



News Release
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Inner-city Kids Taught RESPECT!

- The Focus of Summer Camp offered at the Ward Theatre

Summer is usually the period for fun, frolic and fraternizing with your colleagues – a time to meet lots of new people with different personalities. However, we scarcely stop to think about how well we relate to each other, will hurtful comments be passed? Will friends ‘dis’ each other? This is the focus of a unique Ward Theatre’s 2007 summer camp; teaching children about ‘**RESPECT**’ in a fun loving, exciting and interactive way.

Over 80 children whose ages range from 5-18 years old are now a part of the performing arts focused summer camp being run at the *Ward* from July 9 – August 3. The camp, which has been funded by Scotiabank to the tune of \$250, 000 allows the children who live in the surrounding inner-city communities to learn music, art & craft, drama, speech and dance as a major part of their curriculum.

However, special attention is placed on how well the students interact with each other, including how they speak and their body language. Camp coordinator, and performing arts teacher, Mr. Kenny Salmon, is delighted at how well the children have been tuning in to the message and changing their behaviour. “The students are all from different backgrounds and we encourage them to respect each other in all they do, no name calling, no violent behaviour, listen when someone is speaking and being pleasant to each other is absolutely critical here.”

Because of this, the teachers have had a fairly easy time managing the students and have seen significant improvement in a few ‘uncooperative’ students. Mr. Salmon noted “students who were aggressive when they entered the camp have made progress, and have told us how good they feel about how they are treated at the camp as opposed to how they are treated at home or in their communities.

As part of the personal development programme, Scotiabank managers have visited the students and made presentations on Career Planning and Developing the Habit of Thrift. Both presentations were well received and several students used the opportunity to start thinking seriously about their career paths. A few noted that saving was already a habit they had developed and looked at ways in which they improve to achieve their personal goals. “The students were very attentive and active in the both presentations and had great ideas on how they could achieve their individual objectives. When it came to thinking about their careers – it was very inspirational to see that, they were way ahead

and already thought of what path they could take to get them there, explained Simone Hull, camp presenter and Public Relations Specialist at the Bank.

The activities at the camp have been structured in a creative and unconventional way to ensure that all age ranges will have something interesting to do. “ Because it is summer, we have to make the camp special and impactful for everyone. Many have developed a serious interest in the performing arts and have gone on to excel in the JCDC Festival and performing arts competitions. Some have taken it to the other level to pursue their associate degrees in performing art at the Excelsior Community College” explained Mr. Salmon.

The Ward Theatre Foundation is seeking to maintain its relationship with the students and develop on initiatives they have started with the children. “We are interested in offering a Saturday programme which may start in September if all goes well. This will help to continue some of what we have started and provide a positive outlet for them to express themselves.

The climax of the camp will see the children staging a full production entitled ‘Abracadabra Alladin’, a one and half hour play which will see them utilizing all their training in speech, dance, drama and music. The play will run from August 3-5 at the Ward theatre and is open to the public.

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