



Child Rights Alliance E-Newsletter

May, 2017

Issue #3



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This Issue focuses on activities of the Child Rights Alliances which occurred during the months of December 2016, January and February 2017.

Launching of the Child Rights Alliance on 8th February, 2017 at the National Library Conference Room.



The Child Rights Alliance (CRA) was [launched](#) on February 8th 2017 at the National Library Conference room. The event was well supported by members of the diplomatic corps, civil society, government agencies, students and the media.

The [Feature address](#) was given by Childhood Specialist Ms. Bonita Harris. In her impassioned speech, she exclaimed, "The violence currently raining down, flooding, and overwhelming us calls for the vision of the Child Rights Alliance...to become the vision of each and every one of us-individuals and institutions... This is why the Child Rights Alliance mission seeks to "ensure the protection and holistic development of children...through building partnerships with all stakeholders."

Welcome

Welcome to our May 2017 newsletter. It is an exciting time for the Child Rights Alliance (CRA). We are pleased to welcome two enthusiastic partners to the CRA: Heavenly Light World Outreach Fellowship and The Orchid Foundation. You will learn a little more about them in this edition. Suffice to say, they have hit the ground running.

The Community Based partners have completed their training and are already making an impact in their respective regions. Sensitizations sessions have begun in Regions 3, 4 and 5. Counseling sessions in both parenting skills and child care counseling have also begun. More on this will be in the next edition.

Let me take this opportunity to invite you, our partners, to [submit any article](#) you would like published in our newsletter. This will allow us to keep abreast with each other's progress so that others can offer support if needed and awareness of your work can be increased. We all know that the protection of children is everyone's business. Civil society and government must work together to achieve this goal.

I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter. Let us continue to work together to create a Guyanese society where every child has the opportunity to grow up in a safe family and community.



Hasani Tinnie,
Communications Officer

Soft Launch of the Child Rights Alliance in Regions Three and Five



Ms. Omattie Madray, Managing Director, ChildLinK addressing students of the West Demerara Secondary School during the Child Rights Alliance soft launch



Ms. Kean Chase, Programme Manager, ChildLinK interacts with the students of Bush Lot Secondary during the Child Rights Alliance soft launch.



The [Child Rights Alliance was launched in Regions Three and Five](#) on February 9th and 13th respectively. The Region Three launch took place at the West Demerara Secondary on 9th February 2017 and the Region Five launch was held at the Bush Lot Secondary on 13th February, 2017. Each launch was facilitated by the two leading organizations in the Child Rights Alliance: The Rights of the Child Commission and [ChildLinK](#).

The students were sensitized about their rights and responsibilities as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). They were encouraged to exercise their rights but also advised that those rights are accompanied by responsibilities. They were also informed about preventative measures a child can practice that may prevent abuse from occurring. Children should be au fait with the referral system in their region. The Child Rights Alliance will continue to work closely with schools to ensure children are sufficiently informed.

Heavenly Light World Outreach Fellowship and The Orchid Foundation join the Child Rights Alliance



From Left: Mr. Colin Marks, PCDC, Ms. Carolyn Caesar; MsSceola Softley; Mrs. Carleen Williams; Ms. Ashome Clarke, Project Officer, ChildLinK; Mrs. Beverley Bunbury, Parenting Skills Trainer, ChildLinK; Ms. Omattie Madray, Managing Director, ChildLinK



Front row from left: Ms.Omattie Madray, Managing Director ChildLinK; Mrs. Indra Constantine Executive Director, The Orchid Foundation. Back row from left: Mr. Hasani Tinnie. Communications Officer, ChildLinK; Kean Chase, Programme Manager, ChildLinK

The [Orchid Foundation](#) and [Heavenly Light World Outreach Fellowship](#) are the newest partners in the Child Rights Alliance (CRA). The Orchid Foundation is based in Parfaite Harmonie, West Bank Demerara. They will conduct sensitization sessions and child care counseling with children in several communities in region three as well as parenting skills education sessions with parents.

Heavenly Light World Outreach Fellowship is renowned for its outreach efforts to the residents of the Charlestown and Albuystown areas. They will provide the same services offered by the Orchid Foundation. Both partners will target 2,000 children for [sensitization sessions](#), 200 children for child care counseling and 175 parents for parenting skills education.

Orchid Foundation and Heavenly Light will offer tremendous value to the Child Rights Alliance.

Round Table Discussion on: An Analysis of the Nature and Extent of Institutionalization of Children in Guyana



ChildLinK held a [roundtable discussion](#) at the National Library Conference room on 9th December 2016. This roundtable discussion focused on the ChildLinK study: [The Analysis of the Nature and Extent of Institutionalization of Children in Guyana](#). The participants included CRA partners and stakeholders such as Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association and Hope Foundation.

The discussion centered on the above mentioned report. According to the report, while residential care can be useful in the short term in emergency cases, long term placement can be detrimental to the child's holistic development. One participant who works directly with children in residential care stated that these children crave the love and attention that children who live with their biological parents may take for granted. Participants agreed that there is much that needs to be done to sensitize the general public about the challenges experienced by children in residential care.

Focus on Sexual Offences Act 2010

The [Sexual Offences Act 2010](#) came into effect in May 2010. The Act is gender neutral, meaning that a victim or perpetrator can either be a male or female. Section 37 of the SOA states marriage or a proposal of marriage is no longer a defence. Section 38 now states it can no longer be assumed that males under 14 are incapable of sexual intercourse. The SOA makes it illegal to commit voyeurism which is observing another person doing a private without consent for sexual gratification (Section 29). It is illegal to abuse [a position of trust](#) by engaging in sexual activity with a child. Someone in a position of trust is an individual who looks after the child and has unsupervised contact with that child. The Police is obligated to investigate a reported offence. The police must lay charge or send the case file to the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice. Failure to comply constitutes neglect of duty by the Investigating Rank who will be liable to a disciplinary charge.

Justice Institute and ChildLinK share concerns about impact of Mashramani revelries on children

ChildLinK and Justice Institute expressed their [concerns about the potential impact of Mashramani activities on children](#) through a [press release](#) and a [letter to the editor](#). These Child Right Alliance partners implored the public that children should not be exposed to an atmosphere which promotes drunkenness and music with sexually suggestive lyrics. Further, children should also be spared the embarrassment of an intoxicated parent.

The Rights of the Child Convention which is a part of Guyana's constitution needs "...special safeguards and care..." If we expect children to value themselves-especially girls- we need to take special care that they are not exposed to some of these activities.

For additional information visit us at: <http://www.childlinkgy.org/>

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