

The Palmyra Foundation commences 2011 book distribution

To target 3,200 four- and five-year-old students in 26 schools across six parishes

UNDER THE banner 'The future is bright, when you can read and write!', The Palmyra Foundation commenced its 2011 book distribution at Montego Bay Infant School, Monday, September 5.

Concluding this Friday, the foundation's team of sponsors and volunteers are scheduled to visit 26 schools in towns and rural areas across the parishes of St James, Westmoreland, Trelawny, Hanover, Portland and Kingston to distribute books and materials valued at US\$96,000. Says Ragni Trotta, board member.

"When times are hard, the weakest in our society suffer the most. In some of the rural areas, 100 per cent of the children do not have books. It is our responsibility to do what we can to help our most vulnerable get the chance they deserve to learn to read and write," says Trotta.

By providing books and other educational materials, The Palmyra Foundation aims to help eradicate illiteracy and promote a positive outlook of prosperity for the children of Jamaica. A secondary objective is to improve the children's self-esteem, introduce them to community role models and, ultimately, give hope of success to children growing up under challenging circumstances.

Continues Trotta: "The Palmyra Foundation will provide approximately 3,200 four- and five-year-old schoolchildren with their own book bags containing a pack of crayons, a pencil, a colourful 300-page BrainQuest Workbook and one or two Scholastic reading books at a value of approximately US\$30 per pack.

"For many of the children, this will be the very first books they own," she states.

TANGIBLE PROOF

At the end of this year's book distribution, more than 100 international volunteers will have helped deliver 79,000 books to 18,000 children in 80 schools across Jamaica's 14 parishes, at a value of approximately US\$500,000, since the charity's 2007 start-up.

For the first time, there is also tangible proof that the efforts of The Palmyra Foundation truly are making a difference. Through the new Palmyra Foundation Assessment, the children's skills have been measured at a selection of schools. Evidence of tremendous improvement among the children who received books from The Palmyra Foundation, in comparison to children who did not, were found at all schools that completed the assessment. Explains Trotta: "Knowing for sure that our efforts are making a difference is important to us and to everyone supporting our effort. By measuring the children's reading, writing, math and science skills, we have a quantifiable way to evaluate results."

The Palmyra Foundation is sponsored by Greylock Capital Management, Crestone Capital Advisors, Billy Craig Insurance Brokers, Rattray Patterson Rattray Solicitors, Landmark Global Associates, J. Wray & Nephew, Appleton Estate Jamaica Rum, 1876 Wines, Margaritaville, Scotchie's, Pier 1, Rainforest Seafoods, John Swaby Entertainment, Jamaica Tours Limited, Guardsman Group, Palace Amusements, RJR, Jablum Coffee, Happy Ice, WISYNCO (Wata/Ocean Spray/Coca Cola), Victoria Mutual, Keith Thorpe, Econocaribe, Caribbean Connection, Hospiten, Digicel, Guardian Life, Deloitte & Touche, Caribbean Producers Jamaica, Saba Art Gallery & Frames, Supreme Ventures, United Way/ FedEx, Frame by Frame, MoBay Chocolate, Turnkey Productions, Shoppes at Rose Hall, Tai Flora Services Limited and The Gleaner Company, in addition to a number of other private individuals.



Senator Noel Sloley and Member of Parliament Luther Buchanan (right) presenting book bags to boys at the St John's Infant School in Darliston, Westmoreland.



Bob and Ragni Trotta of The Palmyra Foundation handing over a book bag to a student of the Montego Bay Infant School during their 2011 book distribution.



Volunteers Kim Oliver (left) and Christopher Clarke share a moment with a student.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS
Winston Dear addresses students at the Somerton All-Age and Infant School in Somerton, St James.



Members from the Island Entertainment Group team, in the foreground - Group Sales Manager Diana Wilson and Director of Sales and Marketing André Dixon, handing out book bags at the Catherine Hall Primary School Infant Department. In the background is Britt Mitchell, marketing manager.



Palmyra Resort & Spa General Manager Lester Scott and Stacey Kramer take a moment with students from Falmouth Infant School after distributing books from The Palmyra Foundation.