

**NATIONAL SECONDARY STUDENTS' COUNCIL**  
**STUDENTS' COUNCIL WEEK**  
**FEBRUARY 15-21, 2009**

The NSSC commemorated Students' Council Week from February 15-21, 2009 under the theme: "Responsible Students' Empowered for Change".

The following activities were hosted in commemoration of the Week:

- Service Of Thanksgiving - February 15, 2009
- Local Council Day - February 16, 2009
- Students' Council Awareness Day - February 17, 2009
- Students' Council Exchange Day - February 18, 2009
- Launch - Save Yu' Life Campaign - February 19, 2009
- NSSC Students Conference - February 20, 2009
- NSSC Labour Day - February 21, 2009

At least eighty secondary schools from across the island participated in Students' Council Week activities.

OFFICIAL LAUNCH

The official launch of Students' Council Week was hosted on February 11, 2009 at Campion College. Approximately one hundred and fifty (150) students were in attendance. Below is an excerpt from the Press Release on the Students' Council Week Launch.

***Responsible Students Empowered for Change Launched!***

**Kingston, Jamaica:-** "Responsible students empowered for change" is the theme driving this year's National Secondary Students' Council (NSSC) week. This was officially

announced last Wednesday when the NSSC hosted their official launch of the week of activities which spans from February 15-February 21, 2009.



The launch kicked off with a 'high beat', entertaining performance by the St. Catherine High School drummers to the delight of the over 100 student councillors and staff representatives present. The recently elected President of the NSSC, Chantal Cogle extended her welcome to the audience with a message which spoke to the plague of crime and violence in Jamaica, which has made its way in so many class rooms throughout the country. She pontificated, "We do have the power to put an end to crime and violence in schools!" She added that the change that is needed to address crime and violence

starts individually and that the students of Jamaica should take responsibility for their actions.

Immediate Past President, Kemesha Kelly spoke in a similar fashion as she challenged councillors to lead the change that Jamaica needs. "The change we need in Jamaica cannot come from adults alone," Kelly pointed out making reference to the youth's influence in Barack Obama's victory in the United States.



The plans for the week were then revealed by General Secretary, Shaneil Stewart.

The launch concluded with Robino Ricketts, National Public Relations Officer presenting an overview of the NSSC's Save Yu' Life Campaign, the goal of which is to promote a culture of healthy living/ wellness among secondary school students through peer intervention. Shantae Riley then graced the stage with a dub poem which focused on encouraging changes in sexual attitudes in youth. This made way for Paul McFarlane's presentation on the National Mentorship Programme that will be coming on stream in the near future. This programme will be a collaborative effort between the NSSC and the Jamaica Union of Tertiary Schools (JUTS). The programme will include a Big Brother Big Sister and Tutoring Programme.

## NSSC SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING



The Service of Thanksgiving was hosted on Sunday, February 15, 2009 at the Fellowship

Tabernacle, 2a Fairview Avenue, Kingston 20. The Service began promptly at 8:55. A total of one hundred and fifty-seven (157) students' councillors from the following schools were in attendance:

- Ardenne High
- Browns Town High
- Calabar High
- Charlemont High
- Edith Dalton James High
- Holy Childhood High
- Immaculate Conception High
- Jamaica College
- Kingston College
- Kingston Technical High
- Meadowbrook High
- Merl Grove High
- Mt. Alvernia High
- Oberlin High
- Ocho Rios High
- Pembroke Hall High
- Spanish Town High
- St. Catherine High
- St. Elizabeth Technical High
- St. Georges College
- The Queens School
- Tivoli Gardens High

The Service commenced with Praise and Worship led by the team from Fellowship Tabernacle. The senior Pastor, Reverend Merrick 'Al' Miller, then welcomed all present and offered a Prayer for the Nation.

Immediately following Rev. Miller, Kayann Walker, NSSC Secretary/PRO (Region One), delivered a scripture reading.

The Merl Grove Choir then delivered a rendition of "He Reigns", after which, National President Chantal Cogle brought greetings.

An instrumental selection from the Pembroke Hall High School Band then ensued, immediately following which Mrs. Roberta Brown-Ellis,

Director of Youth Policy and Programme Development at the NCYD, delivered greetings on behalf of the organisation.

The dance group from Fellowship Tabernacle then delivered an item, after which the sermon was delivered by Pastor Everton Jones, a guest Pastor from Montego Bay. The sermon centred on the theme for Students' Council Week – Responsible Students Empowered from Change, encouraging young people to stay clear of negative influences.

The Service was also attended by:

- Senator Warren Newby, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Information, culture, Youth and Sports
- Mr. Winston Forrest, representing Mr. Jasper Lawrence, Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education
- Ms. Nadine Molloy, President of the Association of Principals and Vice Principals Mr. Doran Dixon, President of the Jamaica Teacher's Association



## LOCAL COUNCIL DAY

February 16<sup>th</sup> was designated as 'Local Council Day'. Students' Councils were expected to host devotions and other fora that promote the work of the council. Additionally, Students' Council Presidents in each school were expected to read messages on behalf of the Minister of Education and the Minister of Information, Culture, Youth and Sports, in recognition of Students' Council Week.

Approximately 55% of all schools have reported hosting activities on this date. Below are the messages from both Ministers:

**Message from the Honourable Andrew Holness, MP  
Minister of Education  
For Students' Council Week 2009**

**'Responsible Students Empowered for Change'**

Knowledge is power. As each of you continue to seek and acquire knowledge I remind you that power, without a shared sense of responsibility and moral purpose is empty, and can become a destructive force. As we mark Students' Council Week under the theme "responsible students empowered for change," I challenge each of you to consider how you will use the knowledge you have acquired, the power you have, to effect meaningful change in your own lives, and the lives of your family, community and country.

Our world is faced with serious challenges. The global financial crisis has triggered a slowdown in world economic growth, including recession in large industrialized countries with implications for smaller economies, including Jamaica. As a society, we continue to grapple with the scourge of crime and violence and other symptoms of social decay. Our education system too is challenged, by increasing intolerance, indiscipline, and in some cases,

violence, in our schools, underperformance of our students, and illiteracy - to name a few pressing issues. However, I remind each of you that great challenges present great opportunities. Difficult times create great leaders and wiser human beings, and history abounds with examples of ordinary individuals who used their knowledge and power to bring about change at pivotal moments. The change that our Nation needs will only come through unity of purpose and each of you is a critical element of the change we seek. Each of you has the power and the ability to be part of the change. See yourselves as important, influential social agents and make your school environment a model for what we would all wish to see in the wider society. I encourage each of you to participate fully in this week's activities, and use this opportunity to act upon your social responsibility, to adopt and practice healthy lifestyles and to respect yourselves.

Today, you face a choice. I encourage each of you to make the right choice – right now. Take ownership of your future, raise your expectations, hold fast to good values, choose excellence and play your own role in moving our country forward. Now is the time to consider your moral purpose as citizens and future leaders of this Nation.

This Students' Council Week, I challenge each of you to become "responsible students, empowered for change" in your own life, in your school, in your community and in your country.

**MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE OLIVIA “BABSY”  
GRANGE, MINISTER OF INFORMATION, CULTURE, YOUTH  
AND SPORTS TO BE READ BY THE STUDENTS’ COUNCIL  
PRESIDENT IN EACH SCHOOL IN OBSERVANCE OF  
STUDENTS’ COUNCIL WEEK**

In today’s world, access to information is a critical part of the empowerment process and unlike ten or twenty years ago, today’s youth find themselves bombarded with information because of the rapid developments in technology and a proliferation of media sources.

Through increased technology and a proliferation of media sources, our youth are constantly bombarded with information. The appropriate use of this information, the ability to sift through and identify what is useful, wholesome and empowering, forms part of the challenge of adolescence in our society today.

A responsible youth is one who has developed the ability to cipher all information, to deduce fact from fiction, and who will use this information not only for the advancement of self, but also as our National Pledge behoves us, “for the advancement of the whole Human Race.”

This ties into the human rights approach to youth development which guarantees our youth the right to express views freely on all matters affecting them, and to have those views given due weight taking age and maturity into consideration.

As our country grapples with the monsters of crime and economic turmoil, I challenge you to be more prudent in the choices you make. Many of the problems we face as a people stem from lifestyle choices that place us at a disadvantage, whether it concerns our health, our education or our use of finance.

As a country, we spend more money on accidents and emergencies in our health system than we spend on preventative medicine. Unfortunately the majority of the victims are youth who engage in reckless and irresponsible driving habits or are the victims of youth on youth crime.

Despite the efforts of many parents, sacrifices by our teachers and the efforts of government, far too many of our youth continue to emerge from school without passing any subjects or learning a marketable skill, despite sharing the same facilities with others who through determination use those same resources to excel.

We do not exercise enough the habit of saving and we spend more on consumable goods than on goods that could be more useful to us. To weather these storms we have to change, we have to be guided by facts and pragmatism, and we must use the information available to us to make wise choices.

As Minister I consider the theme for this year's celebration of the NSSC week, **“Responsible Students Empowered for Change”**, as being most appropriate. I encourage you all to make the best choices for your future. Strive to excel in all your endeavours, and to make meaningful sacrifices for your future. You are indeed the Hope of Jamaica, and what you do today will determine the country you will inherit. I commend your student leaders and wish for you a most successful week of activities.

Olivia Grange, M.P.

**MINISTER OF INFORMATION, CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORTS**



## STUDENTS' COUNCIL AWARENESS DAY

In promoting a greater awareness of the National Secondary Students' Council, and the responsibilities of students' councillors, the NSSC sought to engage the media. The following was printed in the Jamaica Observer:

### **Pres Cogle speaks of NSSC week**

Shawna-Kay Williams Observer TEENage writer Clarendon College

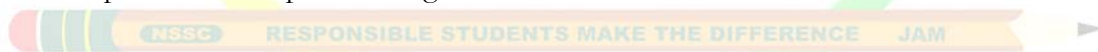
Tuesday, February 17, 2009

"Responsible students empowered for change", is the leading theme for this year's National Secondary Student Council Week, slated for February 15-21, 2009.

The National Secondary Student Council (NSSC) is a youth organisation, operated under the auspices of the National Centre for Youth Development (NCYD), which seeks to anchor youth participation and activism in combating the pressing social issues that affect them daily.

In light of these social phenomena, the NSSC week will be focusing on issues of violence in school, inappropriate sexual activity amongst students, drug (specifically marijuana) use among students and lack of awareness among the general student body as to the role and functions of a students' council.

**TEENage** recently interviewed the current president of the national council, Chantal Cogle, from the Ochio Rios High School in St Ann, to find out what has been happening within the Council and the series of activities that will be expected to take place during the course of this week.



**TEENage:** What have you been doing since your recent election as national president for NSSC?

**Chantal Cogle (CC):** Well, I have been visiting with the secondary schools all over Jamaica and attending regional student council meetings to keep abreast of all the happenings throughout the student council populace. I know how important it is to interact with my colleagues and to get their feedback on issues affecting them, so that the NSSC's mandate - empowering our youth for change - can be realised. I am also currently sitting on the Overseas Board of Commissions and a number of other boards representing the views of secondary students in Jamaica, so that their voices are heard and respected.



**TEENage:** What exactly are the responsibilities of student councillors?

**CC:** Student councillors are to ensure that students' rights are not infringed upon and while doing so, they should also highlight the full responsibilities of students in ensuring that their personal rights are not violated.

**TEENage:** How was the theme for this year's Students' Council Week conceptualised?

**CC:** The theme was broached out of a need by the general student council body to recognise the fact that there are indeed young people who are excelling and making positive contributions to national development. Student Council Week is therefore an avenue for demonstrating these positive impacts and in the same

notion we are seeking to mobilise our young people to advocate for positive changes in society.

**TEENage:** What are some of the activities that are scheduled to take place during the course of Student Council Week?

**CC:** We already had our National Service of Thanksgiving held at Fellowship Tabernacle Church, and yesterday (Monday), Local Council Day was hosted at the secondary schools across the island. This activity sought to empower our student councilors and fellow youth through the messages prepared by the minister of education, Andrew Holness, minister of sports and information Olivia Grange and a message from me, the president.

This Tuesday is Student Council Awareness Day, where the mandates of the council are expected to be promulgated through the youth media such as TEENage. Tomorrow (Wednesday, February 18), will be our annual Student Council Exchange Day, where councilors within individual region will trade places with councilors from other schools within their region to assist with the strengthening and revamping of their student council body.

Thursday, February 19, 2009, will be the 'Save Yuh Life' Campaign, which is being held in Region Five and then Friday, February 20, 2009 there will be a National Students' Council Conference, which will be held in Region Three. The last day of Student Council Week will be spent on Region Sx for a Labour Day clean-up and beautification exercise at the Ascot High School in St Catherine. This campaign seeks to promote a culture of healthy living amongst secondary school students through peer intervention.

**TEENage:** The NSSC could be relatively considered as 'foreign' to a number of secondary students, so tell us, what other forms of youth advocacy routes have the NSSC undertaken or are currently negotiating to get the mandates and activities of the council household?

**CC:** We have been collaborating with various media houses to voice our concerns and we have sent out press releases, hosted capacity building workshops to resurrect dormant councils and we have also been lobbying with the National Centre for Youth Development [NCYD] to ensure that our plans are well executed.

**TEENage:** What important message do you wish to communicate to your peers in recognition of Student Council Week?

**CC:** As the theme for Student Council Week states "Responsible students empowered for change," I want all my colleagues to remember that we are the future and we should continue to be the best that we can be. We should be our brother's keeper and remember my colleagues, if you can imagine it, you can achieve it, if you can dream it, you can become it!

**TEENage:** As a staunch youth advocate, how have you internalised the Jamaica Broadcast Commission's recent motion to ban all "dagging" songs?

**CC:** I am entirely supportive of their stance against the issue. I am, however, saddened that such a proposition was so long in coming, especially since the minds of many of our youth have already become poisoned and corroded with the lyrical garbage played on the air waves. It will take profound efforts to reverse this "dagging" mentality, but there is still hope. At least this is a stepping stone in deflecting the evils that have beset us.

On February 17<sup>th</sup>, a Workshop was also hosted at the Hopewell High School, engaging student council representatives from the Parish of Hanover. The following schools were in attendance:

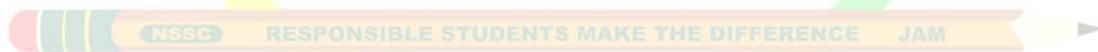
- Hopewell High
- Ruseas High
- Bethel Primary and Junior High
- Grange Hill High

- Knockalva Technical



Students' Councillors were trained in the following topic areas:

- Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors
  - Kevon Campbell, Youth Empowerment Officer – Student Governance
  - Tashauna Brown, Regional Vice President – Region Four
- Leadership and advocacy
  - Traci-Ann Johns, Youth Ambassador to the United Nations General Assembly



## STUDENTS' COUNCIL EXCHANGE DAY

Fifty-seven (57) secondary schools participated in the Students' Council Exchange hosted on February 18, 2009. Kindly see breakdown below:

	<b>Parish</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Partner School</b>
1	Kingston	Camperdown High	Dunoon Technical High School
2	Kingston	Convent of Mercy 'Alpha'	Wolmer's Girls
3	Kingston	Dunoon Park Technical High	Camperdown High School
4	Kingston	Holy Trinity High	St. Georges College
5	Kingston	Kingston Technical High	Oberlin High School
6	Kingston	Kingston College	Yallahs High
7	Kingston	St. Georges College	Holy Trinity High
8	Kingston	Wolmer's Boys School	Pembroke Hall High
9	Kingston	Wolmer's High School for Girls	Convent of Mercy Academy 'Alpha'
10	St. Thomas	Yallahs High	Kingston College
11	St. Andrew	Edith Dalton James High	Campion College
12	St. Andrew	Merl Grove	Holy Childhood High School
13	St. Andrew	Meadowbrook High	Immaculate Conception High
14	St. Andrew	Campion College	Edith Dalton James High School
15	St. Andrew	Mona High	Jamaica College
16	St. Andrew	Jamaica College	Mona High, Mavis Bank High
17	St. Andrew	Mavis Bank High	Jamaica College
18	St. Andrew	Charlie Smith High School	St. Andrew Technical High School
19	St. Andrew	St. Andrew Technical High School	Charlie Smith High School

20	St. Andrew	Immaculate Conception High	Meadowbrook High
21	St. Andrew	Pembroke Hall High	Wolmers Boys
22	Portland	Buff Bay High School	Titchfield High
23	St. Mary	Islington High School	Brimmervale High School
24	St. Mary	Brimmervale High	Islington High School
25	Portland	Port Antonio High School	Happy Grove High School
26	Portland	Happy Grove High School	Port Antonio High School
27	Portland	Titchfield High School	Buff Bay High
28	Trelawny	Cedric Titus High School	Albert Town High
29	St. Mary	Tacky High School	Ocho Rios High
30	St. Mary	Ocho Rios High School	Tacky High
31	Trelawny	Albert Town High	Cedric Titus High
32	St. James	Cambridge High School	Mt. Alvernia High
33	Westmoreland	Godfrey Stewart High School	Mannings School
34	St. James	Mt. Alvernia High	Cambridge High
35	St. James	Green Pond High School	Cornwall College
36	Hanover	Hopewell High	Ruseas High
37	Hanover	Ruseas High	Hopewell High
38	Westmoreland	Mannings School	Godfrey Stewart High
39	St. James	Cornwall College	Greenpond High
40	St. James	Montego Bay High	St. James High
41	St. James	St. James High School	Montego bay High

42	Manchester	Cross Keys High School	May Day High
43	Manchester	Belair High	Porus High
44	Manchester	Bishop Gibson High	DeCarteret College
45	Manchester	May Day High	Cross Keys High
46	Manchester	DeCarteret College	Bishop Gibson High
47	Manchester	Spauldings High	Christiana High
48	Manchester	Christiana High	Spauldings High
49	Manchester	Porus High School	Belair High
50	St. Elizabeth	Munro College	STETHS
51	St. Elizabeth	St. Elizabeth Technical High School	Munro College
52	St. Catherine	Charlemont High School	St. Catherine High School
53	Clarendon	Clarendon College	Old Harbour High
54	St. Catherine	Old Harbour High	Clarendon College
55	St. Catherine	St. Catherine High	Charlemont High
56	St. Catherine	Dinthill Technical High School	Jonathon Grant High
57	St. Catherine	Jonathan Grant High School	Dinthill Technical High

## LAUNCH - SAVE YU' LIFE CAMPAIGN

The official launch of Save Yu' Life Campaign was hosted on February 19, 2009 in Mandeville Park, Manchester. Below is an excerpt from the Press Release on the launch of the Campaign.

### *NSSC SEEKS TO "SAVE YU' LIFE"*

**Kingston, Jamaica:**-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 from 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.”

## NSSC STUDENTS CONFERENCE



The NSSC Students Conference, dubbed the 'NSSC Invasion' was hosted on Friday February 20, 2009 at the Troy High School in Trelawny. Approximately five hundred student councillors were in

attendance, inclusive of representatives from the following schools:

- Aabuthnott Gallimore High
- Albert Town High
- Brimmervale High
- Browns Town High
- Charlemont High
- Clarendon College
- Ferncourt High
- Holland High
- Manchester High
- Marcus Garvey Technical
- Mt. Angus Primary and Junior High
- Muschette High
- Ocho Rios High
- Pembroke Hall High
- St. Hilda's Diocesan High
- St. James High
- Tacky High
- Troy High
- William Knibb Memorial High
- York Castle High

In commencing the conference, the National Anthem was sung by Zulieka Stephenson from Brimmervale High School, following which, Camara Cobourne of Tacky High School led the group in prayer.

Greetings were brought from the following persons:

- Mr. Linval Wright, Principal – Troy High School
- Miss. Sherrienne Mesquita, NSSC Vice President – Region Three
- Mrs. Maxine Headlam, Regional Director – Ministry of Education
- Miss. Takisha Barnes, Director of Youth Programmes – NCYD

Presentations were made from the following students on the topic areas identified:

Chantal Cogle (Ocho Rios High)	-	Youth Advocacy
Mario Palmer (Browns Town High)	-	Drug Use among students
Lamoya James (Muschette High)	-	Inappropriate Sexual Activity





Mr. Jerron Green, Prime Minister of the National Youth Parliament was invited as the Guest Speaker. Mr. Green spoke to the critical role that student leaders have to play in effecting positive change within the Jamaican society.

Presentations were punctuated by 'edutainment' pieces from:

- Steppa
- Omari
- Konshens
- Hero



## NSSC LABOUR DAY

The NSSC hosted its Students Labour Day activity at the Ascot High School in St. Catherine. Through this activity, student accomplished the following:

- Clean-up of garbage behind classrooms
- Painting of outer wall of school
- Painting of curb through the school's driveway
- Tree-planting activity
- Weeding and clean-up of garden area at the front of the school
- Workshop with students' council representatives at Ascot High on leadership and the responsibilities of councillors.



Representatives from the following schools were in attendance:

- Ascot High
- Edwin Allen High
- McGrath High
- Montego Bay High
- Ocho Rios High
- St. Catherine High