



# SANTA gives a helping hand all year round

In Jamaica, G4S security officers give hands-on help to projects supporting children's health and education

As far as the global business world is concerned, the initials G4S represent the leading security solutions organisation, created by the merger of Group 4 and Securicor. But G4S Jamaica came up with an imaginative alternative when its security personnel decided to get involved in a much-needed community project.

G4S, it decided, could also stand for "Gifts 4 Schools".

One school in particular

benefitted from G4S Jamaica and its employees' community efforts. The Roosevelt Avenue Basic School for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children from poor families, located in Swallowfield, just half a mile from the G4S offices, had been built by the Seventh Day Adventist Church as a donation to the community.

But the building was not completed and so, when it opened, it had no windows or doors, and the walls were unrendered and

not painted.

There seemed to be no way of improving its condition – but G4S Jamaica had other ideas. It had just learned, at the G4S Latin America regional conference, that the Group wanted to encourage local community projects and was making funding available to those companies wishing to help specific projects.

Once it received the go-ahead from G4S corporate headquarters, the Jamaican management lost no time in extending a helping hand to the Roosevelt school, which became its first community support initiative. Security personnel exchanged their uniforms for working clothes and set about installing windows and doors, constructing a kitchenette and renovating a bathroom area.

The project was a complex one, as Frank Jackson, country manager, G4S Jamaica, explains: "It included

the procurement of supplies such as cement, sand, wooden louvre slats and frames, doors, locks, ply-wood and various other supplies. It was partly funded by the guards' own welfare fund to which they make fortnightly contributions from their wages."

Delighted with the success of that venture, G4S Jamaica soon established a new charity programme, to promote children's health and education, which it calls SANTA. But unlike the Santa who just puts in an appearance at Christmas, this one works around the year. That's because the initials represent Seeing A Need, Taking Action.

And through that programme, G4S discovered Mustard Seed Communities, a charity whose Jerusalem compound includes a home for children under 10 who are afflicted with HIV and have no home or stable family from which they can get help or treatment for the disease.

The eight-acre Jerusalem compound, located in Jamaica's depressed Spanish Town district, outside the capital, Kingston, cares for 130 children of whom a number are physically and mentally disabled.

"The home is pioneering the

concept of independent living accommodation for the disabled, outside of an institutional setting," explains Frank Jackson.

"Additionally, this supports the development of self-sufficiency and enhanced self-esteem, speeding up the eventual return to their communities where feasible."

Also at Jerusalem is the Little Angel Learning Centre, another Mustard Seed Basic School. Attended by some 40 children, and registered by the Ministry of Education, it receives help from G4S security guards and is financed by Gifts 4 Schools.

A similar effort to the Roosevelt Avenue school was required at Little Angels, where the years had not been kind to two of the buildings. Gifts 4 Schools decided to finance a facelift for one of this pioneering basic school's buildings, involving refitting lights and installing ceiling fans, replacing windows, tiling the floor and repainting ceilings and walls, both inside and out.

And once again, all the labour was provided by G4S Jamaica's generous security officers.

Phase two of the Little Angels project will be to give the second building a similar upgrade. This work has been delayed, however, due to the ravages of Hurricane Dean which severely damaged the roof in August last year.

A new roof is being funded by Gifts 4 Schools but will be fitted by a professional roofing contractor.

G4S Jamaica's SANTA and Gifts 4 Schools is very much in line with the Group's global "giving back to community" philosophy. It is one of five schemes in different countries receiving financial support for the next six years.

The first of these, designed to create sustainable revenues in Malawi, was featured in *G4S International*, September 07, pages 17-18.

The second is G4S Security Services (Russia)'s initiative to support the work of two state children's home, known as "internats". This community project was featured in *G4S International*, December 07, pages 42-43.

The remaining two schemes will be featured in future issues of *G4S International*. ■

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Out of uniform, the G4S security officers carried out much-needed building works at both projects, as well as making financial contributions through their welfare fund. In uniform, they give the children encouragement with their regular visits.