

Families Get Titles to Homes



ANOTHER 30 Jamaican families now have security of tenure after being presented with certificates of title to their own homes by Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness.

The new homeowners, who hail from Greater Portmore, received their documents during a ceremony at the Greater Portmore Open Bible Church in St. Catherine on December 18.

Prime Minister Holness told the beneficiaries that their titles empower them to enhance their social and financial standing.

"You now have ownership in law. You can pass it on your family, to your children. You can take loans on it if you so desire for the further advancement of your family or you could just rest in peace knowing that the hard work and sacrifice is now in your hands," he said.

Mr. Holness noted that it was as a result of restructuring



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (8th left) with new landowners in Greater Portmore at a ceremony for the presentation of certificates of title at the Greater Portmore Open Bible Church in St. Catherine on December 18.

operations within the National Housing Trust (NHT) and the Housing Agency of Jamaica (HAJ), including the turnover of the HAJ's mortgage portfolio to the NHT, which facilitated the release of the recipients' titles.

In the meantime, the Prime Minister said that come next

year, the Government will "rapidly increase the number of housing solutions coming to market".

"What we will do in Bernard Lodge...and in other areas of the country, will rapidly expand housing, and then we have to now reclaim the communities in Kingston

to make them attractive again for people to live in," he said.

For his part, Member of Parliament for South St. Catherine, Fitz Jackson, praised the new home owners on earning their titles, having paid their mortgages over the years.

PM Opens Upgraded Kingston Air Traffic Control Centre

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, on December 18, officially reopened the multimillion-dollar upgraded Kingston Air Traffic Control Centre (KATCC), located at the Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority (JCAA) headquarters in St. Andrew.

The upgrading project, which is part of the JCAA's ongoing modernisation programme, included installation of a new state-of-the-art voice communication control system; cutting-edge, system-wide air traffic management automation surveillance system; and a new global positioning system (GPS).

The centre is also equipped with a master clock and receiver to ensure and maintain precision and accuracy in the reporting of time, and an advanced air traffic control simulator to

enhance the training of air traffic controllers.

The Prime Minister said that the investment in the upgrading of the KATCC is in keeping with the Government's focus on developing the island's air transport sector.

He noted that the centre, which has been efficiently operated by the JCAA over several decades, is the nucleus of Jamaica's air traffic management, network and operations.

"As a result of our efficient, seamless and safe operations, passengers, businesses and other stakeholders confidently rely on Jamaica's navigation services for its contribution to a safe global air traffic management system, and safe and efficient passage through Jamaica's strategic and highly traversed airspace," he noted.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (2nd right) cuts the ribbon to officially reopen the upgraded Kingston Air Traffic Control Centre (KATCC), at the Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority (JCAA) headquarters in St. Andrew on December 18. He is assisted by Minister of Transport and Mining, Hon. Robert Montague (2nd left). Looking on (from left) are Vice President of Sales for French company, Thales, Frédérique Miller; and Director General, JCAA, Nari Williams-Singh.

Deed Signed to Benefit Coral Gardens Victims

FIFTY SIX years after the Coral Gardens incident in St. James, where the police and soldiers detained Rastafarians, the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport has signed a Deed that will establish a Trust Fund for the benefit of victims.

The Deed was signed at the Ministry's offices located on Trafalgar Road, in Kingston, on December 19.

In April 2017, Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness apologised for what took place, on behalf of the Government.

Included in the Prime Minister's apology was the commitment to establish a Trust Fund of no less than \$10 million for victims of the Coral Gardens incident.



Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange (second right), hands over a copy of the Deed for the Coral Gardens Trust Fund to members of the Rastafarian Coral Gardens Benevolent Society and victims of the Coral Gardens incident, on December 19 at the Ministry in Kingston. Sharing the moment are Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Denzil Thorpe (back row, 2nd right), and Cultural Liaison in the Ministry, Barbara Blake Hannah (right).

Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange, said

signing the Deed is the Government's way of making right to a wrong.

"In April 2018, in keeping with the commitment given by Prime Minister Holness and in keeping with the recommendation of the Public Defender, the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, transferred cumulatively, a sum of \$12,718,000 to the Administrator General for the purpose of setting up the Trust Fund. So today, we formalise the process in the presence of our Rastafari brethren and sisters, as part of our programme of reconciliation," the Minister told the audience.

Treasurer, Rastafarian Coral Gardens Benevolent Society, Lewis Brown, said the group is happy with the decision of the Government.

Retirees and Long Serving Members of JIS Celebrated

RETIREES OF the Jamaica Information Service (JIS), Office Attendant, Lillieth Richards and Part-time Office Attendant, Ms. Dolet McPherson, were treated royally by the agency at its Christmas Soiree, held at the Terra Nova Hotel, in Kingston, on December 7.

Ms. Richards, affectionately called "Miss Lil", and Ms. McPherson were each presented with a watch and a plaque at the posh event. Miss Lil, who worked at the JIS for 25 years, told **JIS News** that she felt really special to be honoured and she was appreciative of the Agency's kind gesture.

"I was very surprised and mi feel real good," she said. According to Ms. Richards, her time at the JIS was one of the best periods in her life and the treatment she received made the company stand out from all the other places she had worked.

Like Miss Lil, Ms. McPherson was proud of her award which, she said, had "warmed her heart immensely".

"I felt very good about it and I appreciate it very much that they consider me and remember about me," said Ms. McPherson, who worked at the Agency for 14 years.

"The best thing about my job was being able to make the place clean and



Chief Executive Officer of the Jamaica Information Service (JIS), Donna-Marie Rowe (left), presents a plaque to retiree, Dolet McPherson, who gave 14 years of dedicated service to the Agency.



Principal Director, Public Sector Modernisation Programme, Office of the Cabinet, Wayne Robertson, presents Jamaica Information Service (JIS) Public Relations Officer, Judith Hunter, with a plaque for 26 years of service to the agency.

presentable for the workers, because they can't really work in a dirty place," she added.

Meanwhile, public relations officer, Judith Hunter, and telephone operator, Georgene Smith, both spoke glowingly about their tenure at the JIS, after they were recognised for 26 years of dedicated service.

"I was shocked...honestly, I never expected it, but it feels good to be recognised

by your peers," Hunter says after collecting her plaque.

"I felt excited and surprised to the point where my knees were so weak... I almost fell to the ground. It brought tears to my eyes," Smith recalls.

Hunter says she looks forward to continuing her work at the JIS in the years to come and hopes to be remembered as a model employee, who inspires others

to strive for the highest level of professionalism.

For Smith, who is described by her team members as caring, trustworthy, loyal and candid, she believes that she has served the JIS well and wants to leave a mark that will be remembered long after she is retired.

The award, which came as a surprise, will no doubt be remembered as one of their most cherished moments on the job.

Prime Minister Holness Fetes 2,000 Children at Christmas Treat



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness elicits squeals of laughter from twins, Mackela and Rackela Elvy, after presenting them with Christmas gifts. They were feted during the Prime Minister's annual treat for children, which was held on the grounds of the Office of the Prime Minister on December 15.