Ten High Schools for 2nd Annual Rita Marley Foundation (JA) Public Speaking Competition

It will be a spectacular event. The Rita Marley Foundation (JA) has broadened next year’s competition with the inclusion of more schools and even greater prizes. Ten high schools confirmed participation and each has selected its most articulate student to compete for the coveted title.

The 2nd annual Rita Marley Foundation Public Speaking Competition & 12 annual Africa Unite Youth Symposium are held in unison to celebrate the 71st earth day of Hon. Robert Nesta Marley OM (Bob Marley). It is slated for Friday, February 12th, 2016 at the University of The West Indies, Mona (Multi-Functional Rm. at the Main Library). The theme, “Harambe.” A powerful word which means working together in one love, peace and harmony.

The event seeks to help nurture/develop articulate, confident and eloquent speakers; encourage the youth to provide realistic solutions to negative events and challenges that impact them; empower the youth through increased knowledge and experience; commemorate the lives and teachings of our

Main sponsor & Rita Marley Foundation (JA). (L-R) Lisa D’Oyen (director HIC) & Rosemary Duncan (manager RMF(JA). At press interview for event.
Glenmuir High School is the reigning Rita Marley Foundation (JA) Public Speaking champion. Xaundre Mohansingh impressed judges and audience with two masterfully delivered speeches. He will be defending his title.

The 1st place winner will receive the Rita Marley Foundation (JA) Trophy for Excellence in Public Speaking, book grant and other superb prizes.

**TOPIC**

We know of legendary women who led their peoples and nations to great heights. We know the adage “besides/behind every great man, there’s a great woman” and “without a woman, a man would not be born.” Therefore the topic for the 1st round of competition, **Women are the foundation& driving force for success.** Speeches will take the typical pros and cons styling. Some speakers (students) will deliver speeches in favour of that topic; while others will speak in opposition to that topic.
Immediately following the first round of competition, three (3) students will be selected to move on to the finals. It will be held on the same date and at the same venue. Finalists will be issued an impromptu topic and given 30 minutes to prepare a speech to be delivered before a distinguished panel of judges and audience. At the end of the Finals the judges will choose 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners respectively and the Rita Marley Foundation (JA) will award prizes to each.

SPONSORS

Special thanks to all our sponsors through whose support this important event is possible. Heart Institute of the Caribbean Foundation; Wisynco Group; Tastee Ltd; Spanish Court Hotel; Suzie's Bakery.

Letters from Konkonuru Basic School, Ghana

Penpal Programme A Mega Success

Hooray!!! Forty eight little faces beam with excitement upon receiving letters and cards from pen pals thousands of miles across the oceans. "Yeah, a letter for me, a letter for me" they yell. Each note is received with great jubilation and each response sent with tremendous delight.

The students at the Holy Trinity Basic School in Kingston Jamaica and the Konkonuru Basic School in Konkonuru Ghana are involved in a letter writing exchange (pen pal) programme. A Rita Marley Foundation initiative designed to have them learn about other cultures; practice communication skills, improve writing skills and acquire a foreign language.
For the five year olds, these are their first pen pals, first letters, first foreign friends and they are having a lot of fun while learning.

Teachers express the programme has helped students with reading, writing and communicating effectively.

Prior to the close of the school term for the festive season, the students penned each other heartfelt messages of peace, love and hope for 2016.

Playground Equipment for Konkonuru Basic School

The Rita Marley Foundation donated a play set equipped with swings, slides and wonderful rides to the Konkonuru Basic School in Ghana. The play set is a blessing. Prior to its arrival, students had no games or toys. They improvised with discarded items strewn about the school yard.
During a ceremony organized by the Rita Marley Foundation (Ghana) the community members, staff and students sang out praises to Nana Afua Adobea 1 (Queen of Development) and the directors for this splendid gift to the school.

More Clean Safe Pipe Borne Water for Konkonuru

The first borehole was completed in March 2015 at the Konkonuru Basic School. The Rita Marley Foundation and Water for Humanity are supplying two additional boreholes for Konkonuru. The arid rural community is populated by 3000 persons, occupying 300 houses, with 10 persons each. Safe, clean water a scarce resource. This summer, the Rita Marley Foundation (Jamaica) sort additional funding from Water For Humanity and approval was granted. Construction will soon commence on the farm and at the Alpha & Omega Home for the Aged.

The Rita Marley Foundation will present residents with training on water hygiene, protection and conservation. A committee comprising community elders and Rita Marley Foundation representatives will also be trained in maintenance and repairs.

Words cannot express the depth of our thankfulness to Water for Humanity, The organization has assisted the Rita Marley Foundation in its mission to promote education, good health and welfare among the youth and socially and economically disadvantaged communities through educational and empowerment projects. Many Thanks to Mr. Steven Herbert and the wonderful team at Water For Humanity.

A Remarkable Year for Mrs. Rita Marley, Doctor of Letters & Living Legend

On October 30, the University of the West Indies, Mona Jamaica conferred Mrs. Rita Marley with an Honorary Doctor of Letters Degree (DLITT) for exemplary works in preserving Jamaica’s music and culture and for being the driving force in keeping Bob Marley’s music and message alive.

Flanked by family, friends, staff and fans, Dr. Marley exuded pure grace and strength as the Public Orator narrated her life’s journey. The citation was met with thunderous applause by hundreds in attendance.
Chancellor, the spirit of Marley is here, in the person of our honorary graduand, the Queen of Queens, Empress Rita Marley. On such an elevated platform, the exhilaration is so great this morning, Chancellor, I wonder if it might be appropriate to sing that sweet anthem of euphoria: “I want to get high, so high, One draw, One draw”! But, Chancellor, I can hear you whispering urgently, “pull up Mr Selector, Public Orator, wheel and come again!” For on this occasion, if we are not careful, we might stir up a sing-along of such legendary Marley songs of the greatest musical tradition, Reggae, that Jamaica has gifted the world. You will forgive me if you find superlatives afloat in the orator’s mouth today because such well known tunes as “One Love,” “Three Little Birds,” “Redemption Song,” “Buffalo Soldier,” “Get Up, Stand Up,” and “No Woman, Nuh Cry” have brought such unparalleled inspiration across the entire globe. And here, right here, we have in the flesh, Rita Marley, the musical muse of arguably the greatest reggae artiste the world has seen. The muse is defined, Chancellor, as: “a woman, or a force personified as a woman, who is the source of inspiration for a creative artist.” Rita Marley is that woman, is that force, is that source of the creative overflow of that period and beyond. She has also been matriarch of the Marley family, as well as the Marley Foundation, who, since Bob’s passing has continued to build, with the Marley family, a globally recognised musical empire. Never mind that new television series called Empire, this is the original musical family business, home grown, and internationally developed. This morning, let us pause to reflect on what Rita has meant to this music and what this music has meant to Rita, Rasta, Jamaica and the world.

The story of her life is a truly Jamaican story which is often one of both trial and triumph, of adversity and its ability to reveal our resilience and of the power of faith, in this case, the “conquering lion of the tribe of Judah,” Rastafarian faith, to propel a people forward. Born Alfarita Constantia Anderson in Cuba in 1946, she grew up in Trench Town, Jamaica, first between Beda’s (her mother’s) house and her maternal grandmother Yaya’s house until age 5 when her parents separated. She remained with her father, Leroy Anderson, and brother, Wesley, in that community and later was placed in the care of her Aunt Viola, affectionately
called Vie-Vie. Under the care of the strict, forthright and vivacious Vie, who was dressmaker, wedding planner, coal shop operator, in short, entrepreneur, Rita grew up learning how to make life in Trench Town. Her memoir details the difficulties of life in Trench Town, the emotional tug-of-war around her parents’ distance from her life and making a home in an extended family. Yet, Aunt Viola provided stability and she attended Central Branch All Age and Merl Grove High School before training to become a Practical Nurse. However, it was music in her blood and on her mind. Having come from a musical family—father, a saxophonist; her Aunt Viola a chorister and her Uncle Cleveland, a big baritone singer at weddings and other celebrations—Rita was destined for a musical career.

One of the early defining moments was the chance to participate in a musical contest, the “Vere John’s Opportunity Knocks Talent Show” produced on RJR. She sang “The Lord’s Prayer” (Mario Lanzo style) and won the contest. As she records in her memoir: “I went up on stage and for the first time experienced the applause of an audience. … And from that day on, I said, “hey, I’m gonna be a singer.” She then attended, what Marcia Griffiths has been credited with calling, Jamaica’s Motown and Music School, Studio One, where she met and made music with some of Jamaica’s great reggae artistes, including Lee Scratch Perry, Bunny Wailer, Peter Tosh, and Robert Nesta Marley, whom she married in 1966. From singing support harmonies in the “Soulettes” backup group, to singing with the Wailers, to forming the famous I-Threes group (with Judy Mowatt and Marcia Griffiths) and then to launch her own solo career, Rita has been a melody maker, with reggae music as her life’s passion. She has had a number of successful collaboration and solo albums, including the 1992 Grammy nomination, “We Must Carry On.” Since the death of her beloved Bob, she has become a kind of music mogul, setting up The Robert Marley Foundation, the Bob Marley Museum, the Bob Marley Trust and the Robert Marley Group of Companies. She is also Head of Tuff Gong International. When the Gleaner carried the announcement of Rita’s inclusion in UWI’s list of honorees this year, one on-line respondent to the news wrote, inter alia: “go deh, Sista Rita! You have been keeping the fire blazing.”

“Like logwood burning in the night,” Rita Marley has continued to keep the Marley Brand blazing across the globe. Yet, Chancellor, her story is not complete without noting her philanthropic and mentoring roles. Maybe because she grew up in an extended family, Rita has demonstrated a big-heartedness in accepting in her family Marley children not her own. In addition, she has adopted 35 children in Ethiopia, founded the Alpha and Omega Home for the Aged in Ghana and established the Rita Marley Foundation to “work towards the alleviation of poverty for peoples of developing countries,” part of which is to ensure that boys and girls receive an education. Learning about Marcus Garvey, black power and Africa early in her life from her aunt, she decided to make Ghana her home, which is, for her, the gateway to Africa and has now become an Honorary Ghanaian Citizen. She has also been awarded the Order of Distinction from the Jamaican Government, the Marcus Garvey Lifetime Award, Living Legend Award, Leading Light Award, the Bridge Builders Award, the African Women of Excellence Lifetime Achievement Award and she has been named Personality of the Year by the Ministry of Tourism, Ghana, the Nana Afua Adobea (Queen of Development) in Ghana and inducted in the Caribbean Hall of Fame. Now, Chancellor, from an institution where the liberated weeds of wisdom waft up to the heavens, confer your blessings on the creative industries, affirming the value of creativity in the upliftment and livity of a people—as you use the authority vested in you by the Council and Senate of this University, to confer on Alfarita Constantia Marley, Reggae Queen, Muse of Bob, family matriarch, business mogul, philanthropist and Rastafarian woman of faith, the degree of Doctor of Letters, honoris causa.
On September 11, The UN Women & AWEA Roundtable Discussion on Global African Women’s Issues convened at the UN Women’s Conference Room. Chaired by H.E. Dr. Erieka Bennett (Head of AU-DAF) and Excellency Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (Former Deputy President of South Africa, Executive Director UN Women). The discussion commenced with a minute of silence for 9/11 victims. Fourteen persons (mostly AWEA honorees) attended.

The African Women of Excellence Awards honorees discussed their life and their works with the group.

Mrs. Marley's message:

Give Thanks to the Almighty, I humbly receive the award and appreci-love the recognition for my works.

It is a special moment in time and we should give thanks for the privilege. The Rita Marley Foundation is a childhood dream made into reality. I was raised in the ghetto of Trenchtown Jamaica. My father Leroy Anderson, his sister, Aunty Viola (Aunty Vi) and my elder brother Wesley Anderson cared for me. I've being assisting the poor from my early childhood. My journey started there. From those early days I learned how to share as there were many in need. Sharing is Caring. I was a voice for the poor people and assisted with Sunday School programs in the community. At the ages of 15-16 years, I was trained as a practical nurse and graduated at the age of 18. I gave my service to the people at the poor house. A government operated home
where many needy persons lived.

I was educated at Central Branch on Slip Road in Jamaica and at Marigold High School, an extension of Dunrobin High School. Education was my priority and I maintained self respect and refused to be distracted.

In those days I was called Gaddy. It means godmother. I was a voice for the poor and spoke to Members of Parliament (MP) on issues affecting them and how best to help. My Aunt was a seamstress and I used clothing to create dolls for the girls in Trenchtown. In those days we did not know about Barbie dolls.

My birth name is Alfarita Constania Anderson. Names given to me by my Cuban ancestors. My father Leroy Anderson was a saxophonist and I inherited his musical talents. I met Bob, my husband Robert Nesta Marley in Trenchtown. He was born in the parish of St. Ann which is also the birthplace of Marcus Garvey. Bob always told me I was a Queen and treated me as a Queen. Bob and I were made for love and our relationship blossomed. We got married on February 11, 1966, a few days after my husband’s 21st earth day. We brought forth our children. A blessed and beautiful family.

The more we give, the more we receive. I realized the need for charitable foundations to improve the lives of those less fortunate and I was blessed with the ability to make them a reality. This was also God’s will. For those reasons, I founded the Bob Marley Foundation and the Rita Marley Foundation.

Today we have lived to see our great potential. My Aunt taught me about Marcus Garvey. The man who taught us about black power, the black movement and a lot about Africa. I always wanted to be there. I went to Ghana since it is the gateway to Africa. I also had the privilege to travel to Ethiopia and several other countries in Africa as a singer and provide that opportunity to others. Africans are special people and we are children of God. Marcus Garvey told us, when you see a black king, you see a black God. I regard HIM Haile Selassie 1 as the black king of whom Marcus Garvey propheticized.

I grew up black as a black woman keen on my identity as a black queen. My mantra has been "Say it loud. I am black and proud."

One again, I give tremendous thanks to the organizers of this event. I am happy and honored to open the eyes and minds of young girls to love their African identity. As my husband said in his song "No Woman No Cry. Oh little
sister don’t shed no tears cause everything is gonna be alright. "He also said "So much trouble in the world. All we have to do is give a little.”

I have over 100 grandchildren and I am also a great grandmother. I thank God for the blessings. I ask my sisters to be strong and we can do it!

Especially Dr. Erieka Bennett. Be strong, hats off to you. Give Thanks. One Heart, One Aim, One Destiny. Africa for us all. Harambe.

Other AWEA Honorees on their Journeys & Message to Women:

**Judge Julia Sarkodie-Mensah** stated that she is a Ghanaian currently based in Nassau, Bahamas. Her mandate is to reform the criminal justice system in the Bahamas. She started the first cosmetology business in Botswana and provided South African musicians, including Hugh Masekela, with land for construction of a mobile studio.

Her message to young women:

*Of messages pure and true,*  
*Sayin, this is my message to you-ou-ou:*  
©Bob Marley Music Inc.
"… always go a step further than colleagues. Whatever you do, do it with confidence, diligence, commitment, patience and a teachable spirit. These are the attributes that have stirred me on. Always encourage others and put a smile on people's faces. We get back what we give out. Whatever we do take the men with us. They helped me with putting an end to female genital mutilation in Sierra Leone."

Excellency Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (Former Deputy President of South Africa, Executive Director UN Women) said "We are incredibly lucky black women in a world where racism is so intense. We have a responsibility to increase the number of persons who can be on top of their game. If you get it to work for the black woman, it works for everyone. On Sept. 27, 2015 Heads of State will convene in china to discuss women’s agenda.

Here are the five (5) goals of UN Women to End Harmful Practices Against Women:

✴ End discrimination against women
✴ End violence against women (trafficking, rape etc.)
✴ Recognize unpaid care workers. (It entrenches gender inequality. Accessible and affordable childcare should be provided)
✴ End female genital mutilation
✴ In 2030 all countries should obtain gender equality"

Mrs. Cecilia Anim (President Royal College of Nursing Council). She is a Ghanaian living in the UK. Nurse Anim heads the largest nursing organization in the world with 435,000 members. She is also an activist in the fight for equal rights for women. Mrs. Anim’s advice to women “…be courageous and innovative. Lead from the front and encourage those behind you and do not be afraid to fail. Always have lots of iron in the fire. Thus, if one fails you have options. We need to work jointly with men. Have networks and partners to reach out to the world.

Dr. Gloria Bozeman Herndon (President & CEO GB Global Group). A Nigerian based in the U.S. Dr. Herndon said" …I applaud my father, my husband, my sons, and grandson. To appreciate men and family lets you appreciate womanhood. I had no choice, I always had to defy the norm. I had to get an education and was the first female officer in Lagos, Nigeria. My message to women is to be positive, value yourself and know how to express yourself.”

Ms.Claudette Perry (Director-Diaspora African Forum Foundation) expressed “… my perspective is from a divine sense. I believe a person must feel a sense of duty and identify with a purpose. When one has a purpose and lives it, that person is so much happier. 160 countries oppose UN Articles concerning women’s equality. We should work with those countries to change their stance.

Hon. Vivian Derryk (President & CEO, The Bridges Institute) said "You have to work twice as hard and be twice as good as a black woman. In the Ivory Coast boys attend school while girls are sent to the fields to work. My mission is to put an end to that practice. (1) We need to network across disciplines and have mechanisms in which women could work together to strategize. (2) We need a coalition to put all ideas in a coherent way to government. (3) We need to celebrate legends (female legends). (4) Implement the Side by Side Program which is very effective in Sierra Leone. Men and Women work together to resolve issues that affect them.

Finally here's a quote "Well behaved women seldom make history."
Hon. Mr. Vincent Okobi (Nigerian Ambassador) stated" I look at women from two standpoints (1) religion and (2) economic. Religion: If God wanted a man's world he would. But he created a partner. There is a man and a woman and a reason for it. Economic: "...no way a nation can develop without input of a woman. There is no way Africa could develop without a woman."

The discussion ended at 3:30pm with closing remarks by Dr. Erieka Bennett

On September 12, the African Women of Excellence Awards Ceremony was held at Warwick Hotel. Mrs. Marley is one of two distinguished women bestowed the Living Legends Award. Mrs Marley received her award for philanthropic works in Africa and Jamaica through the Rita Marley Foundation.

Acceptance Speech

I thank you all and good evening. Happy Ethiopian New Year. In Ethiopia we would all be 7 years younger. It is a great joy and achievement to receive this Living Legends Award. I want to show some love to Africa, Jamaica and our ancestors. As Bob Marley said "Africa Unite cause we're treading on the winepress for far too long." United we stand, divided we fall.

I thank the African Union Diaspora Africa Forum for recognizing my works. I accept this award on behalf of all women of Africa and the diaspora.

The Rita Marley Foundation is a childhood dream made into reality. The Foundation works in Ghana and Jamaica to improve the lives of women, children and the elderly through health, education, nutrition and community projects. The youth receive educational tools to succeed. Mothers receive skills training to support themselves. The elderly are cared for in a safe and loving environment at Alpha & Omega Home. We're continuously building boreholes in the rural community of Konkonuru in Ghana for residents to have clean, safe pipe borne water. Needy students at the Konkonuru School receive a nutritious meal daily. Basic School students in Ghana and Jamaica have formed lifelong friendships through the pen pal letter exchange program.

Mrs. Rita Marley (Living Legend)
This Living Legends Awards means that the Rita Marley Foundation is on the right path. However, I tell you that all of us gathered here this evening still have a great deal of work ahead of us; because right now in Africa young girls and women are being killed for pursuing an education. Children and women are also the most impoverished people on the continent. At this moment little girls are condemned into childhood marriages and young girls forced into prostitution; In 2015 women are victimized for being women and earn less than men for similar skills and labour. Right now in Africa women walk long distances on lonely dangerous roads to seek food and water for their families. Also the majority of people injured or killed during conflict are children and women.

In the song No Woman No Cry, Bob Marley encourages women to be strong and carry on despite our burdens and challenges. He sings “O little - little sister, please don't shed no tears; No, woman, no cry.” Bob Marley also says “So much trouble in the world. All you have to do: give a little (give a little).”

These powerful words guide and motivate me to continue working to ensure “the aged be protected, the infants nourished and cared for.” Through good works we could dry unhappy tears and bring tears of joy and hope to our people in Africa and the Diaspora. All we have to do is give a little. (cont)

Thanks Sister Desta for being a back bone in my life. I remember the days when you were my tour manager and advisor. Thanks Dr. Bennett for the vision. Again, hats off to you. We look forward to the unification of all Africans.

Again, I thank you all. Jah Bless & One Love, HARAMBE!

List of Honorees:

Living Legends:
- Mrs. Rita Marley
- Madame Xernona Clayton

African Women of Excellence Awardees
- Amb. Alice Dear
- Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka
- Judge Julia Sarkodie-Mensah
- Mrs. Vivian Derryck
- Mrs. Cecilia Anim
- Dr. Gloria Herndon
- Ms. Claudette Perry
- Ms. Florizelle Liser

CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU ALL

Singin’ dont worry about a thing, cause every little thing gonna be all right - I wont worry!
©Bob Marley Music Inc.
We need your Support to raise funds for Konkonuru Basic School

The Konkonuru Basic School in the rural community of Konkonuru Ghana, West Africa is in need of school supplies. Sharon Marley, daughter of Bob & Rita Marley has embarked on a knitting project to raise funds for the purchase of those resources.

She is creating gorgeous SCATS, each intricately and impeccably hand knitted. Available in designs & colours of your choice, the SCATS are sold for $70. To support this worthy venture, e-mail culturecornercreates@gmail.com

Your gift will help improve conditions at the Konkonuru Basic School and bring smiles to its 286 students. Harambe. !

THANKS FOR A WONDERFUL YEAR

Together we achieved great goals in 2015. We empowered the youth through educational projects; eased the burdens of persons and communities in need. However we could not have achieved our mission without you.

And so with tremendous love and sincere gratitude, we say Thank You.

As 2015 has closed and we’ve rung in the Western New Year, the Rita Marley Foundation (Jamaica & Ghana) looks forward to your continuous support in whatever way you could share. You could send donations here.

Wishing you & yours
Melkam Lidet
(Merry Christmas)
Jah Bless & One Love

Singin’ dont worry about a thing, oh no!
cause every little thing gonna be all right!
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