



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Literacy is Celebrated at the 2011 Joanna Clarke Excellence in Education Award Evening**

GEORGE TOWN, Grand Cayman – Marking a milestone year, the 2011 Joanna Clarke Excellence in Education Award (JCA) winners were announced on Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> in an award ceremony hosted at Grand Old House. For the fifth year in a row, DMS presented cheques totaling \$12,000, split evenly between the two initiatives the JCA Committee deemed the most deserving - Catch Up Literacy for its *Catch Up Cayman* programme and the Speech and Language Therapy Department for its training assistance programme *Making Hanen Happen*.

With each of the winners receiving a \$6,000 KYD grant, the award assists in funding their worthy initiatives as well raising awareness about the effort and encouraging further private sector support from the community.

Namesake of the award, Ms. Joanna Clarke, shared thoughts. “It is inspiring to see how many educators we have out there continually striving for improvement in the education system. There is great opportunity for funding from the private sector to help drive even greater success stories. I commend DMS for its commitment to investing in educational endeavours in Cayman; they have set a good example of corporate responsibility. I celebrate my past student, Don Seymour and his patriotic stance. May God continue to bless him and to keep him noble and humble.”

Catch Up Literacy requested funding to continue to offer 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.

Of selecting Catch Up Literacy as a recipient, JCA Committee Member Tara Tvedt said, “Catch up Cayman was selected firstly due to the future sustainability; it provides a ‘train the trainer’ aspect where going forward there will be no requirement to hire trainers from the UK foundation, and thus the programme becomes self sustainable. In addition, the organization has already

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identified and recruited local volunteers from organizations such as Rotary International and the Pink Ladies who would like to be trained as facilitators, and thus it also demonstrates the criteria 'to contribute to community involvement in education'.

The Speech and Language Therapy Department sought funding to set up a training assistance programme "Making Hanen Happen" 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.

DMS Vice President and a JCA Committee Member Krista Pell said, "Similarly, this initiative was selected largely because the programme is centered around community as well as parental involvement, with the trainings being offered to parents and caregivers alike. Making Hanen Happen is an outstanding programme that encourages participation at an active level with a variety of children to combat language delays, and we are proud to do our part to support them."

The other finalists recognized at the ceremony and their proposed initiatives included Early Years Task Force for its Preschool Educational and Training Assistance Programme; the School Counselor's Group to provide guidance counseling; and the Harmony Learning Centre for its Towards Independence Programme.

The JCA evening began with a cocktail reception at 6 PM where guests mixed and mingled, including Ms. Joanna Clarke, JCA Committee members and finalists, DMS representatives, respected educators and supporters of education. There was also a silent auction to raise additional proceeds for the Joanna Clarke Scholarship Fund – and between ticket sales and the auction - an impressive \$4,000 was raised. During the dinner that followed Ms. Clarke read a poem and offered a blessing.

DMS President, and a former student of Ms. Clarke's, Don Seymour said, "DMS remains deeply committed to building our community through various donations, sponsorship and volunteer efforts. This award is one that we cherish and hold in the highest regard as it brings to the forefront so many deserving education initiatives that require the support of the private sector to be successful. We commend all applicants on their endeavours to provide invaluable opportunities for Cayman's people to capitalize on their skills and talents, and DMS looks forward to continuing to do our part to help them succeed in their mission."

For further information on the Joanna Clarke Excellence in Education Award visit [www.joannaclarkeaward.ky](http://www.joannaclarkeaward.ky).

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

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*Catch Up Literacy winners: (l to r) Ben and Pam Webster, Ms. Joanna Clarke and DMS President Don Seymour.*

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*Speech and Language Therapy Department winners: (l to r) Rachelle Buote and Sarah Hassall, Ms. Joanna Clarke.*

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