

Supporting communities

MARA PROJECT LAUNCHED TO ASSIST THE YOUTH

Pinelands Creative Workshop and the Haynesville Youth Club have launched the Multi-dimensional Approach to Resilience and Adaptability (MARA) Project which was made possible through funding from the Maria Holder Memorial Trust.

This morning, the organisations held a walk through at their Police Post, Haynesville, St. James location to show the face-to-face aspect of the project in full swing.

Chief Executive Officer of Pinelands Creative Workshop Sophia Greaves-Broome said that the organisation was in the second phase of the MARA project after conducting its research in both the Haynesville and Pine communities to see how they can best assist the youth of those communities despite the ongoing COVID-19 situation.

"The project is based on the research I would have undertaken with Peter Skeete as we went through various experiences with COVID and found ways to strategise how we can help those that we serve.

I would have approached Maria Holder Memorial Trust with the findings from both communities to start to build out the MARA project which was accepted by the Maria Holder team. We are able to deliver a multi-dimensional programme and a multi-community programme where we are offering academic support.

We are also looking at cultural heritage preservation as well as developing new leadership and new ways of thinking using the social entrepreneurial approach," she said.

Greaves-Broome said that the initiative caters to ten children in the face-to-face sessions at the Police Post and an unlimited number of children in the online sessions which are hosted by Pinelands Creative Workshop. She added that the Multi-dimensional Approach to Resilience and Adaptability (MARA) Project sought to bridge the educational and technological divide in some communities.

"We are seeking to fill those educational gaps because we know once there are gaps the possibility without any support, any setting or bridging, we would have problems in terms of interference with the delicate social dynamics and cohesion, especially in housing estates.

This programme is timely especially in dealing with some of the areas that have been exacerbated like internet and technological access, as a result of COVID 19, and would take time to fix.

Therefore, this initiative allows for Pinelands and Haynesville to hit the ground running with practical interventions to provide the necessary bridging and retooling to assist with the goal of building back better," she said.

Founder of the Haynesville Youth Club Peter Skeete said he found that a lot of persons in the Haynesville Community did not have access to online schooling thus he knew a project such as MARA was imperative to assist the nation's children.

"Since the start of this term a lot of our young persons were not exposed to online schooling and what we felt is that there was a need for us to respond to that need and in so doing we were able to get some free Wi-Fi and tablets donated from our colleagues from the community who would have done very well in life and have decided to give back.

We have close to ten persons currently at the Police Post who are doing their online schooling, and this is supplemented by the after-school programme where that effort continues as reputable teachers are there, and they are engaged in English and Mathematics training for the upcoming 11+ exam.

This particular project with the Maria Holder Memorial Trust is a continuation of that outstanding collaborative project that we have done with Pinelands since 2001 in culture, sports and now education as we help to build our young people and provide meaningful opportunities to limit their participation in negative behaviours," he said.



From left, CEO of Pinelands Creative Workshop Sophia Greaves-Broome presents a MARA packet to Kayla Daniel as founder of the Haynesville Youth Club Peter Skeete looks on.



Tishony Richardson (left) receives her MARA packet from the CEO of Pinelands Creative Workshop Sophia Greaves-Broome.

Greaves-Broome added that the initiative's overall goal is to assist as many children as possible who may find themselves without the technology or infrastructure for online school.

"The online is open to all persons although we are working with the Haynesville and Pine communities. These are challenging times and we would want to embrace all persons who find themselves in a not-so-comfortable position but still want to have access to the best opportunity possible for their children. Feel free to contact us as we are not limiting persons as we want to help those who may need the additional support.

We hope that parents would see this as the prime opportunity because the Government cannot do it all. Support like that provided by the Maria Holder Memorial Trust is a practical way to build the future human capital and at the same time, narrow those gaps that could lead to a broken and inequitable society. It has to be a whole of society or a

collective approach to people and community development and by extension, national stability.

"Pinelands Creative Workshop can be contacted at 430-0551 as well as Peter Skeete at 829-4891 so that your child can get the best opportunities as they move forward.

A critical part of the Pinelands philosophy has been and continues to be – to provide opportunities for all whether you are from the Pine community or not.

We realised on review that our last project had a national impact and was able to touch persons from almost every parish across the island.

As an organisation we are clear about the challenges but we want to continue to assist our children, men and women across this island who may need our support, and to do this we need to continue to garner support, build active partnerships and see the translation of much of the research move from filing cabinets and book shelves into real time actions," she said. (Write Right PR Services)