



Cricket Hall of Fame helps Jamaican School

The Savanna-la-Mar Primary School in Westmoreland, Jamaica, was recently presented with a check for J\$100,000 from the Cricket Hall of Fame. The funds raised through the efforts of the organization and the Sportmen's Athletic Club, was the response to an appeal made to the group by a teacher at the school, following the passage of hurricane Ivan, which left extensive damage to the school's buildings. The teachers had launched the drive to raise funds so that they could undertake temporary repairs to the roofs in particular, so that the school could reopen.

Dr. Dolton James, Program Coordinator at the Cricket Hall of Fame, who went to Jamaica to make the presentation, said that the damage is so bad that in some parts of the school the only thing that is keeping the roof from collapsing, are a few broken beams. The walls that divide each classrooms were all demolished therefore all the classes (over 40 students each) are now being conducted in one huge, open space. The only thing that separates each class is the chalkboards, he said.

According to James, the Principal Ms. Shirley Mullings said that during the hurricane the entire roof of one of the main buildings which currently houses six classrooms, completely lifted off the main building structure then fell back in place. Mullings said that she fears that any sudden freak storm could result in the total collapse of the roof and serious injury to the students.

To show their gratitude for the donation, the entire student body, reportedly almost 900, ranging in ages from five to 11, prior to the presentation, put on a spirited, cultural show for Dr. James. More than 2,000 students attend the school on a split shift basis. Featured were the school's Marching Band and its Dance Troupe decked out in colorful costumes. The children performed exciting dance skits which included a demonstration of the quadrille

dance and the song “Boiled Breadfruit,” in which the other students joined in.

In replying following the presentation, Dr. James, who as a youngster went to school in the area, reminisced a bit on his school days imploring the students to make use of their opportunity to get a good education. In encouraging them to use him as an example, he told them that education is the only tool that can liberate people of African descent from poverty.

Referring to the present situation at the school, he said, “I am very aware that there are many similar or even worse damages elsewhere, however, this was a situation I experienced. It was a tremendous pleasure for me to be there to present the school with the funds,” he stated. “We received a call for help from one of the teachers (Ms. Joan Williams), and we were able to raise the funds in a very short time. The principal, staff and students were very excited and thankful,” he said.

In making an appeal for more help for the school, Dr James said that we realize that it is just a “drop in the bucket” and that it will not be able to accomplish all the needed repairs, but nevertheless it was a good start. Anyone, who would like to donate to the Savanna-la-Mar Primary School’s rebuilding fund, should call (860) 246-5400 or (860) 250-2976.