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Members of the TEACH Caribbean team and the JN Foundation show their fun side during a prize-giving ceremony for students over the summer. From left (front row) are Eva Coleman, maths teacher, Horace Clarke High; Nicole Clarke, TEACH Caribbean; Esther Tyson, school improvement coach, JN Foundation; Evorene Henry-Tracey, principal, Brimmer Vale High School; Lawrence Rowe, principal, Mile Gully High School. In the back row (from left) are Ashley Pope, Rhodes Scholar, South Africa; Franz Brown, TEACH Caribbean volunteer; Deslyn Goffe, teacher, May Day High; Jevaughn Baker, TEACH Caribbean volunteer; Annette Morris, maths teacher, Mile Gully High; and Melecia Dougherty, English teacher, Mile Gully High.

In 2015, the summer programme was expanded to include the Brimmer Vale and Horace Clarke high schools in St Mary, with support from the Jamaica National Building Society (JNBS), which selected the two participating schools from the JN Foundation's iLead educational leadership programme. Funding was also provided by the Canadian Fundraising Committee, US Fundraising Committee, GraceKennedy Foundation and the Insurance Company of the West Indies.

"The biggest improvement for the students was in English. At the start of the programme, the grade for English was 62.8 per cent. At the end of the programme, the grade for English increased to 75 per cent," said Wynette Terrelonge, executive director, TEACH Caribbean, in respect of the Mile Gully and May Day students.

"The grade for maths at the start was 31.6 per cent and at the end of the programme, the maths grade moved to 62 per cent," she added.

Students from Horace Clarke and Brimmer Vale high schools also showed tremendous improvement, although being involved in the programme for only two years. Students' grades in English moved from 30 per cent to 70 per cent, while in mathematics they improved from 24 per cent to 67 per cent.

Founder of TEACH Caribbean, Mariame McIntosh-Robinson, says that the programme has had a significant impact on the confidence of the students.

"I believe there are students who can emerge as Rhodes Scholars from this cohort," she remarked, noting that the programme has been targeted to the schools in an effort to increase support for rural, non-traditional institutions which receive less assistance than urban schools with similar challenges.

Terrelonge says TEACH will continue to support the students in the nine months remaining until the CSEC exams.

Fifteen-year-old Jahmeilea Ogeare, who emerged top girl in the Brimmer Vale and Horace Clarke High segment of the programme, with an average of 95 per cent, noted that the teaching style of the Rhodes Scholars assisted her to better comprehend the subjects.

"Miss Mayanka [Mukherji] helped me a lot to understand English language; particularly summary writing," she explained, her voice a little hoarse after activities during the week.

"And, although I've always been doing well in maths, Miss Eva Coleman helped me to stay focused," she added.

Top boy in the Mile Gully programme and budding pilot, 15-year-old Nicqus Dwyer, is eyeing a Grade 1 in mathematics, and he is assisting others to achieve a similar grade.

"I try to teach my fellow students what I've learnt, because, normally, what we learn here they teach us after school," he says. He is confident that he will do well.



Jahmeilea Ogeare, collects her trophy from JN Foundation's Chevanese Peters. In the background is Melecia Doherty, English language teacher, Mile Gully High School, one of the four high schools which participated in the TEACH Caribbean programme.



Nicqus Dwyer collects his prize from JN Foundation's Chevanese Peters. In the background is Melecia Doherty, English language teacher, Mile Gully High School.