



Twelve-year old Tre Hussey has started his journey into high school full of hope and optimism for a bright future.

Tre's confidence comes from knowing that his family will not have to worry about his school expenses for the next seven years, and he can just concentrate on excelling.

The outstanding student, who attends St. Mary High School, is the proud recipient of a Jamaica 50 Commemorative scholarship under the PetroCaribe Development Fund, which will cover uniforms, books, meals, transportation, auxiliary fees and other costs up to grade 13.

This year, to mark Jamaica's 50<sup>th</sup> year of Independence, 47 top Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT) scholars received commemorative medals and plaques, with bursaries valued at \$180,000 per year for 27 beneficiaries under the Programme for Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH).

Tre, a quiet, assuming youngster from Galina, who attended Oracabessa Primary, performed outstandingly in his GSAT, graduating top boy in his school and copping numerous awards.

He earned scores of 94.8 per cent in Mathematics, his favourite subject; 91.6 per cent in Language Arts; 97.5 per cent in Communication Task; 88.6 per cent in Science; and 100 per cent in Social Studies.

Tre, who is a PATH beneficiary, says he is grateful, as he knows that the award "will take some of the stress off my mother."

Some \$209 million (US\$2.33 million) in scholarships are being awarded to students pursuing

secondary and tertiary level studies under the PetroCaribe's Jamaica 50 Scholarship and Merit Awards programme. The programme recognises the outstanding performance of the students, while at the same time, giving them an opportunity to continue their education. The tertiary awards will be made later in the year.

General Manager of the PetroCaribe Fund, Sharon Weber, explains that the programme is aimed at developing outstanding scholars and leaders, who will contribute to Jamaica's future sustainable development going into the next 50 years, and beyond.

She tells JIS News that the response from the recipients from across the island is heartwarming. "This is where you really touch people's lives in a direct way. We are focused on improving the lives of the poor and of communities, and that is one of the goals of the PetroCaribe Fund," Mrs. Weber says.

In July, Prime Minister [Portia Simpson Miller](#), while addressing the scholarship winners at a luncheon in Kingston, told them that: "Being a Jamaica 50 scholar makes you a special Jamaican; you are among the brightest and the nation expects great things from you".

It is an honour that has left Trey's mother, Dian Masters, feeling overwhelmed. "I was feeling happy and joyful. I hugged him and kissed him and told him that he did well and then encouraged him to do better once he goes to high school," Ms. Masters explains.

A mother of three, of which Trey is the last, Ms. Masters says she has never stopped encouraging her son. "When he comes from school I check his books, I check his homework. I sign my name in his book. I also look at the type of friends he keeps. I talk to him and encourage him, like an adult," the proud mother says.

"Even though I come from a poor, poor, poor family, I try to lift up my head and hold up my pride. I try to grow them the same way. What I don't achieve in life I try to let them have it, even if when they are big they don't give me anything," Ms. Masters continues.

## **On to Westwood High**

Like Tre, Shamara Harvey, is excited to be a Jamaica 50 scholar and to have the opportunity to attend the school of her dreams, Westwood High in Trelawny.

Shamara says she is looking forward to her time at the prestigious all girls institution as the next step in the journey towards fulfilling her goal of being a teacher or dentist.

Shamara earned scores of 98.7 per cent in Math; 95 per cent in Language Arts; 92.5 per cent in Communication Task; 91 per cent in Science; and 100 per cent in Social Studies in her GSAT examinations at Claremont All-Age in St. Ann.

"I feel excited. I knew I did well but I did not expect it (the scholarship) based on the thousands of students who do GSAT, and the many outstanding performances," she tells JIS News.

Her mother, Angela Grant, shares her daughter's excitement and is proud of her achievement. She says the community is also happy for Shamara, showering her with praises and encouragement. "Shamara is a high achiever from Grade One and I basically expected her to do well," Miss Grant says.

Ms. Grant describes the Jamaica 50 Scholarship as "a big, big help".

"At first, when I heard that she passed for that school (Westwood), even though it was her first choice, I thought, 'wow a lot of money going to have to spend now'. I thought about what I was going to do to make it happen; and then I heard about the scholarship," Ms. Grant says.

## **O'Brian has made us Proud**

Over in St. Thomas, Colette Campbell was hoping that her son, O'Brian Harris, would win the Paul Bogle Scholarship for outstanding achievement in GSAT. Imagine her surprise and delight when he copped one of the Commemorative Jamaica 50 scholarships.

“I was speechless when the Principal called me.... I couldn't talk. It was just overwhelming for me and my family. He has made the family very, very proud,” she says of her son.

Speaking with JIS News, O'Brian also shares his emotions. “I felt excited and astonished. I was surprised to see that I got so far. I knew I did well; but I didn't know I would get this far,” says the 12-year old student, who graduated from Airy Castle Primary with scores of 98.7 in Mathematics; 97 per cent in Language Arts; 91.6 per cent in Communication Task and 97.5 per cent in Social Studies.

Ms. Campbell, a single parent, says it has been challenging financially, to give her son the things he needs, and so the scholarship “means a lot”.

“It is a great help for me and him...he can go to school now without missing a day and get the books and all of that,” she notes.

O'Brian will attend Morant Bay High, where he hopes to continue doing well. He tells JIS News that while at Airy Castle Primary, he was a high achiever copping the trophy for Outstanding GSAT performer. He also received a certificate for placing second in the parish in a Mathematics competition.

All three Jamaica 50 Scholars are looking forward to their time in high school and vow to carry on the good work that has brought them early success. They, along with their parents, give thanks to the PetroCaribe Fund for the financial assistance, noting that the scholarship provides

a pathway to an even brighter future.

The PetroCaribe Development Fund was formed through agreement with the government of Venezuela, and Mrs. Simpson Miller has thanked the government and people of the South American country for the support, which is allowing Jamaica to undertake a range of development programmes.