



# THE YEAR OF THE COMMUNITY

**Bigger. Better. Bolder.**

2016 Annual Report



J-FLAG

Est. 1998

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PRiDE Black Tie Gala

PRiDE JA Family Picnic

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# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## 2016 was an amazing year!!!

The success would not have been possible without the LGBT community which demonstrated its courage and resilience in a way that the movement has not seen in a while.

Our theme was around building and working with the LGBT community across the country and the ways in which they support the work being done by J-FLAG, our affiliates, and others to make Jamaica a more hospitable place for all of us to live, work, raise our families, and do business.

The bold stance of some of our allies has also been critical in opening up a space for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity. The willingness of the politicians, particularly those who made up the new government, to engage the organisation around International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) in May and speak at events hosted by us signalled a respect of the organisations role in shaping society, one that we hope will last and not fade as time passes on.

The community continue to give me hope that together we can make the change necessary for us all to live a better life in here at home on this rock called Jamaica.

Pride JA 2016 was a phenomenal success and it best demonstrates the change that is happening. I was stunned by the tremendous support. The party promoters were an invaluable resource in building out the relationship with the community which helped to mobilise the large number of persons who attended various events throughout the week.

Now is an opportune time for the LGBT community and movement and we commit to working with our affiliates, partners and allies to ensure that every LGBT people can fulfil and realize their dreams in Jamaica free from discrimination and violence. We welcome the new challenges as we broaden our horizons to make the next phase of our work even more meaningful to all those we serve.



**“PRIDE JA 2016 WAS A PHENOMENAL SUCCESS AND IT  
BEST DEMONSTRATES THE CHANGE THAT IS HAPPENING.”**

**- DANE LEWIS**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# ABOUT J-FLAG

J-FLAG is a human rights and social justice organisation which advocates for the rights, livelihood and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Jamaica.

Our work seeks to build a Jamaican society that respects and protects the rights of everyone. Our board and staff are committed to promoting social change, empowering the LGBT community, and building tolerance for and acceptance of LGBT people.

Since 2012, the organisation has been operating under five broad objectives:

1. Increase public tolerance and understanding of LGBT peoples
2. Transform J-FLAG into an effective umbrella group to improve service to the LGBT community
3. Create the foundation for legal reform
4. Increase organisational Sustainability
5. Improve community engagement and mobilization

In pursuit of these objectives, the following strategic approaches are being used:

1. Create a powerful J-FLAG brand whose promise is that of a caring, value driven organisation dedicated to promoting inherent human dignity and the right to be.
2. Strong, proactive leadership of the LGBT Community.
3. Collaborate with other human rights groups and stakeholders in pursuit of incremental gains against all forms of discrimination.
4. Create a culture of excellence that attracts creative, high-calibre personnel who will develop efficient operating systems and a buoyant stream of donors.

## Mission

To promote social change by empowering the Jamaican LGBT community and build tolerance for and acceptance of the LGBT community by the wider Jamaican society

## Vision

The creation of a Jamaican society that respects and protects the human rights and inherent dignity of all individuals irrespective of their sexual orientation and gender identity: A Jamaica where there is the freedom to be, for all people.

## Values

J-FLAG promotes the values of all-inclusivity, diversity, equality, fairness, and love. These values are at the heart of all we do, as we seek to become effective agents of social change.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Ivan Cruickshank**, MSc., BSc.  
Chairperson, Finance Manager,  
Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition

**Charles Barrett**, MBA (Candidate), BSc.  
Group Marketing Director, Jamaican Teas Ltd.  
and Managing Director, Advertising Advantage

**Patrice Smith Sterling**  
Finance Committee Chair & Senior Programme  
Manager, Digital Jamaica Foundation

**Kerry Jo Lyn**, PMP, MSc.,  
Director,  
Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice

**Anthony Hron**, MSc., BSc.  
Senior HIV/AIDS Technical Advisor, USAID  
Jamaica

**Sannia Sutherland**, MSc., BSc. (Hons)  
Programme Coordinator, Caribbean  
Vulnerable Communities Coalition

## MEMBERS OF STAFF

**Dane Lewis**, BA, Dip.  
Executive Director

**Jaevion Nelson**, MSc., BSc.  
Director, Projects & Strategy

**Latoya Nugent**, MSc., PGDip, BA (Hons)  
Director, Education & Training

**Mark George**, MBA, BSc  
Director, Finance & Operations

**Rochelle McFee**, MSc. (Dist), BSc. (Hons)  
Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist

**Neish McLean**, PGDip (Dist), BSc. (Hons)  
HIV Coordinator/Project Manager

**Karen Lloyd**, MSc. (Candidate), BSc. (Hons)  
Youth Coordinator/Project Manager

**Glenroy Murray**, LEC, LLB (Hons)  
Policy & Advocacy Manager

**Suelle Anglin**, BA (Candidate)  
Media & Community Mobilization Coordinator

**Karleen Jackson**, Dip.  
Support Services Officer

**Joan Dawson-Bryan**, BSc (Candidate)  
Finance & Administration Officer

**Elton McDuffus**, BA (Hons)  
Procurement Officer

**Jherane Patmore**, BSc. (Candidate)  
Programme Officer

**Noelle Nelson**, LLb (Candidate)  
Programme Officer

**Christina Clarke**, BSc (Candidate)  
Administrative Officer



# ANALYSIS OF STAFF

## COMPOSITION



**53%**  
**YOUTH**

Unlocking potential. We're mainstreaming and investing in youth! More than half of the staff is 29 years or younger



**60%**  
**WOMEN**

No more J-FAG. Women make up the largest share of employees



**60%**  
**VOLUNTEERED**

More than half of the staff volunteered with J-FLAG before becoming employed



**53%**  
**TRAINED**

Half of the staff participated in a training programme/workshop with J-FLAG or an affiliate prior to being employed



J-FLAG has a total of fifteen persons on staff with diverse experience and backgroudns in a variety of areas



# 2016 SNAPSHOT

2016 has been a very successful year for #TeamEquality!

Through a variety of multifaceted programmes and initiatives, which were implemented by our expanded and diverse team, we increased our reach and impact thereby truly making it 'The Year of Community.'

We engaged over 15,000 LGBT people, friends, allies, and other stakeholders across all parishes and over 4.2 million persons online.

Our work was guided by our objectives to increase public tolerance, transform J-FLAG into an effective umbrella group, advocate for policy and legal reform, improve organisational sustainability, and improve community engagement and mobilisation.

At the end of the year, #TeamEquality had an 82% implementation rate! 98 of the 119 activities committed to in the annual work plan were implemented. An additional 43 ad hoc activities that were important to advancing the organisation's work were also undertaken, making it a combined total of 162 completed by the team.

IT'S BEEN AN  
AMAZING

YEAR! **82%**

OF 119 ACTIVITIES  
WAS COMPLETED IN 11 MONTHS

85%

OUTCOME 1:  
INCREASE PUBLIC TOLERANCE  
28 OF 33 ACTIVITIES COMPLETED

81%

OUTCOME 2:  
SERVICE & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE  
17 OF 21 ACTIVITIES COMPLETED

100%

OUTCOME 3:  
POLICY AND LEGAL REFORM  
4 OF 4 ACTIVITIES COMPLETED

84%

OUTCOME 4:  
ORGANIZATION SUSTAINABILITY  
27 OF 32 ACTIVITIES COMPLETED

76%

OUTCOME 5:  
ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH  
22 OF 29 ACTIVITIES COMPLETED







## WE REACHED

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2,062 OCT - DEC

9,050 JULY - SEPT

3,060 APRIL - JUNE

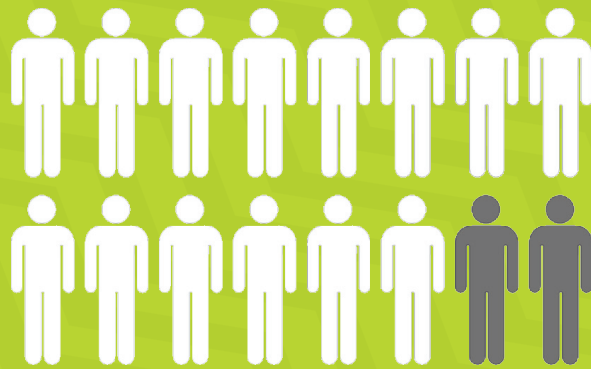
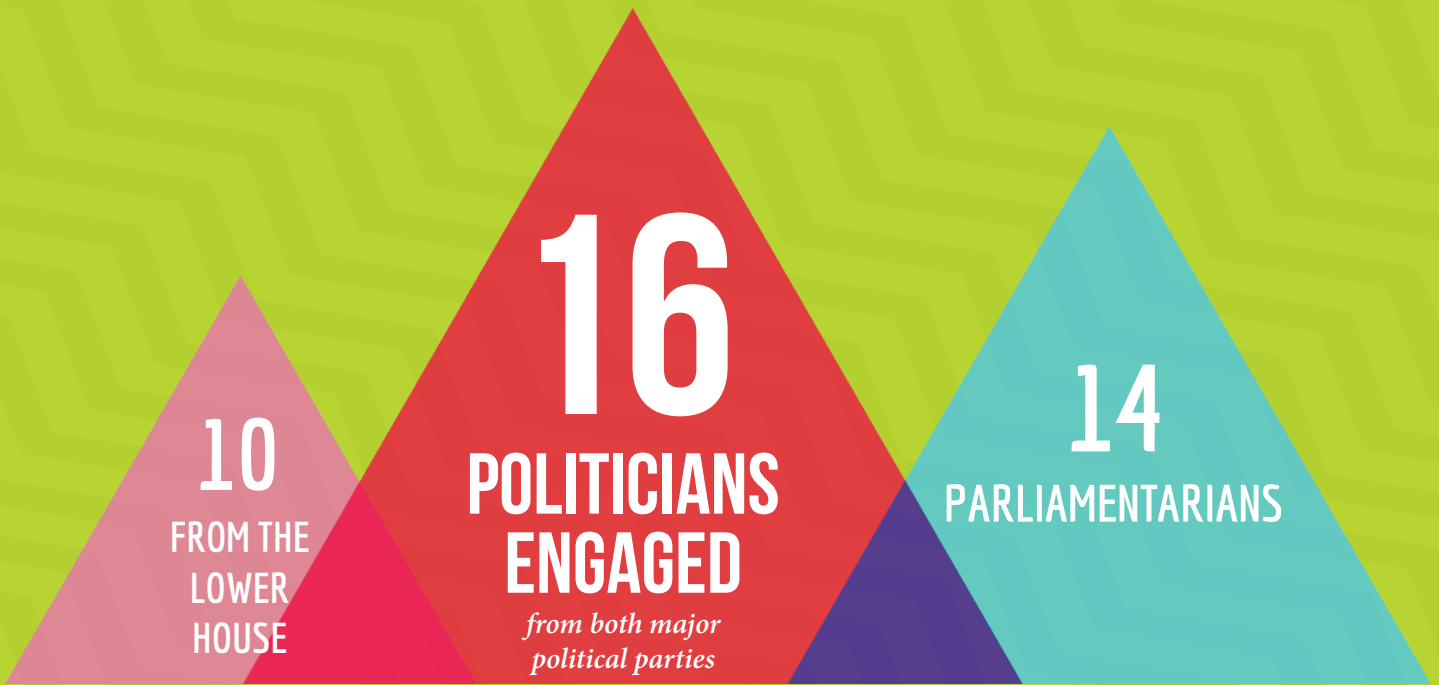
1,204 JAN - MARCH

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**15,376**

DIRECTLY THROUGH OUR  
PROGRAMMES IN 2016





## REPORT ON KEY PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES

### LGBT Youth Social Justice Advocacy Programme

Fifty-eight young people from the LGBT and ally community were trained to advocate from a results and knowledge-based perspective under the LGBT Youth Social Justice Advocacy Programme.

The training focused on international human rights laws, regional and local human rights mechanisms and the social justice milieu in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean. A diverse methodology, including experiential learning, group activities, simulations, mini lectures and role playing, was utilized to get the most out of the training sessions. The simulations, and assignments allowed for experiential learning as a group. Time allotted for group sharing and peer review provided opportunities for the

youth participants and facilitators to discuss issues and engage in debate issues.

Through the programme, participants learnt about how advocacy, policy, and social justice movements are related and how they influence one another as well as how they can influence change. They were also provided with opportunities to develop and implement advocacy initiatives and work with entities focused on social justice and youth development in both government and civil society.

Advocacy initiatives focused on rural youth empowerment, anti-bullying in schools, disability issues and empowerment programmes for vulnerable groups. More than 300,000 persons were reached on social media through twitter chats and campaign pages on Facebook. The anti-bullying initiative conducted sensitization sessions in three primary schools and reach over 300 students.





### *Youth Mainstreaming and Youth Protection Strategy*

We developed and adopted a Youth Protection Policy and a Youth Mainstreaming Policy to guide how the organisation engages young people in its programmes and initiatives in such a way that their needs, concerns, expectations and safety are paramount considerations.

The Youth Mainstreaming Policy promotes the active participation of young people in the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of programmes and initiatives. It also encourages equal opportunities for young people in all areas of the organisation. It will help us to ensure that there is a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for young people within the organisation, whether as staff, clients or beneficiaries of our programmes. The Youth Protection Strategy commits the organisation to safely engaging the youth that come into contact with our different initiatives, projects and services, due regard to all the risks attendant to being associated with a human rights and social justice organization that serves the LGBT population.

### *Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy*

An Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy to create the framework within which the work done by the organisation remains conscious the importance of the principles of equality, equity and non-discrimination in human rights. The policy was developed to support the organisation in enhancing its ability to meet the needs and expectations of employees, volunteers, interns, directors and the LGBT and ally community as well as suppliers for goods and services.

The Policy has also been modified and shared with the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica (PSOJ) which has committed to sharing it with its members. This was done given the finding from the national survey

on homophobia which found that employers would be open to having such a policy.

Staff has been sensitized about all three policies. They were also shared with key civil society partners who have expressed a willingness to adapt them for use in their respective organizations.

### *Internship Programme*

Six were selected for paid internship opportunities to facilitate their personal and professional development and provide them with an opportunity to apply some of the skills acquired during the training programme. Interns were placed at Jamaicans for Justice, St. Catherine Youth Information Centre (Ministry of Youth), Mary Seacole Hall (UWI), Eve for Life and Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition. At the end of the internship, interns gained general understanding of event planning and coordination, insight and hands-on experience in organizing and running activities, programmes and conducting research, and hands-on experience in working with and for vulnerable and marginalized communities as well as becoming more familiar with working with a non-profit organisation.

### **J-FLAG Cares Initiative**

In our thrust towards national development, we launched J-FLAG Cares to promote volunteerism, civic duty and social responsibility among LGBT people and allies. Through the efforts of our volunteers and staff, several initiatives were undertaken to help the most vulnerable in our society, fundraise for various projects and charities, and take care of the environment. Among the many activities undertaken and supported, #TeamEquality participated in four charity runs - Grace Education Run, Sigma, Mobay City Run, and Food for The Poor Run.



Individuals participated three beach clean-up activities. Staff and volunteers also participated in labour day projects across the island, including the painting of Seaview Gardens Primary and the Open Heart Charitable Mission. Our Western Jamaica Ambassadors partnered with the Open Heart Charitable Soup Kitchen to provide meals to over 300 persons in St. James and collected signatures for a petition to ban styrofoam in Jamaica. Volunteers also gave their time to support the Jamaica Society for the Blind's assessment on persons with disabilities and Club Elite's Back-to-School Retreat in Seaview Gardens.

### Support Services Interventions

The Support Services Department provided counselling, referrals, documentation of human rights violations, personal development planning/treatment planning, and outreach activities (meal provision and care packages distribution) to more than 500 persons island wide.

Sixty-Seven incidents of human rights violations were reported.

### International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT)

#### *The 4th Annual Larry Chang Human Rights Symposium*

The Annual Larry Chang Human Rights Symposium is held annually around the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT).

The theme for the symposium was "Celebrating a Community of Love." It provided a space for LGBT people and their partners to share their love stories to challenge misconceptions about community. Approximately 350 persons attended the symposium which provided a space for the Jamaican LGBT community to come together and celebrate and reflect on

the strides that are being made in Jamaica to improve the human rights situation.

#### *LGBT Courtesy Calls/Advocacy Meetings*

In May, to observe the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT), we convened 19 advocacy meetings with Ministers, other parliamentarians, business leaders, other stakeholders with 40 LGBT Jamaicans and allies to discuss issues affecting the community. The meetings sought to enhance their understanding of the human rights situation for the community. The meetings provided policy and decision-makers with an opportunity to dialogue with LGBT Jamaicans about laws and policies as well as socio-cultural issues affecting them, their daily experiences, and their concerns and ideas about national development. The number of meetings convened increased by 58% and community members' involvement in the meetings by nearly 140%.

### Improving Access to Non-Discriminatory and Responsive Health Services for LGBT People

We continued our partnership with the Ministry of Health and National Family Planning Board (NFPB) to implement a multifaceted programme towards improving access to health services that are non-discriminatory and responsive to the needs of LGBT people across the island. The programme encompass training for healthcare and community outreach workers, advocacy capacity building for transgender persons and gay, bisexual and other MSM, promotion of human rights and health information and services on social media, policy and decision-maker education and outreach, research and development and/or amendment of policies and protocols, among other things.

### ***Healthcare Workers' Training***

Healthcare workers from across the island were trained around issues relating to gender and sexuality and human rights. Trainings were conducted with medical and frontline personnel in health facilities and outreach workers from the Regional Health Authorities and NFPB. Knowledge and understanding of issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity coming into the training was low. At the end of the training, participants indicated that they felt informed, empowered, more aware and have greater respect and appreciation for the LGBT community and are more confident to provide services to the population.

### ***Advocacy Training***

Transgender persons, gay, bisexual and other MSM, and staff from NGOs participated in a series of trainings to build their capacity to advocate for improved HIV and other health services. Participants were engaged in interactive sessions to raise their awareness about the healthcare needs of marginalized populations and effective advocacy strategies. At the end of the training, they created videos and other content for use on social media and developed advocacy activities to be undertaken individually and/or through their respective organisations.

### ***Health for All HIV and AIDS Forum***

Two high level fora were hosted National HIV/STI/TB Programme (Ministry of Health), National Family Planning Board (NFPB), UNAIDS, J-FLAG, Jamaica Youth Advocacy Network (JYAN), United National Population Fund (UNFPA), Jamaica AIDS Support for Life (JASL), Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition (CVC), Eve for Life, USAID/PEPFAR and United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to discuss key issues around the national HIV and AIDS response.

On June 13, 2016, along with our partners

the Health for All Forum: Putting Youth and Adolescents at the Heart of the HIV Response was undertaken to highlight the critical need to increase the provision of and access to services to adolescents and youth and for their greater involvement in the national HIV and AIDS response. Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security, Senator The Hon. Parnell Charles Jnr. was the keynote speaker and moderated by Dr. Sanneta Myrie, Miss World 3rd Runner Up 2015, Miss World Caribbean 2015 and Miss Jamaica World 2015.

On December 1, 2016, which is celebrated as World AIDS Day, the Health for All: Celebrating the Gains, Meeting the Challenges forum to celebrate Jamaica's progress in stabilizing HIV infections at 1.6% and reducing AIDS-related deaths by 64% between 2004 and 2015. Minister of Health, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton and Maura Barry-Boyle, USAID Mission Director brought remarks. Dr. Shannon Hader, Director of the Division of Global HIV and Tuberculosis at the US Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) was the keynote speaker and hosted by Veterinarian, Media Personality and Miss Jamaica World 2005, Dr. Terri-Karelle Reid.

### ***Other activities***

Healthcare workers from St Mary, St Ann and Portland were also sensitized specifically around transgender issues. IEC materials addressing stigma and discrimination were disseminated to healthcare facilities across the island. The #BelIntheKnow social media campaign was launched to raise awareness about HIV testing, treatment, care and support and provide information on where key populations can access these services. We completed a Human Rights Curriculum to standardize human rights trainings among NGOs. NGO Capacity Assessment of six organizations was completed and a Technical Assistance Plan developed for them. A World AIDS Kickoff Jog was held with the

Minister of Health, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton to promote healthy lifestyles among people living with HIV. A Guide for Healthcare workers on Interacting and Engaging with Key Populations was developed. Four issue briefs were developed and disseminated to parliamentarians.

## RESEARCH

### ***Diversifying LGBT Rights Advocacy***

We completed a research paper which situates the LGBT person within the Jamaican legal framework, with a view of determining how well that person is protected and identifying what lacunae exist within the law that would make that person a 'second-class citizen'. The research provided an analysis of the laws related to, inter alia, equality and non-discrimination, sexual offences, family law, provocation, trusts and citizenship and enumerated the limitations placed on LGBT persons specifically and illustrate what that means in their everyday lives.

Avenues for addressing the limitations were identified. Recommendations were made to organisations on how to diversify their points of advocacy on LGBT rights so as to fully reflect the legal situation of LGBT persons, beyond the limitations of "the buggery law", and articulate the various ways in which their rights are being and could be violated and, in some cases, upheld.

### ***National Attitudes to LGBT People and on Homophobia and Development***

Two national studies were published - The National Survey on Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Same-Sex Relationships which was conducted by Market Research Survey Limited and the Homophobia and Development: The Case of Jamaica which was edited by Rochelle McFee and Elroy Galbraith with a foreword by Lee Badget.

There were several key findings in National Survey such as employers' willingness to develop an equal opportunity and diversity policy which suggest that the human rights situation for LGBT Jamaicans is improving. The study on homophobia and development included a survey among more than 300 LGBT people and found that some people have had to change location, avoid public spaces such as restaurants and shops, have not been denied health services but experience unnecessary testing and questions, and have been threatened more than they have experienced physical violence, among other things because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Both studies have been widely discussed in several spaces, including the media, and the Beyond Homophobia Symposium as well as with parliamentarians, government officials and business leaders. We have found these two studies to be particularly instructive for how we design our programmes and initiatives, including as especially for our work with the LGBT community and advocacy for policy and legislative improvements.

### ***Application of the 'buggery law' and gross indecency law***

The research on the application of the buggery law and gross indecency law was conducted to determine the practical impact of the offence in terms of arrests, charges and prosecutions for same. This was an update to the "Criminalizing Consensual Private Intimacy" research that was done by Anika Gray in 2012. The findings of the 2016 Update included data on the reports, arrests, prosecution, convictions and sentencing for buggery for the years 2011 - 2015. There was also an analysis of the international obligation of Jamaica to repeal these laws and its relative place in the Commonwealth Caribbean regarding the criminalization of consensual same sex intercourse.





## **Community and Outreach**

### **Expansion of the Volunteer Programme**

At the end of the year, there were close to 200 persons registered as volunteers with the organization. Volunteers participated in several charitable initiatives across the country. The initiatives included beach clean-ups, charitable run/walk, soup kitchen and other feeding programmes, painting, and back-to-school treat.

### **Community Activist Network**

We engaged fifteen LGBT persons and allies from western and central Jamaica to establish a community activist network through which persons were trained to act as ambassadors for the organisation in their parishes. Action plans were developed for both regions to guide their work with the office in Kingston.

### **Community Socials/Lymes**

We hosted eleven social gatherings for the LGBT and ally community - targeting young people primarily - towards addressing internal

stigma, engendering a sense of community and providing a safe space for people to gather, socialize and talk about issues that are pertinent to their livelihood and well-being with each other. Each gathering is different - patrons watch movies and discuss key issues. On one occasion - June 18, we hosted a memorial to honour the lives of the persons who died in the Orland Tragedy at Pulse Night Club and on coming out day we hosted one in which persons shared their coming out stories.

### **LGBT Party Promoters Lyme**

As part of efforts to continuously improve the relationship between J-FLAG and LGBT event promoters, we hosted two promoters' meeting and lymes. Conversations were centred around how J-FLAG can effectively and consistently engage party spaces, and how promoters, in their role as gatekeepers and influencers, can use their agency and social capital to increase the participation of members of the community in J-FLAG's initiatives. The engagement facilitated the participation of promoters in advertising for PRiDE JA 2016.



# PRiDE JA 2016

## Halo Pop Week

HaloPop Week - an OutCaribe initiative that supports LGBT friendly businesses - was once more in play, as it was in 2015, with eateries on board to grant discounts to diners who used the #HaloPopWeek Code. Participating restaurants were Opa!, Susie's Bakery & Coffee Shop, Tea Tree Crêperie and Chilitos. Several organised outings were made to these eateries over the weeks leading up to PRiDE Week. The Committee along with volunteers and members of Equality Youth patronised participating eateries. Behind the scenes meal preparations in participating eateries picked-up a lot of views on social media and enticed supporters to support the #HaloPopWeek initiative.

## PRiDE Sports Day

Sports Day preparations brought the buzz in the weeks leading up to PRiDE JA, and sent the community into frenzied preparation. The houses, comically named after popular dancehall hit songs - 'Ray Bans', 'Neegle Eye', 'Bruk Back' and 'One Drop' - began to recruit team members to participate in the featured Sports Day activities. Teams competed in cheerleading, netball, football, volleyball, track, bun eating, beer drinking and three-legged race. The community's involvement in Sports Day was tremendous, and it boosted and set the tone for the reception of the PRiDE JA events that were to follow.

The day began with a parade around the field at the University of the West Indies (UWI) Mona Bowl where teams waved Jamaican, rainbow and trans flags as symbols of pride for their country and community. This was followed by a spirited cheerleading competition inside the gymnasium, which was won by team





Bruk Back. This then segued into the more anticipated activities of the day - track events, football, volleyball, netball bun eating and beer drinking contests. The frequent alternation of sweltering heat and sporadic downpours of rain did nothing to damper the spirits of the athletes and over 500 supporters who were determined to set the tone for a charged week of events. At the end of the day's event, team Bruk Back emerged as PRiDE JA Sports Day Champions.

### PRiDE Opening Ceremony

Stemming off the excitement of the Sports Day, persons gathered at the Residence of the Canadian High Commissioner to Kingston, for the PRiDE JA 2016 Opening Ceremony on the evening of August 1st.

The official opening of the 2nd Annual Jamaica Pride Celebrations was attended by a cross section of persons, including LGBT persons, academics, diplomats, activists, and allies.

J-FLAG's Executive Director, Dane Lewis and Political Officer at the Canadian High Commission, Colleen Pigeon brought greetings and welcomed patrons to another historic celebration for the LGBT community.

Member of Parliament for Manchester Central, and former Minister of National Security - Peter Bunting delivered a passionate address in which he pledged his continued commitment to promote the human rights and equality of Jamaicans who are LGBT.

The Pride Awards for service and support were announced for Jamaica AIDS Support for Life, Dr. Michael Abrahams, Latoya 'Thugz' Brown, Knutsford Court Hotel, and Lifetime Achievement Award to Monique Rowe. PRiDE JA Co-Chair, Neish McLean then shyly proceeded to cut the 'pride cake' with his partner Katisha. Following that, he raised the pride flag and officially declared PRiDE JA 2016 open.







## **PRiDE Open Mic: Kingston and Montego Bay**

Amidst threats of a thunderstorm, plans were well underway to host the PRiDE Open Mic night concurrently in Kingston and Montego Bay at the South Beach Café and UWI Western Campus Students' Lounge respectively. In Kingston, close to 200 persons turned out to enjoy and participate in the audience-centred programme.

The evening began with servings of hors d'oeuvres and beverages under the subtle yet colourful decor of the venue, which provided patrons with the perfect atmosphere to intermingle and reminisce the absolute joy of the Sports Day. Approximately ten acts turned up to showcase their talent pieces in poetry, music (including lip-synching) and dance in the jam-packed venue.

In Montego Bay, just over sixty (60) patrons showed up to celebrate a community of love. The second city's entertainment line-up featured open mic performances and a karaoke show, and though camera shy, the patrons did not withhold their talent expressions. There was a resounding approval of Carla Moore's performance of select spoken- word pieces; Carla is a UWI Western Campus Lecturer at the Institute of Gender and Development Studies.

The community in Montego-Bay and Western Jamaica by extension has urged J-FLAG to continue with these community-building initiatives.

## **PRiDE Jamaica Symposium: Love in Families**

Storytelling is an amazing tool for advocacy and activism. A personal story advances advocacy further and faster than generic articles or from tales told anonymously. The PRiDE JA symposium themed 'Love in Families' set out to demonstrate the power of love as a tool to overcome challenges and adversities.

The symposium featured a four-member panel comprising of three parents and one sibling of individuals who identify as LGBT; the speakers - Stevonne Nugent, Odette Dobson, Michael Williams and Shereen Stewart were the focal point of the symposium.

The speakers each delivered short orations on their family lives and how they have treated with their relatives since knowing they identified as LGBT community members. Panelists spoke of their fears and shows of resilience in embracing their loved ones despite the stigma attached to them merely being. The remarks resounded with the audience and were tear-jerking in some sections.



Adding to the programme's dynamism was the regular social media check-ins led by Jaevion Nelson. This feature allowed for persons in the audience and those not present to give feedback on the event. The talented Nickieshia Barnes also graced the stage to deliver a heartfelt performance to the delight of the audience.

This symposium brought out once more, what is customary at J-FLAG's events – substantive discourse with lessons to take away, and from which to learn. Over 350 persons witnessed the power of love.

### PRiDE Trade Show and Gallery

The Courtleigh Auditorium was home for the day, hosting the first PRiDE JA Trade Show and Gallery exhibitions. Several members

of the community who are business owners and artists were invited to showcase their merchandise and talents at no cost to them. There was a bevy of patrons throughout the day. On sale were novelty items, beauty care products, paintings and household products such as vases and incense, amidst the drawings, paintings and uniquely crafted pieces of art that were tastefully displayed throughout the day for viewing. Fetish Secrets, Ophelia's Kitchen, Timuna Fisher, Deanne Baker and Earth Elements were among the seven (7) businesses that were present on the day. The Jamaica Aids Support for Life - a committed long-standing ally - was also present all day, administering free HIV tests, supplying condoms and providing counselling in a specially cordoned off section of the venue.



There was tremendous support for the day's activities and social media was abuzz with activity throughout the day, with patrons showcasing their shopping hauls and vendors' appreciation of PRiDE JA's provision of a space for entrepreneurs and artists to showcase their work and peddle merchandise.

Two viewings of the PRiDE JA 2015 documentary were also scheduled as part of the Gallery. This gave patrons a chance to reflect on the first staging of PRiDE JA, as well as gave those who were unable to attend, the opportunity to share in the experience and the work behind the scenes.

### **The Other Side of Paradise with Staceyann Chin**

J-FLAG's women's affiliate Women's Empowerment for Change (WE-Change) provided the icing on the day's cake by hosting an evening with Staceyann Chin after the close of the Trade Show. This highly anticipated event did not disappoint, as Staceyann held a rapt audience from the start to the finish of her performance.

Using anecdotes of her childhood, she delved into themes of gender inequality, sexual abuse and depression. She was able to connect even deeper with them by breaking the fourth wall and collecting feedback from members of the audience during her monologues.

Staceyann's raw and personal performances told of the influence of the church on her socialisation and how it affected her identity as a lesbian and the betrayal she felt by those who were supposed to be support systems - her pastor and aunt - turned out to be betrayers of her hope and trust.

In a very open, almost conversational tone, she spoke of her coming-out experience while in university and her early explorations of her sexuality as an open, self-identified lesbian who was sexually assaulted - an assault that drove her away from her Jamaica.

In true fashion of top performers, Staceyann could ad lib with effortless grace in sections and punctuate her excerpts with lewd humour and sexual overtones, much to the delight of a predominantly women audience.

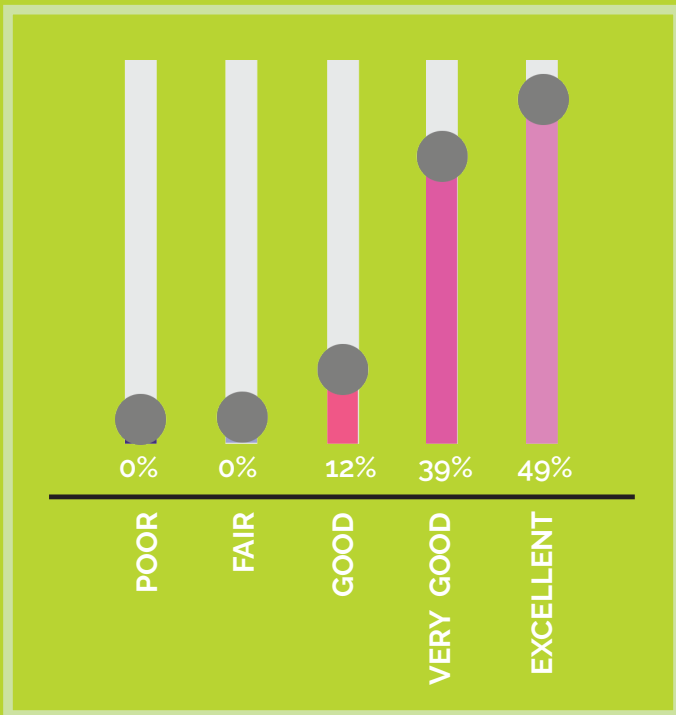
She could unpack and share her challenges with conceiving or 'beating her biological clock' as a lesbian, and tickled the audience by unashamedly telling women what to expect as they age.

Staceyann spoke with solemnity of her own feelings of being a coward activist, having left Jamaica to live abroad where it's more 'comfortable', while others stayed, fought and continue to fight to gain access to equal rights and justice. In her own words 'I never thought I'd be using the words pride and Jamaica in the same sentence, much less to be performing here.'

The audience left Staceyann's performance with a greater appreciation of the struggle lesbians often contend with in their personal and advocacy lives.



## PERCEPTION OF THE PERFORMANCE OF J-FLAG



100% felt that J-FLAG have performed in the range of good to excellent

## LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH J-FLAG AS AN ORGANIZATION



Of the 104 persons surveyed, 102 persons responded to the question regarding their satisfaction with J-FLAG as a LGBT organization. A combined 9% where either somewhat satisfied or not satisfied with the organization but the majority of respondents were either very satisfied (52%) or satisfied (39%) with J-FLAG.

Similarly, between June 1 and August 19 (Note: There were only 3 responses in August), 143 people from across the island (Note: Westmoreland and St. Mary not included) responded to an online survey which, among other things, asked persons to rate our performance.

**73.43% of persons rated our performance in the range of good to excellent.**

### HOW WOULD YOU RATE J-FLAG'S PERFORMANCE FOR 2016 SO FAR?







## PRiDE JA Feeding Initiative

PRiDE JA 2016 Committee's Co-Chair Nicolette Bryan, led the PRiDE Feeding Initiative - J-FLAG Cares. An ambitious target of feeding five thousand (5,000) people who were identified as less fortunate was set. On Friday August 5th, more than forty (40) volunteers turned up to Rainbow House to assist with sandwich preparation to be delivered to various homes, care facilities and homeless persons, inclusive of displaced LGBT community members.

More than 20 organisations including Best Care Facility, Maxfield Park Children's Home, Poor Relief, Mustard Seed Communities, Glenhope Place of Safety, Open Heart Charitable Mission, Jamaica National

Children's Home, and the Christian Boys' Home were some of the beneficiaries of the outreach initiative.

While the feeding initiative was primarily urban centric, provisions were made to get as many parishes involved in the programme, and eight parishes were serviced by additional volunteers in rural Jamaica. As such, in addition to Kingston & St. Andrew, there were partners in the parishes of St. Elizabeth, Manchester, Clarendon, St. Catherine, St. James and St. Thomas who assisted in distribution. These partners were critical and should be applauded for their efforts in assisting the committee in surpassing the 5,000 target and reaching just over 5,130 beneficiaries.

## PRiDE Black Tie Gala

Elegance, decadence and photo-opps were the order of the evening at the Black-Tie Gala. Almost 200 patrons were plied with wine and delectable cocktails while feting to various genres of pop music over-toned by the egging of the Disc Jocks David and Tremma. Upon entering, the decorative lights and trimmings foreshadowed the vibrant evening of celebrations that laid ahead; the wooden flooring provided patrons with the buffer needed to dance around, unimpeded by usual pitfalls of outdoor venues.

The diversity of the patronage ranged from youth to middle-aged folk from the LGBT and ally community. The vibe of the event was fuelled by the inclusive bar which had an array of wine and other beverage selections. The party continued until after midnight when the gradual wind-down began and patrons started to make their way home. The Black-Tie event was a successful venture, enough so that it is warranted to be a mainstay calendar event in subsequent stagings of PRiDE JA.

## PRiDE JA Family Picnic

In the words of Fashion and Lifestyle trans blogger, AshSlay, '... the energy was nothing but love. If the devil was working he was on day off because from the music, vibes, weather and people it was too perfect.' Pearly Beach in St. Ann, provided the perfect setting for over four hundred and fifty (450) patrons to bask in the optimally tempered sunshine along the rainbow-coloured beach and vibe to the musical stylings of Disc Jockeys David and Ravas.

Transportation was organised to bus just over 200 persons from Kingston in addition to other patrons making the trek from parishes all over the island by personal/private transportation. The turnout was a positive reflection of PRiDE JA's commitment to creating intergenerational and family spaces.

The family picnic provided the perfect air for reflection on the week of activities that was coming to a climactic close, and was the ideal way to close PRiDE JA - with music, food, water slides and desirable swimming conditions.

It was heartening to see families with children relaxing amidst the youth who were bustling along the coast of the beach.







