

Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller says the National Housing Trust's (NHT) Best Schemes Competition is an important initiative that plays a vital role in encouraging the development of model communities all over Jamaica.

Prime Minister Simpson Miller made the statement at the launch of the competition which was held at Angels Grove in Spanish Town on Thursday, January 31.

The Prime Minister emphasised that through the NHT, the Government's goal to make housing more affordable is being achieved.

"We have reduced interest rates so that persons earning under \$10,000 per month could move toward owning their own homes and the NHT has provided home grants of \$1.2 million each to low-income contributors as well as to people with disabilities. We have done this because we are building a better Jamaica through the building of better communities," she said.

The Prime Minister also highlighted that in collaboration with Food for the Poor and JEEP, the NHT launched First Step Homes which is another initiative to help the most vulnerable own their homes and provide stability for their families.

Mrs. Simpson Miller pointed out that one of the mandates given to the NHT is to lift people out of poverty and set them on a path toward economic empowerment and social advancement.

"We are utilising the NHT to train inner-city youths in Kingston and St. Andrew in construction and related skills, under the YUTE BUILD Programme. The programme is helping to put idle hands to work, and put food on the table for at least 40 young person and their families living in NHT scheme communities," she said.

The NHT's Best Schemes Competition now in its 20th year is being held under the theme "Celebrating Communities". The competition is open to all 132 of NHT's built schemes and encourages communities to showcase what they have achieved in the areas of culture, health,

education, environmental awareness and governance and entrepreneurship.

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