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Wards at Rio Cobre Juvenile Correctional Centre benefit from Summer Programme

Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security, Senator the Hon. Parnell Charles Jr. has lauded the successful partnership of Youth for Arts & Recreational Development (YARD) Empire, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Organisation of American States (OAS) and the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) at the first staging of a drama presentation at the Rio Cobre Juvenile Correctional Centre.

The drama presentation represents the culmination of the 8 week summer initiative involving YARD Empire's use of the performing arts at the juvenile institution.

According to Iris 'Terry' Salmon, one of Jamaica's prominent actresses and President of YARD Empire, the boys not only expressed themselves through the performing arts, they were exposed to different aspects of what is needed to make a drama production successful.

The initiative reached 84 percent of the wards at the institution, who wrote their own stories, sang and participated in rehearsal sessions for the

drama presentation that was performed for Minister Charles, members of the DCS and OAS staff.

Minister Charles who has portfolio responsibility for the DCS said, ***“The talent displayed by Correctional Officers and wards is a demonstration of the success of our collaborative approach to rehabilitation”***.

Susan Ewerse, Director of the New Path Project also expressed satisfaction with the partnership and commended YARD Empire’s summer drama programme.

She explained that, ***“it engages the young people in a different way, it makes them think and it impacts on their lives when they are telling their stories.”*** She continued, ***“What we saw at the drama presentation was them doing their writing, singing, and telling their story in their own way.”***

With the newly minted stage donated by YARD Empire, Superintendent Dryden, his team and wards from the Rio Cobre Juvenile Correctional Centre are ready for the upcoming ‘We Transform Expo and Competition’, which is to take place on Friday, September 27.

The summer initiative implemented by YARD Empire is in keeping with the Ministry of National Security’s effort toward Rehabilitation and Redemption, the fifth pillar of the national crime reduction strategy.



Caption: (from left) YARD Empire Director, Mr. Keith Byfield; OAS Education and Curriculum Advisor, Mrs. Kimberley Seymour-Brown; Founder & President of YARD Empire, Ms. Iris 'Terri' Salmon and Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security, Senator the Hon. Parnel Charles Jr., pose for a picture at the recent drama presentation at the Rio Cobre Juvenile Correctional Centre.