

# National AIDS Programme now online

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SUN News Editor

The Turks and Caicos Islands National AIDS Programme has launched a proactive and information filled website to educate the young people/adults in the country and the world about the seriousness of HIV/AIDS.

On Tuesday May 15th at the Gecko Grill conference room, shareholders in the local fight against AIDS met and witnessed the launch of the website which was powered on by Minister of Health Hon. Dr. Lillian Boyce.

"They (children) have an opportunity to find the National AIDS programme website. I'm glad that it is pretty and I am glad that they would want to stop and look at the pictures and then find the time to read about it and realize that information is there for their use."

The former Minister of Education called the website timely and much needed in the country and was proud to announce that every school in the Turks and Caicos Islands has computers and the internet.

"Every School in the TCI has a computer, and I am hoping that every community centre will be equipped with computers and not only for the children but also the adults. I am so thankful to the AIDS Foundation that today we can surf the net and find the National AIDS Programme." Hon. Boyce also added that the entire country and the government must pray for persons living with HIV/AIDS in the country.

Dr. Rufus Ewing, Director of Medical Services in the TCI and

member of the Turks and Caicos AIDS Awareness Foundation (TCAAF) was also at the launch and commented that: "It is my hope that this website will be in every home, every school, organization and government department in the TCI. We have to ensure that all of our youths have access to the internet and the website."

Dr. Ewing stressed that the proposed Youth Centre which the TCAAF is in the process of establishing is extremely important to this end.

"That youth centre is important because it will provide facilities for kids to have access to the internet and to engage in activities which that will educate them help them prevent themselves from contracting HIV/AIDS."

Patron saint of the TCAAF and active member Hon. Galmo Williams, Minister of Home Affairs was on hand for the historic launch.

"With its widespread use and accessibility, the Internet can only magnify the effectiveness of our joint efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS."

Designed with the youth in mind, the site ([www.tcinationalaidsprogram.com](http://www.tcinationalaidsprogram.com)) offers a wealth of information, statistics, news, reports, special features and events about the HIV/AIDS epidemic from a local and world-wide perspective.

"Globally, half of all new HIV infections are among young people so reaching out to them is fundamental to our work," said Cherylann Jones, the National Program coordinator. "The Internet is the most effective way to reach young people today. We're indebted to the Turks and Caicos AIDS



L-R Hon. Galmo Williams makes a point to Hon. Dr. Lillian Boyce and Dr. Rufus Ewing

Awareness Foundation for bringing us the opportunity to create this site, which we know will become an invaluable communications tool. We are also grateful to the members of Rapport for their input on the design and functionality of the site and helping ensure it is attractive to our target audience. Together, we are making huge strides in stopping the spread of this destructive disease and ensuring a brighter future for generations to come."

The site was developed in partnership with the), a non-profit organization formed to help fight the

spread of HIV/AIDS through education and awareness. The TCAAF conceived the idea for the site and provided the necessary funding to build and maintain it.

The Caribbean is the most-affected region in this hemisphere by HIV/AIDS and is second only to sub-Saharan Africa in terms of the impact of the disease. It is the leading cause of death among adults (ages 15-44) in the Caribbean, and a quarter of a million people in the region are living with HIV or AIDS, half of which are women, and a third between the ages of 15-24.

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