



FCJ NEWS

FCJ boosts food security for elderly residents





The United States Agency for International Development, USAID defines ‘food security’ as having, at all times, both physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet dietary needs for a productive and healthy life.

On Tuesday, May 23, 2023, representatives of Factories Corporation of Jamaica Limited were at the Salvation Army Francis Ham Residence for the Elderly in St. Andrew to participate in our annual Labour Day project. This project involved the construction of a 200 square feet greenhouse with a hydroponics system to provide residents of the home with some level of food security.

In addition to the mental health benefits, the 12 female residents of the Francis Ham home, whose ages range from 40 to 100 years will be involved in the planting and care of a variety of vegetable crops, which will promote self-sustainability and healthy eating habits. Growing their own vegetables will provide them with fresh produce. This will help the residents to maintain a balanced diet and improve their overall health.

Among those in attendance was the Divisional Commander for the Eastern Jamaica Division of the Salvation Army Major Nana Boakye-Agyemang who explained that a struggle for the non-profit organisation is maintaining an institution that depends solely on donations and still provides a quality service.



“It’s always been a challenge but we thank God for companies like you who, not only support us but you inspire us and confirm that what we are doing is right. We truly appreciate what you have done here... One of the things we know about the ladies here is just looking at it (the greenhouse) makes them feel alive. It is going to add some more years to their lives, I believe that. This is going to add to their joy in addition to providing something to make their table colourful and nutritious,” said Major Boakye-Agyemang.

In empathising with the Divisional Commander, FCJ Chairman, Lyttleton ‘Tanny’ Shirley explained that organisations such as the Salvation Army, should ensure that they have relationships with companies like FCJ, who wants to assist, not just because they can afford to, but because they have the passion.

“That sense of well-being, that sense of giving back to those who would have given so much of themselves... and today I feel so proud to see some of those who have worked so hard to set the pace and set the conditions for



Major Boakye-Agyemang planting a seedling into the Hydroponics system, while FCJ Chairman Lyttleton Shirley, Principal Central Greenhouse Supplies and Services Jervis Rowe, Major Jennifer Brown look on.

Jamaica to be a better place, that they themselves can be comforted in a surrounding where their minds remain engaged,” said the FCJ Chairman.

Labour Day 2023 was observed under the theme - Plant a tree for life –

promoting climate change mitigation, food security and road safety.

According to Mr Shirley, the theme is appropriate. “It involves many things, food and all the other elements that would make our world one that we all can continue to survive in.



Francis Hamm's Major Jennifer Brown examines the sweet pepper seedlings bedded in one of five planter boxes donated to the home.

We at FCJ, feel pleased that today, we are able to provide a better food security, a better cleaner environment and facilitate the process where man and nature can coexist and feel enlightened. God is good and we have to continue to give praise because we all get old. It's just a matter of time. And we'd all like to enjoy this level of surrounding."

In the meantime, the operator of Central Greenhouse Supplies and Services, Jervis Rowe explained that the donation of the greenhouse using hydroponics is appropriate because this is the direction of agriculture, especially for vegetables. "For 250 years we have been doing agriculture the same way and these are some of the new things we can do now to make agriculture interesting." Said Mr. Rowe.

Also partnering with FCJ on the Labour Day project was Rhino Jamaica, a client who has partnered with us on previous projects. For this project they donated a 650-gallon water tank to support the greenhouse. The FCJ team also spruced up sections of the property, with a fresh coat of paint, maintained the grounds and laid gravel to provide easier access to the elderly residents.

The Francis Ham Residence has, for the last three years benefitted from FCJ corporate social activities, with a team maintaining the grounds on a monthly basis.





