



Operation Restoration Christian School

"CHANGING OUR COMMUNITY TO IMPACT THE NATION AND THE WORLD"

January 2007

Happy New Year and all the best for 2007. We look forward to this year with a great deal of excitement as we make serious plans to expand our facilities as well as to acquire property in the country for our homes for abused and neglected children. We are also looking forward to seeing our vision of "Changing our Community to impact the Nation and the World" come through and see God moving forward. We look back at a year with a lot of challenges but also to a lot of positive changes and steps forward.

Christmas

Thanks to the Union of Jamaican Alumni Association (UJAA) and Flynn Brown who hosted a reception for Miss Stanley at the Jamaican Consulate in New York, sufficient funds were realized from that event as well as a few local supporters to put on a wonderful Christmas Party. Our students were awarded prizes for outstanding achievements throughout the year and volunteers, sponsors and benefactors were awarded certificates of recognition for the part they had played in the outstanding achievements we had made. We were honoured to welcome the Belgian Ambassador to Jamaica, Herman Portocarero, as our Guest Speaker. The ambassador said "I was impressed by the work of the staff and the pupils, by the good vibes, and by the respect shown by the community." He told the audience that "Trench Town is a community known around the world. You can all be its ambassadors. You have reason to walk proud. So, respect yourselves and others, get an education and you can be anything you want."



Testimonies from students, their parents and member of staff "were moving and inspiring and gave us hope," said Geoffrey Byfield, a long-time supporter.

Operation Restoration also brought much joy to more than 300 children from Rema who faced a dismal Christmas because of the gang wars in that community in which one of past students/workers was seriously injured. We also want to thank the Belgian Embassy and others that made these events possible.



At the beginning of the year Lambert Weerd from Holland joined us for six months. After being back in Holland he remembers: "Trench Town is different, unique. Trench Town is a place of warm, loving,

sharing people and at the same time there is the war, the fighting and the struggle to survive. It was great to spend some time at this place and play my part. I received a lot while giving. God is working there. So, don't worry, He is in control!" Lambert loved taking the students on trips, playing games with them and being a mentor to them and would spend hours talking with them.

In March Lieve Aerts returned from Belgium. "After a year at Operation Restoration in 2004, I went back to Belgium, but knew that my task at ORCS wasn't finished. I needed to go back home for a while, but was more than happy to return to Trench Town earlier last year. I see how God is moving and impacting individual lives through Operation Restoration and love playing my part in it. It is not just a school where they teach teenagers to read, it is a life building programme that impacts the wider community."

Community

As part of our efforts to help provide employment for members of the community, ORCS employs persons to work in the manufacturing of our popular leather craft items. This has taken off to new height with the increased orders from Sandals as well as the Jamaican Diaspora in the States. Plans are afoot to operate this as a joint venture with another community based organizations as with the space limitations at the school we are unable to produce enough to meet the potential demand. We are excited about this venture because of the potential of becoming self-sufficient.



Strong Women of Trench Town (SWOTT), the community arm of Operation Restoration is regrouping. Donna Drummonds and Vivienne McLean represented Trench Town at Women/Parenting Conferences in New York and Slovakia, respectively. SWOTT members along with our students marched through Trench Town in



December, appealing to the community to live in peace.

Incentive Shopping



Shopping with Incentive Points, earned throughout each term for good conduct, class work, attendance, homework, attire and punctuality, continues to be a highlight of the school. Students are able to use these points to go

on trips, purchase school supplies, clothing and toys at Christmas time. The idea is to use these points as a means to motivate and reward them for doing well in school. During the Christmas shopping it was a pleasure to see students waiting patiently in line to enter the store where they shrieked with joy with their purchases not only for themselves but for their siblings and parents. Two of our older students spotted a new pair of shoes and got very excited about it. "See, what you can buy with your points!" Others were happy to be able to buy a gift for their younger brothers or sisters. Many 'new' clothes to the school's Open Day the following morning. Our store is empty now and we are looking forward to fill it up with your generous donations.

Staff

Some changes in staff were made that were considered necessary for the development of the school. With the faithful monthly contributions from Integrity Childrens' Fund, an Atlanta-based Jamaican organization, which provides more than half the funds for teachers' salaries, we were able to add more qualified teachers were added to our team, which is a blessing for the students. Our current staff is assisted with school fees for continuing education to improve their own academic standards. Some are already attending Teachers' College while others are preparing to do in the coming school year.



Volunteers

Volunteers continue to play an integral role in the development of the school. Without their help, much of our accomplishments would not have been possible as, even if we could afford it, our local folks are reluctant to come to Trench Town. As Pauline Caesar-Ford, in response to our first Newsletter puts it, "If this young lady (Lieve Aerts) could come half way around the world to help our kids, surely the ball is now in our court. This month, we will feature both Lieve Aerts and Lambert Weerd.

Newsletter

In October we launched our monthly newsletter and a lot of positive responses came. We are encouraged to continue writing. In the coming newsletters, we will feature our students, staff, and keep you updated about the community developments. We encourage you to respond and write your ideas. Some responses to the previous letter.

Natalya Edwards: ... "I showed a colleague and she was really excited about the work that you are all doing. I told her all about you and how much of an inspiration you have been to me over the years. I loved the newsletter (great job Lieve!). Blessings to you as you continue to work so diligently on behalf of our Lord and the children of Trench Town."

Christine Green: 'I currently attend Albany State University in Albany, Georgia. I was happy to receive this email as I longed for an update about Operation Restoration and Miss Lorna. While attending high school in Jamaica, Miss Lorna played an integral part in my life by encouraging me to achieve my best. If it was not for her love and support, I would not have been able to attend school some days as she would provide me with lunch money. She has done so much for me and I will forever appreciate her for that. I hope to reach a point in my life one day when I will be able to give back to others just as how Miss Lorna has given to me.'

THANK YOU

We have so many persons to thank for making all the things we achieved possible. As we go along, we will be expressing thanks to different persons and this month, we would like to thank Tearfund and Lieve Aerts' home Church for funding Lieve for yet another year to assist in teaching, counselling, administration and the many other things she does. We also want to thank the elders of her church, who contributed to the purchase of badly needed ceiling fans. 'It is so cool now, they spin so smooth, it is a nice breeze. It is easier to learn now.' The students enjoy the cooler atmosphere which is more conducive to learning. We can see the big difference this makes. Thanks.

We are working hard on updating our website and will inform you when it is completed.



God bless.

Lieve, Belgian volunteer

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