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HOPE Partners With JCF to Provide Opportunities for Unattached Youth

Participants in the Housing, Opportunity, Production and Employment (HOPE) Programme will be interning with the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) to gain life skills, proper work ethic and discipline.

National Coordinator of the Programme, Col. Martin Rickman, said that discussions have been held with Police Commissioner, Major General Antony Anderson, and his management team, to have this undertaking facilitated in all police divisions.

“Each division may have 14 to 20 (police) stations and the idea is to feed the young people into those stations,” he indicated.

He said he is also looking to **“build this out with our other essential services such as the Jamaica Fire Brigade and the Department of Correctional Services.”**

Col. Rickman was speaking to JIS News at the launch of the HOPE Programme Police Partnership for the St. Andrew North Division at the Constant Spring Police Station in St. Andrew on Monday (August 13).

The partnership will enable unattached youth from across the division to be meaningfully engaged as a means of reducing gang and criminal involvement.

The first cohort of 16 interns will be placed at police stations for one year, where they will be engaged in the digitisation of records and as customer service representatives.

Col. Rickman urged the police personnel and civilian staff at the stations where the young people will serve **“to get involved with the youngsters (and) guide them towards bigger and brighter things.”**

“We hope that they will become employable not only because of their attitude but also because of their skills and work ethic and that they will be much better off where they will be in life later on,” he said.

To the interns, Col. Rickman described the opportunity before them as a **“golden ticket”**, which they must utilise well by **“listening to the guidance that is going to be provided, being diligent in the duties that will be assigned, being punctual and being reliable.”**

“All the stakeholders want you to do well. You must show that you are grateful for what you are being given. This will take you to your successful future, whatever that may be,” he added.

Meanwhile, Head of the St. Andrew North Police, Superintendent Glenford Miller, said that the partnership represents a **“ray of hope”** for the division and will be used to reach young people and steer them away from criminal activity.

“We will try as best as possible to recruit the interns at the end of the programme for them to become police officers...this is a stepping stone and something for you to build on,” he said.

Mr. Miller urged the interns to pass on the message of HOPE and encourage their peers to get involved in the programme.

Launched by Prime Minister, the Most. Hon. Andrew Holness in May 2017, the HOPE Programme provides educational and job opportunities for young people.

The initiative is targeted at persons aged 18 to 24, who are not employed or enrolled in a school or programme of training.

The police are seeking to use the initiative, in conjunction with its already established programmes such as ‘Pon di Corna’ and the Proactive Violence Interruption Strategy (PVIS), to increase engagement with the youth.