



More than 150 children in the community of Trench Town will benefit from a new basic school that was officially handed over to residents of Paradise Court on September 12.

The school, constructed by the National Housing Trust (NHT), at a cost of \$20.6 million, is built on strata lands owned by Paradise Court, a 252-unit apartment complex in Trench Town, built under the Inner City Housing Project (ICHP) in 2007.

The new strata committee of Paradise Court will be fully responsible for its operations and upkeep, with President of the Proprietors Strata Plan, Cheryl Davidson, expressing gratitude for the new school.

Speaking at the handing over ceremony on the school grounds, Prime Minister the Most Hon. [Portia Simpson Miller](#), said "the dreams of the children of Trench Town are no different from the dreams of the children anywhere else in this country."

"They dream of a life of fulfillment, of happiness, a life which gives them the opportunity to exercise their talent and skill; a life of peace and freedom," she added.



The Prime Minister noted that a child's circumstance of birth, "should never dictate the quality of education that that child should receive."

"A just society invests in its children, which means it invests in the future of the country, that is why the NHT has made this investment," the Prime Minister said.

Meanwhile, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing, Dr. the Hon. [Omar Davies](#) , in whose constituency the school is located, said the new school will accommodate students from the adjoining National Baptist Basic School, which has been in operation for the past 60 years.

Dr. Davies, who has instituted an initiative aimed at implementing best practices throughout the 28 basic schools in his constituency, urged that nationwide, “we should look for every single child 4-6 who should be enrolled in a basic school, but for whatever reason is not, and we must get them enrolled in all the basic schools throughout the island.”

Dr. Davies said he has used the political system in his constituency to identify those children and this method has yielded great results and could be used as a model islandwide.

“I welcome this handing over ceremony, because it is the society’s way of providing for those children the chance that they deserve,” the Minister said.

For his part, Education Minister, Rev. the Hon. [Ronald Thwaites](#) , said he is looking forward to the basic school becoming an infant school facility, “so that government can fully support it.”

Rev. Thwaites lauded the NHT for its role in constructing the school, noting that it is a wonderful thing for the agency to “set the example for all housing developers, anywhere in Jamaica, understanding that what people need is not only the nice houses... but rather they need the social facilities.”

In the meantime, Managing Director of the NHT, Cecile Watson, said that the agency has a responsibility not just to build houses, but also communities.

“It has become clear in recent times that what we do in building social amenities is not only as important as direct housing, it is of critical relevance to transforming the lives of our mortgagors and it is no way inimical towards the interest of affordable home ownership,”

Mrs. Watson said.

She urged the children to enjoy the new school and take care of it. “Parents and teachers adopt it and make it your own. Work together to sustain this place and make it a fun place to learn,” she added.

The new school has been built to meet the requirements of the Early Childhood Act. The first section of the building comprises three classrooms, an office for staff, a kitchen and male and female restrooms. The NHT is to spend a further \$6.5 million to add three more rooms to the facility.

The agency has received sponsorship support from Food For The Poor, which will provide desks and chairs for three classrooms; Petrojam Ltd., Jamaica Energy Partners and Ashtrom, which will provide \$203,000 each, to equip the school with whiteboards, beds for the sick room, a refrigerator and stove.