

PM Hands Over 52 Housing Solutions in Westmoreland

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, on December 4, handed over 52 housing solutions in Darliston Grove and Shrewsbury, in Westmoreland.

Mr. Holness presented keys to families for 29 detached units in Darliston Grove and 23 detached units in Shrewsbury.

These beneficiaries were the first under the National Housing Trust's (NHT) Inter-generational Mortgage Programme.

Under this initiative, a younger sibling or child agrees to carry the mortgage obligation, subject to affordability, when the older mortgagor retires or dies. The beneficiary's loan will be scheduled to retirement over a 60-year period, and will include the portion of the costs to be covered during the period from the date of the loan to retirement.

In his address at the ceremony, Mr. Holness said the



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (centre) is surrounded by new homeowners of the Darliston Grove and Shrewsbury communities in Westmoreland, at the National Housing Trust (NHT) handover ceremony on December 4.

Government is committed to ensuring that every Jamaican has a fair chance of owning his or her own home, and residing in a secure environment.

He congratulated the new homeowners, and lauded the NHT on delivering the new houses. Mr. Holness said the agency has been fol-

lowing the Government's mandate to build housing solutions for the hard working men and women of Jamaica.

"It was in early 2017 that I broke ground at Darliston and Shrewsbury, and I told you that I would be delivering six housing developments totaling 1,493 housing solutions

in the parish of Westmorland under the NHT's four-year housing programme," the Prime Minister said.

"So, I have to thank the board of the NHT for doing such a wonderful job in ensuring that these projects come to fruition in short order," he added.

Three More Hospitals Certified as Baby-Friendly

THREE MORE hospitals in the public health system have been officially certified by the Ministry of Health and Wellness as 'Baby-Friendly', under the Ministry's National Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI).

These are Lionel Town Hospital in Clarendon, Port Antonio Hospital, Portland and Port Maria Hospital, St. Mary. There are now five baby-friendly public health facilities.

The initiative aims to give every baby the best start in life by creating a healthcare environment that supports breastfeeding. It provides a framework that enables mothers to acquire the skills they need to breastfeed exclusively for the first six months, followed by complementary foods and continued breastfeeding for two years and beyond.

In his address at the National BFHI certification ceremony and launch of the National Infant and Young Child Feeding Network on December 3, at the Courtleigh Auditorium in New Kingston, Health and Wellness Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, commended the nurses and staff of the certified institutions for their tireless work in meeting the standards of certification set out by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The WHO guidelines provide a 10-step outlay to successful breastfeeding. Each step provides a list of criteria that have to be met by the facility.

Dr. Tufton said 14 other hospitals are currently working to join the other five facilities as baby-friendly certified by the Ministry of Health and Wellness.



Health and Wellness Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (left), holds seven-month-old Sherina Grant, at the National Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) certification ceremony and launch of the National Infant and Young Child Feeding Network, on December 3, at the Courtleigh Auditorium in New Kingston. Enjoying the moment are (from 2nd left) Country Representative, United Nations Children's Fund, Mariko Kagoshima; Sherina's mother, Patrina Rowe, and Food and Nutrition Advisor, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Audrey Morris.

Proposal for New Public Sector Compensation Structure to be Submitted to Cabinet

A PROPOSAL for a new public sector compensation structure is expected to be brought to Cabinet for consideration by December 2020.

This has been disclosed by Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke, who said the proposal is to be arrived at following a review of the structure as part of the ongoing transformation of the public sector.

The review, which is to be undertaken at a cost of US\$1.58 million over an 18-month period beginning January 2020, is seeking to streamline public sector compensation and make it more transparent.

International consulting firm, Ernst and Young Jamaica Limited has been contracted to carry out the review, in



Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke (2nd left); and Country Managing Partner, Ernst and Young Jamaica Limited, Kayann Sudlow (3rd left), display two contracts, totaling US\$7 million, which they signed on December 4, at the National Heroes Circle offices of the Finance Ministry. Also present (from left) are: Financial Secretary, Darlene Morrison; Executive Director, Ernst and Young, Barry Eligon; and President, Jamaica Civil Service Association, O'Neil Grant.

collaboration with the Finance and the Public Service Ministry.

Dr. Clarke, along with representatives from Ernst and Young, signed the con-

tract on December 4, during a ceremony at his National Heroes Circle offices in Kingston.

The Minister pointed out that the review will involve

evaluating public-sector compensation as a whole, and benchmarking compensation against what happens elsewhere in Jamaica.

"We will be looking towards establishing a single job evaluation system, where jobs can be evaluated according to a single criterion, rather than using multiple job evaluation criteria, which we have been using over the past several decades," Dr. Clarke said.

The Minister and Ernst and Young also signed a contract valued at US\$5.45 million to implement shared corporate services for the public sector.

Grange Announces Plans to Establish Insurance Fund for Artistes and Musicians

MINISTER OF Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange, has announced plans by the Ministry to establish an insurance fund for performing artistes and musicians.

Reggae Month 2020 will be celebrated next February under the theme 'Come Ketch de Riddim'

Speaking at the media launch for Reggae Month 2020 at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel in New Kingston on December 3, the Minister said it is being proposed that provisions under the facility, being targeted for introduction in 2020, cover life, health, maternity and pension.

"We have the athletes' insurance fund and it has worked well for our athletes. So, we want to establish a similar fund [for performing artistes/entertainers and musicians]," Ms. Grange said.

The Minister advised that the initiative will be undertaken in partnership with several key stakeholders.

Among them are the Jamaica Federation of Musicians (JFM), Jamaica Reggae Industry Association



Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett (left), demonstrates his dancing skills at the invitation of Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange, during the media launch of activities to mark Reggae Month 2020, at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel in New Kingston on December 3.

(JaRIA), and Jamaica Association of Vintage Artistes and Affiliates (JAVAA).

Ms. Grange further indicated that she is in discussion with Tourism Minister, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, in relation to exploring the possibility of benefits under the proposed Tourism Workers Pension Scheme also accruing to entertainers and musicians.

Reggae Month 2020 will be celebrated next February under the theme 'Come Ketch de Riddim'.

It will feature 29 days of live reggae music activities on the island and in the Jamaican diaspora.

Fire Victims Get Birth Certificates



Marketing and Planning Manager, Registrar General's Department (RGD), Nicole White (right), presents Donovan Brown (wheelchair), fire victim of the Good Shepherd Home, with his birth certificate, at a ceremony held at the Lord's Place Children's Home, downtown Kingston, on December 5. Sharing the moment (from left) are Ransford Duhaney, fire victim of the Good Shepherd Home; Public Relations and Marketing Manager, National Identification System (NIDS) Project, Richard Delapenha; and Director, Good Shepherd Home, Father Peram Prem.

The Cannabis Licensing Authority Issues 50th Licence

THE CANNABIS Licensing Authority (CLA) has issued its 50th licence for operations in the medical cannabis industry.

The Montego Bay based Outlier Biopharma Limited was presented with the permit to operate a retail herbal house (without facility for consumption) during a ceremony on December 4, at the CLA's New Kingston offices.

Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Audley Shaw, commended the CLA on the milestone, and hailed Outlier Biopharma for joining the growing local cannabis sector.

"The industry is moving fast. Even as we celebrate



Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Audley Shaw (centre), hands over the Cannabis Licensing Authority's (CLA) 50th licence for operations in the local medical cannabis industry to Director of Outlier Biopharma Limited, Brian Thelwell (right), at the CLA's New Kingston offices on December 4. Looking on is Chief Executive Officer, CLA, Lincoln Allen.

this 50th licence, it's not a licence for us to slow down;

it's actually an opportunity for us to speed up. That we

must do, because the industry is moving fast globally," he said.

Mr. Shaw noted he will be seeking to fast-track the regulations for the export of cannabis.

"I'm going to be making a call to the Chief Parliamentary Counsel... so that we can begin to promulgate our exports," he said.

CLA is an agency of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries that was established in 2015 under the Dangerous Drug [Amendment] Act (DDA) with a specific role to establish and regulate Jamaica's legal cannabis and hemp industry.