

All Island 50-Day Happiness Tour

To help Jamaicans better cope with the daily stresses of life, Choose Life International (CLI) will embark on a 50-Day Happiness Tour across the island, beginning on March 20.

The initiative, which is also in keeping with the United Nations International Day of Happiness being observed on the same date, will see CLI volunteers spreading a message of happiness and wellbeing throughout Jamaica. "The message will entail how to be happy, how to have an 'I can' attitude, and better cope with the stresses of life," informed Dr. Donovan Thomas, Founder of the non-governmental organisation, during this Friday's (February 7) launch of the tour held at the Knutsford Court hotel in New Kingston. Dr. Thomas and his wife, Faith, founded CLI in 2008, hoping to reach Jamaicans with their message of contentment and hope. The organisation also offers suicide intervention, grief counseling, as well as emotional and behavioural assessment services. He noted that the message of happiness, contentment and hope is necessary to Jamaica at this time, particularly as many citizens try to cope with the harsh realities of life, brought on by the global economic climate and social problems. "Happy people don't kill themselves or kill others," he emphasized, adding, "that is the message we want to send. We feel compelled to intervene in the lives of Jamaicans, people who are suicidal, people who are stressed, people in need of hope." Dr. Thomas said there are too many people who simply exist, going through the motions of life without peace, fulfillment and purpose. He noted that this was the main mission of CLI and the idea behind the 50-Day Happiness Tour. In the meantime, Co-founder and Director of Counselling at CLI, Faith Thomas, told JIS News that the mission of the tour is to energise Jamaicans, to help them to choose to be happy and to let go those things that stand in the way of their happiness. "We want people to also recognise that happiness does not necessarily come from things, whether the things are a degree or money or good looks. But happiness comes from other factors that are more intangible," she stated. She informed that among the activities planned for the tour are visits to schools, churches, children's homes as well as business places and hospitals, throughout all parishes. There will also be a Happiness Seminar at the Swallowfield Chapel in Kingston on March 20, starting at 6 p.m. "We want to teach people to be happy, so we will also be going into the communities," Dr. Thomas said, noting that special emphasis will also be placed on schools, with an objective of helping teachers and students live a more harmonious life. "We want to empower the schools and the teachers as much as possible. We feel that there is an emotional gap between the teachers and their students. As we look at the profile of students, we realise that they need help, but we also realise that in many respects, the teachers lack the emotional capacity to provide that therapeutic setting that the students need," he reasoned. He informed that as the tour proceeds, CLI will also seek to inspire 50 "happiness coaches" to become ambassadors in an effort to help others increase their happiness threshold. The happiness coaches will be taught the basic counseling skills needed to assist their co-workers, schools or family members better cope with life's challenges. In endorsing the event, Director of Production at the Jamaica Information Service (JIS) and Civil Servant of the Year, Enthrose Campbell, said the 50-Day Happiness Tour will benefit families, the productive sectors, the civil servants and the country at large. Ms. Campbell also informed that she will be partnering with the CLI team to further inspire members of the civil service to be contented and happy with their jobs and to do it well. "Too many civil servants are grumbling, 'mi nuh have this, nutten nah gwaan', so one of my chief jobs this year is to work with fellow civil servant and to inspire them to be happy to serve," she stated. For further information on the 50-Day Tour persons can email info@chooselifeintl.org or call 920-7924.