

COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING CENTRE

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The Comprehensive Learning Centre in collaboration with the adults and youths of the North Hill and Sandy Ground communities saw the successful launching of the **Meet Our Community Elders Programme** on Saturday 28th July 2012.

The programme which was chaired by Iwandai Gumbs, notable radio personality and son of North Hill, saw a large and appreciative turnout of youth, adults and senior citizens, not only from the participating communities but from throughout Anguilla. Rev. Lindsay Richardson invoked God's presence on the proceedings and also gave the children and elders a special blessing. During the programme, a message of Hope was delivered to the gathering by the Acting Governor, Mr Stanley Reid. He reminded the attendees that there are many young people in the community who are doing well and need to be encouraged to keep on the right track. He noted that he makes it a point to attend events in which the young people are involved, signifying support and appreciation for them. Minister Edison Baird, who provided a message of perseverance cautioned the youth that the elders in the community had a lot to offer and that if it was not for his grandmother and grandfather and the community of adults and elders in which he was raised, he would not have reached where he is today. He told them that as the Minister of Education, he is urging them to take every opportunity to educate themselves. One of the Elders, Mr Clinton Richardson reminisced on life growing up in Anguilla and told the youth that the elders were pleased to provide them with guidance along the way. Mrs Sandra York Gumbs, manager of the Comprehensive Learning Centre said, "Our priceless national treasures, our elders, are willing to journey with you. This afternoon, sets the stage for the months to come when these gems will nurture and inculcate, share with and listen to you; you the youthful minds and voices of our communities. This programme would not produce the desired results if it is not a collaborative effort between children and parents, elders and adults, school and church. So we have to immerse ourselves in our children's business. No mother should be saying, "*Why you don't leave my child and look after you own!*" We are talking about looking out for each other. We are talking about encouraging whosoever child, to be the best that he or she can be. We are talking about giving of ourselves to bring a brighter tomorrow for the entire community. Think of it, isn't this what these elders did for us?"

Mrs Patricia Hodge, who along with Ms Sherma Hodge and Ms Jeri Richardson assisted with the organisation of the programme, informed the gathering that the first event of the Meet Our Community Elders programme is scheduled for Saturday August 25th when Justice Don Mitchell of North Hill will guide the children and accompanying adults on a tour of the caves in the North Hill area under the guidance of. The children of North Hill and Sandy Ground played very important roles with Tafari Smith welcoming the gathering, Danecia and Daneice Hodge rendering Whitney Houstons' Greatest Love of All, and all the children participating in poetry. One of the highlights of the evening was a moment of silence for the 13 fallen villagers and elders followed by the lighting of a candle to signify that the contributions of our deceased loved ones will be remembered by all and built upon.