



# SOUTHERN REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

3 BRUMALIA ROAD, MANDEVILLE, MANCHESTER, JAMAICA WI  
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## PRESS RELEASE

July 6, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### Fathers Call for More Opportunities to be Mentored and Equipped With Parenting Skills

Some 30 fathers are calling for additional support for fathers which they believe will help the nation's men to be better fathers and men.

The call was made by the fathers who attended the inaugural Fathers Forum hosted by the St. Elizabeth Health Services on June 30 which recognized them for playing an invaluable role in their children's lives, equipped them with parenting skills and provided opportunities for mentorship. A Support Group will also be established for the participating fathers to support each other with varying challenges.

Khaneel Farquharson, a father of two said he thoroughly enjoyed the forum and noted that: "It was an excellent forum and I wish we could have these more often to impact more fathers. Today's forum has challenged me to be more financially and mentally focused to ensure that the wellbeing and education of my children comes first." He is appealing to men to live up to their responsibilities as fathers which is also a charge from the bible.

For organizer of the forum, Paul Smith who is the Parish Medical Social Worker at the St. Elizabeth Health Services, the forum was a success. "I am impressed by the reaction of the fathers. It's overwhelming as I have received several calls and seen many posts on social media telling the impact of the forum. We are exploring the option of having a second part for the fathers" he added.

Regional Technical Director for the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA), Dr. Michael Coombs who was the guest presenter told the fathers that research has shown that: "Children who grow up without a father are significantly more likely to be involved in crime and violence; to be incarcerated or placed in juvenile centers; to run away from home and

(more)

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become victims or perpetrators of crime; to be sexually abused and experience teen pregnancy; more likely to abuse drugs; to be mentally ill; more likely to have violent behavior and perform poorly in school among other things."

Dr. Coombs noted that for too long the walls of fatherhood around families have been broken down exposing children to abuse, gangs, crime and violence, failure in school, mental illness, drugs and teen pregnancy. He appealed to the fathers to be the agent of change in rebuilding the walls of fatherhood around families.

(more)



**Some of the fathers along with their sons who participated in the inaugural Father's Forum on June 30.**

(more)

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**Several fathers clap in agreement to a point being made.**

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