Workshop Summary

Department of Children and Family Services – Common Social Issues Affecting Children in the Cayman Islands

Presented By: Ms. Maureen Jervis-Brooks

I found all our workshops to be very helpful indeed and highly necessary for a teaching program, therefore I found it difficult to choose two that had the greatest impact on me as a teacher. However, in reflecting, for me one of our most enlightening workshops was this one presented by Ms. Maureen Jervis-Brooks. She was very thorough, covering much ground in her allotted time. Ms. Jervis-Brooks has practiced Social Work for the past 30 years, acquiring her Master of Science Degree in Social Work from Howard University, in Washington D.C. in 1979. This workshop, highlighting the many social problems that children in the Cayman Islands face today, was presented on Friday June 4, 2010, during our regular class period for the Diploma in Education program at the University College of the Cayman Islands.

The purpose of the workshop was to inform the Diploma in Education class of 2010 of the social issues faced by our children and youth today that present barriers to learning. I believe that Ms. Jervis-Brooks aimed to inspire empathy, provoke our thoughts and also give some advice on handling difficult situations with our students. She achieved all three objectives successfully. Ms. Jervis-Brooks was very passionate about her work, voicing her immense concern as she spoke of the social issues faced by the youth of the Cayman Islands today. She expressed in detail the varying issues and how they affect our children, making it very difficult to concentrate and learn.

Ms. Jervis-Brooks covered the whole range of social issues and barriers to learning ranging from genetic diseases to poverty and divorce. It is difficult to overcome social problems and come to a realization of your personal worth as an individual when you have suffered the hardships of growing up in a violent, unloving home, or perhaps a home where your parents are unable to provide all your necessities or do not care what happens.

Ms. Jervis-Brooks gave a very educational presentation on the many issues that affect children’s learning here in the Cayman Islands. Therefore the workshop brought to the forefront of my mind, the issues youth struggle through. The presenter covered real cases that appear in our islands and the difficulties that the children who are involved face as a result of living in dysfunctional homes or with parents who themselves are struggling with difficult situations and depression.

When she was finished I believe the entire Diploma in Education class was in awe and left with hearts yearning to reach out and help the youth of the Cayman Islands. This is a topic that is very close to my heart and I was able to feel the hurt that many of our youth struggle through on a daily basis. The difficulties faced by our youth today are very varied and becoming more complex.

I know that I am much more aware of the problems that our youth face, the signs to look out for in my students, and the route I should take in helping them get the assistance that they need. By experiencing this workshop I am left sharing the hurt that inevitably I will encounter in some of my students, with a greater desire to help, and in a better position to help them find solutions that will enable my students to learn better.