



26 Haining Road, Kingston 5
www.hearthechildrencryja.com
Tel: 876-929-0431, 876-294-8123-5, 876-822-0483
email: hearthechildrencry@yahoo.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHILD MONTH BREAKING NEWS! – YOUNG LAWYERS STEP UP TO SUPPORT CHILDREN

- ***Child Watch Legal- New Affiliate Arm of Hear The Children's Cry formed***
- ***Watchdogs for Legislative Issues Affecting Children***
- ***Lawyers to provide Oversight, Scrutiny & Advocacy for Laws/Overseas Conventions & Treaties Concerning Children***
- ***To Provide Legal Public Education for Parents & Guardians***

As the country grapples with an array of problems affecting children, a group of young lawyers has stepped up to the plate to serve as legal watchdogs, and to fill an important gap in providing legislative oversight and practical legal advocacy to support Jamaican children and their families.

The new entity, ***Child Watch Legal***, an affiliate arm of Hear The Children's Cry, will undertake the following:

- Provide Child Legislative Oversight, e.g. by interacting with relevant legislation whenever there is enactment or revision of child protection and welfare legislation, including Parliamentary representation.
- Examine International Treaties/Conventions, e.g. U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Engage in Public Education , e.g. Family Court procedures; Children in Conflict with the Law, etc.
- Participate in Legal Advocacy on current and emerging new matters relating to children
- Interacting with other Attorneys in ongoing Legal Networking.

All three Attorneys describe how excited and committed they are to undertaking this new endeavor on behalf of the nation's children.

Says Priscilla Duhaney, Attorney-at-law, Sole Practitioner, and Lecturer in Paralegal Studies at Excelsior Community College, “Having a passion for children’s emotional, physical and financial wellbeing, I believe it is my duty to seize the opportunity to provide legal insight, address the concerns of the vulnerable, and to be a voice for the voiceless. I am doing this out of a long held vision for the protection and holistic development of Jamaica’s youth.”

As she gears up for the new assignment, Deseree Whittle, an Attorney-at-Law and Founder and Director of Yutes On d’Rock Foundation, a youth development organization operating in Rockfort and its environs in East Kingston for the past 12 years, explains “Having been actively involved in youth development for a number of years, my whole purpose for studying law was to position myself to better help the children. I am therefore very excited about this opportunity to serve the children of Jamaica in this way”

Therese Saunders, whose parents are themselves lawyers, embraces the opportunity to serve. A devout Christian and Roman Catholic, Therese has a special ear for the suffering of children .In her own words she discloses, “I feel especially concerned and grieved for those whose sufferings are brought about by the unjust conduct of other persons and institutions. I feel compelled to respond to the children’s plight and commit wholeheartedly to the aims and objectives of *Child Watch Legal*.

Founder of Hear The Children’s Cry, Betty Ann Blaine is heralding this important new development as a critical area of support for the broad-based advocacy the organization has pursued for the last 20 years.

“We are absolutely delighted with the establishment of *Child Watch Legal* as a part of Hear The Children’s Cry,” she says, noting, “It is increasingly important to know that there is a team of lawyers that can assist the organization, and by extension the children and families we serve, with this type of legislative monitoring and oversight. Importantly, through *Child Watch Legal’s* Public Education component, parents and guardians will benefit from information regarding Court proceedings and issues relating to children who may come in conflict with the law.”

“This type of help is invaluable”, Blaine asserts.

CONTACT:

Priscilla Duhaney; Tel: (876) 792-3781; email: priscilladuhaney@gmail.com

Therese Saunders: Tel: (876) 868-3451; Email: therese.saunders.law@gmail.com

Deseree Whittle: Tel: (876) 386-3781? Email: whittledlaw@gmail.com

Betty Ann Blaine : (876) 294-8125: bab2609@yahoo.com