

Herbert Morrison hosts Sandals HIV/AIDS after-school activity

ON Friday, November 25, more than 300 students at the Herbert Morrison Technical High School turned out to support the Sandals Pre-World Aids Day activity themed ‘Show Your Moves’.

The event which aimed at engaging youths on the prevention of HIV/AIDS, created an opportunity for 26 talented students to compete and showcase their original pieces as they brought the message of abstinence across to their fellow peers through the use of drama, poetry and song.

The winners received complimentary all-day access to Beaches Negril and Beaches Sandy Bay.

The event relayed messages about sex and sexuality and HIV transmission through the use of the performing arts as well as interactive discussions with representatives from Sandals Montego Bay and Sandals Royal Caribbean.

The after-school activity started with great energy as entertainment manager from Sandals Royal Caribbean, Derrena Tate guided the programme as emcee and whose vibrant personality and down-to-earth style held the interest of the entire school population. The students were judged on three main areas — creativity, the content of the message, and how the message was communicated.

The day’s activities also included a profound speech from the junior mayor of Montego Bay and also a student of Herbert Morrison — Shaniel James.

James encouraged her fellow students to “not be fooled... and to make wise decisions. That is, to abstain from sex.” She drew reference to a young girl engaging in sexual activity at an early age may regret it.

Seventh grade student and second place winner in the ‘Show Your Moves’ competition, Tajay Robinson expressed: “My friends and I decided to enter the competition because it was a good avenue for us to share our thoughts and encourage our fellow students to abstain from sex. It was also an opportunity for us to show off our talent to our peers.”

The event is also a similar approach used by the Sandals Resorts HIV/AIDS and Youths Campaign project entitled ‘Follow Facts Not Fashion’, which was implemented in high schools located in western Jamaica in 2009.

Regional public relations manager, Khadine Daley noted “the format is really what appeals to young people and this should make it clear for those persons who have not got that message!”

Principal Fredrick Haughton also welcomed the approach used by the Sandals Foundation to reach the target group. However, he confirmed that “a sustainable programme must be in place to ensure there is impact and change in behaviour”.

Volunteers from Sandals Montego Bay, Sandals Royal Caribbean and Sandals Carlyle will continue to visit several schools in the region to help bring the message of abstinence across to the many at-risk youths living in the Montego Bay region.



Annastacia Irving (left), first-place winner in the Sandals ‘Show Your Moves’ HIV/AIDS event, collects her prizes from Miss Flagship 2011 Tina Grant.



Second-place winning trio — Tajay Robinson, Tarike Shaw and Odean Cunningham — engage their peers with a powerful and entertaining presentation on HIV/AIDS.



Sandals Royal Caribbean entertainment manager Derrena Tate enjoys a discussion with some of the students at the Herbert Morrison Technical High school during the Sandals 'Show Your Moves' HIV/AIDS after-school event.



Students enjoying the concert.