins us to celebrate and support these amazing candidates who are all working toward a better tomorrow for Cayman. We also wanted to take the opportunity to express our appreciation to the many local media entities that continue to show support in heightening awareness about this award – it is truly a community effort.”

To purchase tickets or for further information about the JCA contact Tara Tvedt-Pearson, dms Organization Ltd. Project Coordinator, at 749-2407 or ttvedt@dms.com.ky.

DMS is a business conglomerate engaged in the financial services, real estate and media industries.

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As a 2010 recipient of the JCA, Cayman Prep and High School for its Marine Science programme, Kalyn Teeling and Cody Panton earned 'Top of the World' exceptional performance awards from the University of Cambridge International Examinations for gaining the highest marks in the world in Marine Science at AS-Level in June 2010. (pictured with teacher Verity Redrup and Guy Harvey)

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