**In Jamaica, Northern Caribbean University Alumni Launches Fundraiser for COVID-19 Scholarships**

Jun 14, 2020Mandeville, JamaicaByron Buckley, NCU/IAD News Staff

*The Northern Caribbean University campus sees an average of 4,000 students at its main campus in Mandeville, Jamaica. The alumni federation aims at raising $1 million US dollars to assist students affected by the pandemic crisis during the fall semester when the new school year is scheduled to begin. [Photo: Northern Caribbean University]*

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The Northern Caribbean University’s Alumni Federation recently organized its most ambitious fundraiser event to help hundreds of students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The media-thon raised US$350,000 in pledges and donations on May 24, 2020.

The event, held on the Mandeville, Jamaica, campus, marked the official launch of a fundraising drive to raise US$1 million by July 31, 2020. This is the first time that the university has been able to raise so much money in a single fundraising event, university leaders said.

Scores of volunteer fundraisers spread across NCU’s global alumni network continue to solicit donations to reach the target, organizers said. The proceeds will go toward the COVID-19 Scholarship Fund, which has been established specifically to assist financially challenged students to return in the fall semester to continue their education. Each year, many NCU students halt their studies because of a lack of financial support.

NCU has seen an average of 4,000 students registered annually during the past four years.

According to university officials, this year the situation has been aggravated. Lincoln Edwards, NCU president, disclosed that the pandemic has dried up sources of income for many students through the literature evangelism ministry or overseas work. This has been compounded by loss of family support due to the closure of the tourism industry and others, reduced remittance inflows, and the inability of family members who are farmers to sell their produce, as well as students losing employment on campus. Edwards also pointed to reduced income from the Seventh-day Adventist conferences that traditionally assist in funding the university.

The media-thon, titled A Gesture of Care, was broadcast live on NCU social media platforms as well as NCU FM and TV, and featured an array of artists who performed in support of the cause to establish a scholarship fund for NCU students challenged by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The overwhelming response from our donors and participants, as well as the endorsements from a wide range of people with statements in support of student scholarship, gives clear evidence of the compelling reason why we initiated this campaign,” said Harold Clayton, alumni federation president.

Among those endorsing the event were Andrew Holness, Jamaica Prime Minister, and Peter Bunting, member of parliament for Central Manchester, where the university is located. The prime minister pledged US$5,000 from his Positive Jamaica Foundation, while Bunting pledged from his constituency fund an annual US$7,000 for two years. In addition, he matched the recommended alumni giving of US$1,000, plus a monthly specific contribution.

“As we express sincere appreciation to all who contributed to this massive campaign launch, we are now inspired to press on to our goal and to raise over one million dollars by July 31, 2020,” said Clayton. “We invite all friends and alumni to join us as donors and fundraisers.”