SOUTHERN REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

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PRESS RELEASE

March 13, 2018
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Initiative Targeting Male-Related Issues Aims to Restore Manhood and the Family

In the context of a growing universal recognition that male-related issues are at the root of the majority of social and public health challenges affecting Jamaica, stakeholders from education, health, the church and civil society, with the support of corporate Jamaica, assembled at the Kendal Camp and Conference Centre in Manchester on Friday March 9, for the third annual Man Up Jamaica (MANUJAM) retreat.

MANUJAM was conceptualized in 2015 and was developed from evidence showing that male related issues are linked to crime and violence including domestic and gender-based violence, substance abuse, sexual promiscuity and other issues.

The retreat facilitated over two hundred participants comprising mainly male students from educational institutions in central Jamaica and Kingston between the ages of 12 and 25, along with teachers, administrators and male facilitators/mentors and attendees, who were engaged in stimulating discussions on male/female relationships, marriage, fathering and family life.

Conceptualizer of MANUJAM and founder of the National Association for the Family (NAF), Dr. Michael Coombs said "the need to change the mindset of the next generation of males in their approach to self development, marriage, fathering and family life was critical to break destructive intergenerational cycles fueling serious social and public health challenges facing Jamaica, not the least of which is crime and violence. Powerful cultural influences and the absence of positive role models made this an even more difficult but urgent task."

The former Regional Technical Director and Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health, lauded the Southern Regional Health Authority for its vision in pioneering the initiative in partnership with the NAF and other stakeholders, as well as corporate partners, the Jamaica Broilers Group of Companies and the Victoria Mutual Building Society.

(more)

Chairman: Wayne Chen; **Vice Chairman**; Michael Stern **Board Members**: Marcus Greenwood, Krishan James, Stafford Haughton, Lorraine Green Mason, Lennox Powell, Dr Lloyd Reynolds, Winston Maragh, Dr St Aubyn Bartlett, Dr Lundie Richards, **Directors: Regional Director and Secretary:** Michael Bent; **Regional Technical Director:** Dr Michael Coombs; **CEO Mandeville Regional Hospital:** Alwyn Miller; **SMO, Mandeville Regional Hospital:** Dr Everton McIntosh

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Several students who expressed their appreciation to organizers pointed out that the time spent at the retreat was insufficient to express themselves fully on the topics which were explored, adding that they have had very little opportunity to have in-depth discussions on these topics.

In response to a strong call for follow up in schools, colleges, communities and the church, Dr. Coombs explained that a curriculum based on MANUJAM Core Values is being developed and a 'train the trainers' approach will be taken in rolling out the initiative. He added that serious consideration is being given to a MANUJAM retreat in St. James later in 2018, in response to a strong call from stakeholders in western Jamaica.

Picture 1

Some of the participants and mentors from the 2018 retreat of the Man-Up Jamaica initiative.

(more)

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Picture 2

Dr. Michael Coombs engages a group of young men.

-30-

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