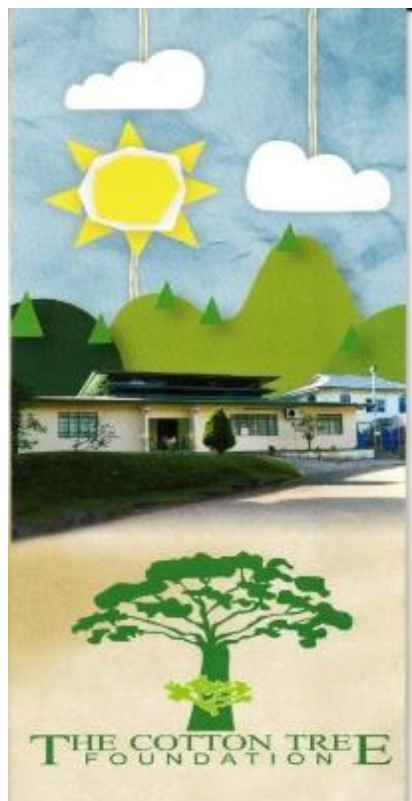




THE COTTON TREE FOUNDATION'S COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES



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BACKGROUND INFORMATION & MISSION:

The Cotton Tree Foundation (CTF) is a Non – Governmental organization that was established in 1993 to improve life chances through the vehicle of education. Our targeted communities are the residents of St Ann's, Cascade, Belmont, East Dry River and environs.

The Cotton Tree Foundation's programmes are based on the idea that a lack of formal education or one's social standing should not be a barrier to the achievement of a fulfilling and productive life. Its services have offered children, young persons and parents the skills and confidence to succeed in life, and its' volunteers have been given opportunities for growth. We recognize a huge amount of wasted potential in the form of talented children who are not given access to quality education, as well as the link between undiagnosed learning/literacy problems and crime.

Our mission is to "improve life chances through the vehicle of education", and as such all of our programmes are geared towards capacity building and enhancing the skills of our beneficiaries from the communities in which we operate. The entry point is through children, young persons and their families. We believe that healthy human development proceeds slowly and that there are few quick fixes, as such our programmes repeat annually. We think long term.

INFRASTRUCTURE:

In 1994, the Government of Trinidad & Tobago leased the property at Spanish Acres, upper St Ann's to Cotton Tree at a nominal fee. Spanish Acres, which sits on a seven-acre parcel of land, was formerly the (two-building) residence of the late Sir Grantley Adams, Prime Minister of the defunct West Indies Federation. The Cotton Tree Foundation undertook major renovations to the buildings to create an environment conducive to the services provided.

With the assistance of a cadre of professionals, community support and funding from the JB Fernandes Memorial Trust Fund, CTF was able to refurbish the buildings to facilitate the conduct of various programmes in a safe and comfortable setting.

MANAGEMENT TEAM:

CTF is strategically managed by a seven-member Board of Directors with expertise in Economics, Law, Human Resources, Education, Child Development and 'At Risk Youth', Finance Media, General Management and.

In addition, there are five management committees:

- Education and Training
- Community Development/ Project Identification
- Administration and Human Resource
- Finance
- Fundraising

CTF Staff consists of four permanent staff members - General Manager, Administrative Coordinator, Community Outreach Coordinator and Security/Caretaker and two contractors – a Cleaner and Courier. Teachers are also contracted to deliver programmes with the assistance of volunteers and community members depending on the projections. See CTF Organisation Chart below. – Appendix 1.

PROGRAMMES:

CTF offers a range of community programmes:

1. **The Early Childhood Care and Education Centre (ECCE).** The school opened its doors to the public in 2000 to provide much needed early childhood education. 38 students are currently enrolled and there is a waiting list of 10. The ECCE is managed under the Ministry of Education. CTF however is responsible for the premises and all add on programmes.
2. **Scholarship Programme:** This programme began in 2003 and affords one child each year a scholarship to an established high performing primary school in the area. The scholarship covers tuition fees and is funded through the generous support of businesses and private citizens. 8 students have benefitted from this programme since its inception.
3. **Special Needs:** CTF support parents of special needs children by sourcing assessments, identifying therapeutic services and where needed, fund appropriate therapeutic services for these children.
4. **The Homework Centre:** Four days per week CTF provides a safe, quiet environment, conducive to study for children to do after school study in a supportive, supervised setting. Remedial teachers are assigned to work with children requiring supplemental literacy coaching. Over 160 students (aged 6 to 12 years) have benefitted from this programme since 2000.
5. **The Maths Club:** Two days per week CTF provides a safe, quiet and stimulant environment for children to develop mathematical techniques and problem-solving. A Maths Teacher, specializing in the 'Numicon' methodology supports a group of 7-8 primary school children in need additional tuition.
6. **Service Learning Programme (SLP):** The Service Learning Programme is administered over one week annually by M.Sc. and Ph.D. psychology students from Boston's Children Hospital, Seaton Hall University and UWI. They address the need for services in the area of early identification of children with Special Needs, as well as services for such children after they have been evaluated and provide professional screening services to children of the Pre-School and the Homework Centre. To date approximately 180 preschoolers, 40 children (ages 6 to 12) and 220 families have benefitted.
7. **Annual Vacation Camp:** This Camp is held over a 3-week period and focuses on academics in the mornings and activities such as craft, woodwork, dance, sport and info-sessions in the afternoons. In 2016 we were oversubscribed with 135 children between 3-17 and their families benefitting from the programme.

8. **Youth Volunteer Programme:** Approximately 25 young persons between 14 and 24 were introduced to volunteerism through this programme through workshops that are followed by a three-month internship at an NGO of their choice.
9. **Community Outreach:** CTF offers a range of community-driven initiatives to support community cohesion such as Community Help Desk, Family Fun Days, Family Movie Night, Sports, Chinese Cookery Classes - to name a few.
10. **ICT:** CTF provides computer literacy training for children and adults in the community.
11. **Parent Support Education:** All our educational programmes, (Preschool, Homework Club and Summer Camp) have a parent education and support component. These have included sessions in Family Literacy, Financial Planning, and Managing Behaviour, Common Sense Parenting and Internet Safety, Cookery Classes.

ALLIANCES:

We are committed to public/private partnerships, and work closely with the Ministry of Education in the ECCE on site.

We partner with several organisations, NGOs and local schools such as Bishops Anstey Junior School, Eshe's Learning Centre, St Ann's RC as well as other organisations and NGOs the Dyslexia Association, The School Leadership Centre of TNT and aim to continue to share our experience, best practices, and case studies and to support each other.

FUTURE PLANS:

The Cotton Tree Foundation has identified certain programmes which are needed within the community. However, due to the negative international financial climate we have experienced a significant decrease in donations and as a result, our existing programmes are under threat and our ability to expand and add new programmes has been limited. Below is a list of projects which we endeavour to undertake. In order to facilitate the continuity and expansion of our NGO's services, your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Programme Type	Description
ICT Programme	CTF offers computer literacy training within the community for children as well as adults using previously donated computers and hardware (2012). However, funds are required to pay ongoing teachers' salaries and administrative overheads.
Programme Type	Description
Sports Programme	CTF is seeking to formalize and broaden our sports programme by using professional training initiatives. This will require funding for sporting

	equipment and discipline specific trainers to facilitate an all-round sporting programme. Our basketball court is already in existence but is in dire need of repairs.
Parenting Support Education/Training Groups	CTF offers Common Sense Parenting workshops as well as Internet Safety Programme targeting issues of internet pornography, violence, cyber-bullying. Funding is required to engage specialized facilitators to implement these programmes
Vacation Camp	CTF currently provides a summer vacation camp in July/August. Given the large number of participants (2016 – 135 children participated) and requests received from the community, we require funding to continue facilitation.
Service Learning Programme	CTF seeks to expand the SLP programme to incorporate onsite therapeutic services – offering children’s Art therapy Groups, Alert and Zone Groups (emotional awareness and regulation); parental educations support groups
Keep it Green & Recycling Programme	CTF seeks funding for experts to develop an environmental awareness and education programme for children and their families - promoting the reservation of the natural landscape of the environs, as well as advice and tips on ‘growing your own’ plants, vegetables and fruits. CTF also requires assistance educating children and their families on the importance of recycling and how to collect, process and reuse materials.

For further information please contact: -

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Appendix 1

