

NSSC SEEKS TO "SAVE YU' LIFE"

Mandeville Park came alive on Thursday, February 19, 2009 as the National Secondary Students' Council (NSSC) launched its Save Yu' Life Campaign in Manchester.

In giving an overview of the Campaign, Jermaine Hamm, students' council president at Manchester High, outlined that the Campaign is "an effort to directly reduce incidences of inappropriate sexual activity through peer intervention." Hamm indicated "young people are bombarded with many negative influences and the empowered students among us need to work diligently towards influencing behaviour change amongst our peers for the positive."

Vice President of the NSSC, Lisa-Marie Stultz, indicated that the Save Yu' Life Campaign involves targeting young people at major bus terminals, with an aim towards providing information and influencing behaviour modification among students through peer support.

The Launch was well supported by a bevy of Government Ministries, Agencies and organisations, including the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Information, Culture, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Health, Children's First, Red Cross and the Institute of Arts and Culture.

In her address, Roberta Brown-Ellis, Director of Youth Policy within the National Centre for Youth Development, reiterated the commitment of the NCYD to continue to promote the empowerment and participation of young people in matters affecting their interests. Mrs. Ellis lauded the work of the NSSC and encouraged them to continue to represent the interests of Jamaican students.

"An so!", echoed across the speakers, as D'Angel entered the Park. She delivered a stirring motivational speech, emphasising the objectives of the Save Yu' Life Campaign and encouraging the young people to abstain from sex. In a now familiar role, D'Angel reasoned with the students, advising of the harmful effects of early sexual activity.

With the official launch completed, approximately thirty (30) students' councillors took to the streets of Mandeville as they sought to engage the young (and the young at heart), in discussion on sexual and reproductive health. Peer counselling was provided to over three hundred students, as the students' councillors stopped in taxi stands, shopping centres, supermarkets and shops - everywhere that students were present.

The Bashy Bus Kru was on hand providing counselling and HIV/AIDS testing for persons over seventeen years old. Over 100 persons were tested on the day.

Kevon Campbell, Youth Empowerment Officer at the NCYD was pleased with the execution of the activity. He noted, "The NSSC should be commended for this worthwhile initiative. They have consistently indicated the will to positively impact on youth development through actively promoting the student voice on critical issues affecting youth."

NSSC Public Relations Officer, Robino Ricketts, indicated that the Save Yu' Life Campaign will now move to other Parishes, providing peer education and support to students, and raising awareness among youth on healthy lifestyle issues.

The Launch of the Save Yu' Life Campaign was hosted as part of activities scheduled for Students' Council Week, under the theme "Responsible students empowered for change."