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Guyana’s local celebrities took time out of the busy schedules to support the Guyana Red Cross Blood Drive in February. Soca artistes, Adrian Dutchin, Michelle Big Red King and Jumo Primo - NCN Radio Announcer Casual Armstrong and Nigel Worrell supported the blood drive by interacting with the donors, taking pictures and signing autographs for donors.

Donors showed up in their numbers on the second Tuesday in February to help save lives as well as to get a glimpse of the local entertainers.

In 2011, the GRCS plans to do more, reach further with the blood recruitment programme.

Each quarter, different themes are used in order to attract new and young donors as well as to retain current donors.

In March, the GRCS Blood Recruitment team held meetings with several secondary schools on the East Coast of Demerara to speak on the importance of voluntary blood donations and safe blood.

Several students uttered “I had no idea giving blood was this important, it could be someone I know that may need a blood type that might not be available.” These meetings have even increased the number of youth within the GRCS Youth Group and potential Club 25 Members.
Creating safer environments

Ten Steps Ahead - The Secretary General of the Guyana Red Cross, Mrs Dorothy Fraser, warmly welcomed the Canadian Red Cross, the Jamaican Red Cross and representatives from the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross Red Crescent to work together on supporting the creation of safe environments for all.

The national societies participated in a three day workshop called “Ten Steps to Creating Safe Environments.” Ten Steps is a resource for organizations and communities to help in the development, implementation and monitoring of concrete actions to prevent, reduce and respond to Interpersonal violence – physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. Violence is a global problem around the world. Organizations and communities have a responsibility to address and prevent violence.

Each of the ten steps is part of a process to reduce the risk of violence and increase protection.

Valerie Whiting , Violence Prevention Delegate in the Americas and Facilitator says the Ten Steps are: to understand the problem, recognize people’s vulnerability and resiliency, define protection instruments, create a prevention team, complete a risk assessment, develop polices and procedures, educate adults, youth and children, respond to disclosures of violence, meet the challenges and maintain safe environments.

“It’s a programme that can help reduce violence/abuse in institutions, organizations or communities with the development of policies and guidelines for its members” - said Shauntel Maloney, the “Be Safe!” Coordinator, GRCS. Sessions are currently being planned for other staff and volunteers at the GRCS headquarters.
“Be Safe!” - A programme, just over 2 years old in Guyana, is certainly moving mountains and empowering individuals from all walks of life. The “Be Safe!” violence prevention programme of the GRCS in February held several trainings. These trainings were to orient new volunteers to the world of Red Cross and its programmes, refresh current “Be Safe!” trainers on the programme and of the new methodology and to train new master trainers from nine of the ten administrative regions of Guyana. Participants involved in the “Be Safe!” trainings were teachers, welfare officers, child protection officers and the head of the Curriculum Development of the Ministry of Education. Each master trainer coming out the workshop, will be tasked with conducting at least two trainings/workshop per year.

“I will be applying “Be Safe!” to my family first. Then I will teach others about the “Be Safe!” programme. I know I have gained lots knowledge and I now have the skills to deliver “Be Safe!” to my community and other villages within my region,” a participant from one of the out lying regions, said.

The workshop concluded with a small reception for both the participants of the “Be Safe!” and the Ten Steps.

“I learned how to help eliminate violence against children and how to help educate the public on what “Be Safe!” is and how it can improve the lives of our children.”

Participants during a group presentation.

Participants from the “Be Safe” Trainings
“Learning by doing”, life saving techniques.

Participants in CBHFA Training in White Water - Region One.

CBHFA in action - As part of the Community Based Health and First Aid Micro-project (CBHFA) implemented by the Guyana Red Cross Society (GRCS), a 5-day Training for community volunteers identified from the communities of White Water and Kamwatta was held in Region 1. The aim of the micro-project is to enhance communities’ preparedness.

The Training was held in the community of White Water located in the Mabaruma Sub-district from January 24th – January 28th, 2011. Participants from the community of Kamwatta travelled by land to White Water on a daily basis either by bicycle or foot covering an approximate distance of three (3) miles.

Members from both communities felt that the training was useful and important in their daily lives. Some felt that the training couldn’t be more timely and appropriate. One participant stated that a few months prior to the training, her father passed away as a result of a heart attack; she felt confident that had she been trained in first aid and understood the health topics that she had learnt, she would have been able to save his life. The participants also indicated that most of the teams will be able to go back and carry out the messaging on their respective health and first aid topics in their communities.

Participant checks for signs of breathing.
Vishal Joseph, GRCS Youth Group Member was able to use his skills, trainings and experience in a very real emergency while on a Caribbean Studies School trip to Suriname.

The youth was able to respond to his fellow class mate who suffered an asthma attack, then further developed into a respiratory emergency and fainted.

“I was travelling in the bus behind my class mate, but my teachers knew I was a trained first responder and managed to stop my bus to get my help.”

The 17 year old is sixth form student at Queen’s College and has been a member of the GRCS Youth Group for 9 months. His future goal is become a Biomedical Engineer as well as a Pediatrician.

Vishal’s note to other youth as a Red Cross Youth Volunteer is “every youth should take the opportunity to get to learn more about the Red Cross and their programmes and activities, and how they can help save lives.” The training I received at the GRCS made it possible for me to save the life of a fellow student, I’m a trained first responder and you should get trained too!”
Although an Amerindian settlement had existed along the Kaituma River for some time, it was only after the discovery of manganese at nearby Matthew's Ridge that Port Kaituma was developed. Port Kaituma's significance grew further following the proclamation from the then President of Guyana, Forbes Burham, that Guyana should become more self-sufficient by populating the interior of the country. Matthew's Ridge was highlighted as a potential new city, and within Port Kaituma a large secondary school was constructed to educate students from all over Guyana. During its heyday, the school boasted over 800 students, of which most were housed in two large dormitory buildings.

Today, Kaituma serves as the gateway to the nearby jungle where the now predominant industry of small-scale gold mining takes place. The transient nature of many of these pork knockers (gold miners) has led to problems of these hinterlands. This however does not perturb a continual flow of workers through the town, including a recent influx of Brazilians and Venezuelans. Port Kaituma itself is a network of small communities - Citrus Grove, Fitzburg, Compound, Four Mile, One Mile, Turn Basin, Teacher’s Quarters, Oronoque and Canal Bank - that are within walking distance of each other. Transport is limited to the very occasional minibus, and is prohibitively expensive.
What is the GRCS doing in Port Kaituma?

The GRCS through partnership with the American Red Cross launched last September the Caribbean HIV and AIDS Prevention Project (CHAP) in Matarkai Sub Region, Region One - Port Kaituma, Falls Top, Arakaka, Baramita and Five Star. Field Officers on the CHAP team have so far met with key stakeholders in each of these communities and formed steering committees in order to meet the objectives of the project.

Mark Holder - Field Officer on the Project noted that the accessibility of the committees is the greatest challenge they face. “we are encouraged everyday regardless of the challenges to continue education on the prevention of HIV and AIDS and condom distribution.” says Mark.

“Awareness and sensitization as well as being able to build relationships is what really creates the impact needed since some Amerindian communities do not believe in the use of condoms”, Quincy Fraser, Assistant Field Officer.

“There’s been a lot of progress in the community, says Dyal Nannoo, Police Officer in Port Kaituma, some of our community members are trained in first aid now and they know that they need to be using safer sex practices and to continue educating their family and peers.
Red Cross at UG’s Career Day

For the first time, the GRCS showcased its many programmes and activities at the University of Guyana Career Day on February 18th, on the Campus of the University.

Organizations from both the private and public sector took part in the day’s activities.

The event is an annual one, organized by the University to display and educate potential students on the course/programmes offered by the University.

Over 50 primary and secondary schools attended, and many were very interested in the courses offered by the RC. Schools in outlying areas were particularly interested in how youth could get involved in volunteering and especially in learning First Aid. The younger children, from the primary schools asked more questions on health and hygiene and voluntary blood donations.

The Guyana Red Cross depends on donations to maintain the Children’s Convalescent Home & the Meals on Wheels Service. Your help is greatly appreciated.
A vibrant volunteer of the GRCS for 24 years turned 91 years old on Feb 19th.

Mrs. Harte, Chairman of the GRCS Ruimveldt Seniors Group. She is a great leader with the group, organizing fund raising events amongst the seniors and other entertaining activities keep the seniors very active.

The Ruimveldt seniors group meets on the fourth Friday of every month. Activities such as “mock weddings”, cake sales, “bring buy”, “bocce”, bingo and poetry telling are just some to mention.

Mrs. Harte says “being involved with the Red Cross has been a long and enjoyable journey. The seniors too, have assets to offer and play an important role in guiding and mentoring the youth in our society”.

The GRCS team salutes Mrs. Harte on her milestone! Congratulations!
Our Seven Fundamental Principles:

- Humanity
- Impartiality
- Neutrality
- Independence
- Voluntary Service
- Unity
- Universality

"Improving the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the Power of Humanity."
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Or
1 Barrack Street,
Kingston, Georgetown.

Upcoming Events

- World RCRC Day-May 8th
- May’s Blood Drive, May 10th
- Volunteer Orientation Apr 27, 3pm.
- Youth Group Bingo Competition June
- World Blood Donor Day Activities June 14th

Doing more,
Doing better,
Reaching further

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