

FLANKER DIGEST

THANKS SANDALS

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Sandals Gives Another Big Donation to Flankers

MARK CUMMINGS, Observer senior reporter
Monday, March 23, 2009

MONTEGO BAY, St James - The Sandals Foundation last week donated \$500,000 to the Flankers Peace and Justice Centre, located on the outskirts of this resort city.

The presentation was made on the behalf of the foundation to director of the centre, Marilyn Nash by chairman of Sandals Resort Gordon 'Butch' Stewart, at a function held at Sandals Cay, to launch the organisation.



Marilyn Nash (right), director of the Flankers Peace and Justice Centre, receives a cheque for \$500,000 from Sandals Chairman Gordon 'Butch' Stewart last Wednesday at the official launch of the Sandals Foundation.

The Sandals Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the Caribbean resort chain.

It was Sandals' third donation to the centre in just over five years. In January 2004, the chairman donated \$250,000 to the centre after plans for the expansion of the facility were outlined by Nash, who heads the facility which was set up under the Sandals Training And Recruitment Tier (START) programme.

In 2006, the centre received another

financial boost when Stewart donated \$1 million towards the expansion of the facility.

Nash told the Observer that the latest donation will be used to assist in the various projects being undertaken at the centre.

The Flankers community and the Sandals hotel chain have had a long-standing relationship spanning more than 28 years.

"The Flanker Community has enjoyed a very collaborative relationship with the Sandals Group, and with Sandals Montego Bay in particular. Over the years we have worked together and as such there have been positive results for both parties," Nash said, at last week's launch which was attended by a large number of business and tourism interests.

The hotel chain, she said, has been involved in many outreach projects in the community including:

- the sponsorship of several sporting events;
- the promotion of literacy, through annual Read-a-Thon;
- numerous health fairs;
- Christmas treats for the children and Senior Citizens for the past 10 years, and
- the awarding of scores of school bursaries.

She added that Sandals has also played an integral role in the peace process of the community.

"They offered the venue and refreshments for Mediation, Training of community mediators, Life Skills Training of Trainers and they were also a neutral venue in the midst of the very important peace talks amongst the warring factions and the police," she said.

According to Nash, due to Sandals' intervention in the community, more than 100 people have been trained and certified by the HEART/NTA in the areas of house-keeping, bartending, waitering, food preparation, water sports, front office and maintenance.

"Sandals has proven their commitment to community development and are the epitome of a good corporate neighbour," Nash told the appreciative audience. The resort chain employs more than 300 persons from the community.

Celebrating Ester Victoria Johnson

'Give mom the roses while she lives'

IAN CROLL, Western Mirror
 Freelance Writer
Monday March 23, 2009

Esther Victoria Jackson died at the age of 100 years and eight months. And even though she lived a long life, her daughter Pearleine Williams-Johnston misses her so much that she bursts into tears at times.



Some would say that Johnston, principal of the Flanker Early Childhood School, is naïve to be crying over a mother who has been blessed with longevity. But Johnston will tell you that her mother, whom she said is one of a kind, was very special to her as they had a very close relationship. And so, her death, though timely and expected, left a void that cannot be filled, at least, not in this lifetime.

And so, when she has to visit her passing mom's bedroom to make adjustments or simply to retrieve something, the memory of her dead mother is always rekindled, a reality she must get accustomed to.



"My mother was a single parent. She had to play the role of both father and mother. In her days she wasn't earning a lot of money but she was prudent and hard working. And she ensured that we went to school and church and the rich man's children did not look better than us," she recalled.

"With God in the vessel she was able to go the extra mile. She found the strength to go further a field for us because it was hard since she was the only parent we knew," the bereaved woman said.

Johnston who grew up in the volatile Canterbury for the first 13 years of her life with her mom said the family later moved to Hart Street then to Flankers, another volatile community.

And though Johnston was not born in Flankers all her children were born and raised there.

"The people around here are united, we live like a family. We look out for each other and we have a good relationship," Johnston revealed.

Johnston said that her mother left a legacy that will always remain with her. And of course, that legacy is not money. As she said: "That legacy is her influence where the fearing of God is concerned. She allowed us to appreciate the principles of the bible or its teaching and respect for Christian and moral values," she disclosed.

Born in the parish of Hanover, Ms Jackson later moved to live with her aunt in Savannah-la-Mar after her

mother died, but she was living with her father before. She left her father's home due to bad treatment she suffered at the hands of her father's common-law wife. She later moved to Montego Bay.

"She was a sweet old lady and I am happy that I gave her the roses while she was alive. I showed her all the love possible and I'm urging others to give their mom the roses while she lives. And there are some daughters-in-law who at times tend to stand in the way of the man and his mother. This should not happen because while a wife can be replaced a mother cannot," she said.

Flanker Peace Model

"Peace invades war-torn Flankers"

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Sheena Gayle, Gleaner Writer,
WESTERN BUREAU:

Residents of Flankers in Montego Bay, St James, are on a mission to maintain peace in the community, following a year and a half of violence that has gripped the neighbourhood, claiming many lives.

As the nation observes Peace Day today, residents of the once troubled St James community say they are now comfortable in their space. The Flankers Peace and Justice Centre, in collaboration with the Mobile Reserve (an arm of the Jamaica Constabulary Force), several months ago embarked on an intense intervention programme with a mandate to restore and maintain normality in the community. Marilyn McIntosh-Nash, executive director at the Flankers Peace and Justice Centre, told **The Gleaner** that the upsurge in violence began late 2006 and continued into 2007.

As a result, Flankers was divided into two sections where members of opposing sides exchanged gunfire on a regular basis. The community was under siege. "Businesses were closing by 4:30 p.m.; residents were moving out; persons were afraid to go to certain sections of the commu-

nity - that is how bad things were," said McIntosh-Nash. "I had to close the centre for weeks because I did not want to risk the safety of my staff," she added.

This crime wave forced the justice centre, the business community and residents to solicit assistance to quell the violent feud. Members of the Jamaica Defence Force, Jamaica Constabulary Force and the Mobile Reserve were dispatched to the community. But, it was the intense community policing that earned the support and respect of the residents.

"The Mobile Reserve came in No-



vember 2007, and they were the epitome of excellent community policing. Residents had no choice but to work with them," said McIntosh-Nash. "They came into an area that was dangerous and terrorised, but were able to garner the respect of the opposing sides."

Crime Free

According to Denver Frater, assistant commissioner of police in charge of the Area One Division, there has not been any crime and violence within the focus areas of Flankers since police and other internal and external stakeholders intervened.

"Each divisional commander is mandated to maintain an active community policing programme within his respective division, which includes having meetings (with residents). Flankers is an excellent success story as the initiative has been going well so far," explained ACP Frater.

Flanker Digest is a monthly publication with the aim of reporting on the issues and activities in the community. It is a free newsletter edited and compiled by the Youth Crime Watch of Flanker under the auspices of the Flanker Peace and Justice Centre.