



For Immediate Release
Kingston Jamaica
May 29, 2007

Scotiabank Sponsors Students to Attend Youth Anti-Crime Conference in Orlando, Florida

Over 20 students from the Youth Crime Watch of Jamaica left for Florida this morning in search of new crime and violence fighting techniques to transform their schools and residential communities. Six of the students who are a part of the Ministry of Education's Safe Schools programme were sponsored by Scotiabank to the tune of \$300,000 to attend the 22nd National Conference on Preventing Crime in Black Communities in Orlando Florida which will run from May 31 – June 4.

The Youth Crime Watch programme involves a larger group of over 900 adolescents and young adults aligned to several Police Youth Clubs across the island. The students' activities are focused on decreasing the number of young people involved in crime and violence in their schools through peer and cross age counseling, mediation, crime reporting and youth patrol. In their residential communities, the students also work on social interventions such as drug, violence and crime prevention education, bus safety activities and conflict resolution.

Over 250 youths were initially trained in 2004 by officers from the United States to undertake workshops, drama presentations and seminars in their various parishes. The students also receive several opportunities to sharpen their crime fighting and counseling skills as they undertake various training programmes locally and attend several conferences all over the world, sharing ideas with other young people in fighting crime.

Sergeant Ruth Anderson, coordinator of the group noted that "it is always a good opportunity for the students to share with others across the world as it exposes them to the different issues in other types of black communities. They also get the chance to apply their skills locally in their own schools and communities.

Scotiabank's director of Public, Corporate and Government Affairs, Mrs. Joylene Griffiths Irving, noted that the Bank was happy to support the programme, as it was an opportunity to invest in the safety of our children in their schools and their communities. Mrs. Griffiths Irving also explained that the programme is an example of Scotiabank's belief that our children are good kids with tremendous promise. **"There are so many good kids, if we just give them and some guidance they will excel. Most of them find themselves in problems because they have nothing to do, when they find something positive to do, they will change for the better"**.

The two main presenters at the youth conference are Bill McCallum, Attorney General of Orlando Florida and Thurbert Baker, Attorney General of Georgia. The conference promises to focus on providing positive alternatives to violence for young people. The group plans to filter the new information and strategies in their youth clubs and social programmes in their communities.

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