



GREETINGS BY MR. ORVILLE HILL, GENERAL MANGER FINANCE JAMAICA SOCIAL

INVESTMENT FUND

AT THE OPENING OF THE RITCHIE'S EARLY CHILDHOOD INSTITUTION

APRIL 2, 2014.

Salutations

Hon. Rev. Ronald Thwaites (Minister of Education)

Hon. Richard Azan M.P - North West Clarendon and State

Minister in the Ministry of Transport and Works

Elvis Marshall – Councillor, Ritchies Division

Ms. Delva Marshall (Chairperson of the school Board)

Principal Mrs. Amelia Morris

School Staff

Chairperson Rev. Kevon Smith

JSIF Staff

Rev. Luke Simpson

Students

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning, I bring Greetings from the Board of Directors, Management and Staff of the Jamaica Social Investment Fund.

The provision of quality Early Childhood Education and services to children from birth to age 6, is integral to the strategy of human resource development to nurture Jamaica's young into responsible and productive members of society.

Research has shown that in these early years, brain development is most susceptible to both positive

and negative influences and although learning takes place all throughout life, during early childhood the brain is taking shape with a speed that would never be equaled again.

The Early Childhood period therefore, is critical in maximizing the developmental potential of a child.

Continued and focused strides in improving the quality of early childhood education is a priority of the Government of Jamaica.

The efforts of the Jamaica Social Investment Fund align with this focus. Ritchie's Early Childhood Institution will be the 10th Early childhood facility completed in the last 12 months by the JSIF, representing an investment of JMD 200 million by the Government in the Sector during the period.

Approximately 2,554 residents of both the Ritchie's, Sunbury and surrounding communities of Western Clarendon, are the beneficiaries of the J\$29-m school funded by the Caribbean Development Bank under the Community Investment Project

implemented by the Jamaica Social Investment Fund.

As we speak, over 90 students and 4 teachers are already enjoying the three new fully equipped classes under the project.

There is also a new kitchen, sick bay, administrative area, sewer and drainage and sanitary facilities, fencing and water storage.

Recognizing the importance of recreation, a play area has been equipped with a jungle gym, slides and swings, thus providing a place that is safe and stimulating for children to learn through play and exploration.

Ladies and gentlemen, Ritchies, has long been a household name in this area and well respected for over 20 years of moulding young minds in the Hall of the Beulah Missionary Church. It is largely due to that well-earned reputation that the school

population ballooned over the years, exceeding the capacity of the original location.

Now the new school is in line with the standards of the Early Childhood Commission (ECC) especially as it relates to the physical environment and is far better able to accommodate students from other surrounding districts including Liewood, Belcarres, Coffee Piece, Cumberland, White Shop, Spalding, Lesterfield, Sanguinette and Fairview Crescent.

This has been a community effort with employment coordinators drawn from the area, residents helping to bush and clear the site before construction and providing storage for material and equipment and sanitary facilities on site.

The residents have also helped to landscape and beautify the grounds after construction further illustrating their commitment to the Ritchie's Early Childhood Institution.

We commend everyone for doing their part and note that under the project beneficiaries have been trained to maintain the facility. We know it is in good hands and wish the teachers and students continued success.

Thank You.