

# Jamaica Outreach Program

**OUR MISSION:**

*"JAMAICA OUTREACH PROGRAM (JOP) IS A NON-PROFIT 501 (C)(3) PUBLIC CHARITY WHOSE MISSION IS TO HELP THE POOR IN JAMAICA. JOP PROVIDES LOVE, RESPECT, FUNDS, GOODS AND SERVICES FOR HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION AND BASIC SUPPORT TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF THE POOR IN JAMAICA WITHOUT REGARD TO RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION, PERSONAL HISTORY, GENDER, AGE OR RACE."*



## SERVING JAMAICA'S POOR FOR 26 YEARS

### OCT.1, 2022 - SEPT.30, 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- \$17,000 in food support for Montego Bay and Kingston's poor
  - 424 students received aid for tuition, supplies, books, uniforms, or transportation
  - 10 Housing units were built for the poor
  - \$25,800 funded medical equipment, supplies and support
  - 1422 Patients received dental care
  - 569 patients were treated or screened at health fairs
  - 220 patients received eye exams and 160 received eyeglasses
- ... see inside for details.

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The poor in Jamaica were in great need during the pandemic and they are still recovering. Dental, Medical and Optical missions, Housing and Education are the key areas where we focused JOP's support during the fiscal year ended September 30, 2023. See the articles in this annual newsletter for more detail. We are extremely grateful to our donors who continued to be generous during these difficult times. **Thank you** for your loyal support of our ministry.

### VOLUNTEERS ARE ESSENTIAL IN OUR SERVICE TO JAMAICA

The need for volunteers is always ongoing. In Naples, we need and depend on host families willing to welcome Jamaicans who visit Naples for medical treatment or JOP events. To staff mission trips, we need optometrists, opticians, dentists, dental hygienists/ assistants, doctors, and nurses from any part of the USA! We need someone in Naples with bookkeeping, accounting, audit or financial experience. New volunteers are always welcomed. Anyone interested in becoming an active volunteer is invited to contact any Board member (see box below for contact info).



### FOOD & GOODS

With the support of JOP, the St. Anne's Feeding Program continues to provide food hampers to the poorest of the poor in the Western Kingston. They are able to provide for 180-200 families a week, as well as serving breakfast twice a week.

In Montego Bay, JOP also supports the Love In Action Soup Kitchen, which provides hot meals and distribution of food packages.

We also had an entire eye exam lane donated by Dr. Zimm for the St. Pius X eye clinic.

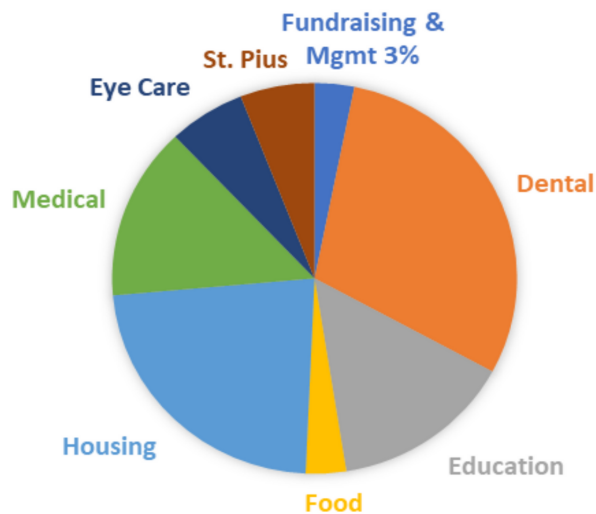
For more information on Foods and Goods you may contact Jeff Meyerson at 239-592-5781 or [jeff@jamaicaoutreach.org](mailto:jeff@jamaicaoutreach.org)



**INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE? GEN. INFO: RAY SHAWCROSS, PRESIDENT 401-862-0590 MEDICAL: DR. JOSEPH VENTO 917-561-5499 VISION CARE: DR. JEFF ZIMM 592-5511 DENTAL: ROGER PLANTE: 401-769-7444 EDUCATION & HOUSING: RAY SHAWCROSS 401-862-0590 DONATIONS: JEANNE PITTMAN 239-248-3248 OPTICAL EQUIPMENT : PAUL CONNOR 330-784-6623 FOOD AND GOODS : JEFF MEYERSON 239-592-5781 WEBSITE & PUBLICATIONS: JEFF MEYERSON 239-592-5781**



## 97% SPENT ON SERVICES TO THE POOR



Revenue\* \$ 591,509

Expenses\* \$576,049

Incr. in Net Assets \$15,460

\*Includes \$226,498 "in kind" goods and services.

Our books are open to anyone who wants a more detailed view of our finances. For more information, please contact Jeanne Pittman at 239-248-3248 or <https://jamaicaoutreach.org/policies-financials/>

## VISION CARE REPORT

Dr Zimm and his family conducted an eye exam mission in February, 2023. They saw 220 patients, of which 160 received prescription eyeglasses and 60 were diagnosed as needing cataract surgery. Paul Connor's eye care team plans to visit the clinic at St. Pius in November 2023 and Dr Zimm intends to reinstate surgical procedures in Kingston by the spring of 2024.

Dr. Jeffrey Zimm is JOP's Eye Care Coordinator, he has been going to Jamaica for 19 years and is part of the JOP Advisory Board. There are many patients still waiting for eye surgery and vision care. For more information contact: Dr. Jeffrey Zimm 239-592-5511



JOP supported schools in both the Archdiocese of Kingston and the Diocese of Montego Bay. After the pandemic, schools in Jamaica are slowly getting back into full operation. However challenges have presented greater financial barriers for JOP supported schools. Salaries of all teachers were increased by the government mandate.



The cost of operating has also increased with inflation driving expenses of electricity, water, school supplies and salaries of support staff.

At the Marcus Garvey School, a JOP supported institution, no student is turned away due to a parent's inability to pay tuition. In addition, considering the correlation between nutrition and academic performance, all students are provided lunch regardless of their ability to pay.



This year JOP provided 424 high school and college students with stipends for books, transportation and other incidentals. Without this assistance many of these young people would not be able to continue their education.

In the Montego Bay Diocese, JOP sent \$34,000 to Bishop Burchell for the support of St Mary Basic School, Msgr. Wilson High School, and student grants in aid. At the DuPont School in Kingston uniforms and shoes were purchased by JOP for economically deprived students whose parents were unable to afford these necessities. Again without the shoes and uniforms these youngsters would not be allowed to attend school.

Moreover, over \$19,000 was provided to 5 parishes in Kingston for their parishioners in educational grants. It is our belief that education is necessary for Jamaican society to be transformed and our faith to spread and grow. For further information contact Ray Shawcross at [reshaw1@verizon.net](mailto:reshaw1@verizon.net) or 401-862-0590.





Jamaica Outreach Program (JOP) - Dental has been in continuous operation since March 2012 and conducts 5-6 missions a year serving the poorest of the poor in Kingston and rural Seaford Town. From that first outreach to the present, there have been 42 completed missions, with only a few canceled due to viruses (Chikungunya in 2014 and COVID 3/2020 – 9/2022). There have been 6,761 patient visits and 8,150 procedures performed by 84 dentists, 226 auxiliaries (hygienists and assistants), and 48 team leaders/laypersons, all of whom were either new or returning missionaries.



**JOP Dental is continuously seeking to recruit new and returning missionaries for its many missions. If you or anyone you know are interested in joining us for a rewarding (and fun) opportunity to serve, please get in touch with Michele LaBasi at [mlabasi.jop@gmail.com](mailto:mlabasi.jop@gmail.com) or Roger Plante at [rogerplante10@gmail.com](mailto:rogerplante10@gmail.com) for more information.**

## In Memoriam

Ann Kerns passed into eternal life on January 7, 2023. She and her husband Al were the founders of our medical program 25 years ago and they led innumerable mission trips to Kingston over the years. Al and Ann served on the JOP Board for many years; they recruited volunteers and were always present whenever there was a need for helping hands at our food drives, fundraisers, mailings etc. We grieve the loss of our dear friend but we rejoice in the fact that she now rests in the good hands of her Shepherd.



JOP provided three medical missions to Jamaica during our last year. Below is the report from our June mission.

Our medical team Dr. Joseph Vento, N.P. Ann Marie Bova and Loretta Vento returned to the Montego Bay area in June 2023 and tended to patients in 3 locations - two for the first time and with very limited facilities. The local volunteers were extremely welcoming and tireless in their efforts to make the mission successful. The team was well prepared with medications (many donated and others purchased by JOP) and diagnostic testing - urine analysis, pregnancy test, glucose test and EKGs.



The first stop was Seaford Town, where the patients were happy to see “Doctor Joe” again. There had been a storm the night before and all electricity was out until about noon. It was exceedingly hot and difficult to work without even a fan. The electricity was back on by noon, but water ran out presenting a new challenge.

The following day, it was off to St. Mary’s church in Cambridge. The altar was the pharmacy. The heat was relentless and stifling. Father Peter led the team on a tour of the parish school. The children were delightful - happy, friendly, well behaved, and very fond of Father Peter.



The last stop was St. Paul’s Church and Mission in the inner city. The church sits on a hill - a steep walk for elderly and ailing patients, but no one complained. That strip of land separates - and has become a neutral ground for - two competing gangs. The grounds and church are lovingly maintained by Delta May Hall 84 years old and going strong. She wields her machete with great skill to clear the grounds of weeds. She has her tool kit to make small repairs. She cleans the church. She was the first person to greet the team. Patients were seen inside the small church. Luckily there was a fan inside and a toilet just outside the church, but not enough water to flush!

Doctors and nurse practitioners are needed for future missions.

For more information contact: Dr. Joseph Vento 917-561-5499 / jtvmd@yahoo.com.





This year JOP donors funded 10 houses for Jamaican families who were previously living in squalor. The gratitude of the parents and children when presented with their new home was truly heartwarming.

However, the highlight of this year's housing program was the JOP initiative in the renovation of Antonio Gabriele Village. This facility was first constructed by JOP 14 years ago with funding from JOP and the Gabriele family. The facility serves as assisted living housing for economically destitute elderly Jamaicans. It provides communal living as well as proper food and medical care. Over the years the physical structure, mainly due to the local climate, fell into disrepair. The buildings had to be rehabbed with new roofs, paint and laundry facilities. Also the costs of food, electricity water, gas and other supplies dramatically increased after the pandemic. Once again JOP donors and the Gabriele family came to the rescue and provided a grant of \$43,683.

For donors wishing to provide a home for destitute Jamaican families the cost is \$9800. This price includes beds, mattresses and other furniture which are provided. Understanding that this price point is more than one donor can provide we are able to match donors with each providing \$4900.

Donors truly transform the lives of desperate families struggling to survive. For further information regarding donating a house or contributing to the Gabriele Village fund contact Ray Shawcross at [reshaw1@verizon.net](mailto:reshaw1@verizon.net) or 401-862-0590.

In a recent Catholic Daily Mass reading, I reflected on the words of St. Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world- like a city set on a hilltop cannot be hidden". It struck me once again quite profoundly that we have all been divinely aligned and positioned in our different spheres of endeavor as beacons of light and hope for all who are downtrodden, less fortunate and impoverished.

In these post-pandemic times, we have to be deeply conscious of the debilitating impact that these past few years have had on us all. Many have been stripped emotionally and spiritually thus exposing our weaknesses, vulnerability and inadequacies. In every crisis, we know that our response must never be to "roll over and die", but to realistically assess our present circumstances and recognize our mutual support for each other in the creative rebuilding of our human and social relations. We must stand united with all the stakeholders convinced in faith, hope and love, that this situation will not defeat us but become a moment of grace, calling us to discern new ways of collaborating, synergizing and being the organization that we had envisioned to be many years ago.

It is in adverse times like these, that we have to be a mighty fortress. We have to be the hands, the feet, the eyes and ears of Jesus in serving the poor. In this way, the sanctity of all God's creatures may be protected and indeed emulated nationally and globally.

As you continue to chronicle the good works of the JOP through this medium, may this newsletter resonate as a mechanism to powerfully declare, and not to curse the darkness of a broken and fallen world, but to light a candle and be that agent of transformational change that will continue to impact and make a difference in the lives of the communities we serve in Jamaica.

Let me close with an exhortation from St. Paul's letter to the Philippians 1:6:

"And I am certain that He who began a good work within you, will carry it on to completion until the day Jesus Christ returns."

With every good wish and blessing.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev. Burchell A. McPherson, D.D.  
Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Montego Bay

**Jamaican Choir is scheduled to sing at St John's masses February 10-11, 2024. Contact Jeanne Pittman 239-248-3248 if you would be willing to help house one or two of our Jamaican visitors.**



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