

# It only takes one!

By Ashlee Cox

"It starts with one person saying, 'I want to fix this problem'."

This is a key function of the Junior Chambers International as highlighted by International Vice President for Junior Chambers International, Jennifer Gracey, in a brief interview with the Hello Youth Magazine!, during her trip to the Caribbean.

As noted by Gracey, the core strength of the youth organisation, known globally as JCI, is that they focus on the individual members being able to take ownership of the various problems in their community, as well as identifying those problems.

"If you see something wrong in your community that you want to fix, you can do it in JCI. Nobody's going to say, 'No, we can't do that, or that's too big of a problem'. We say, let's do it, let's take a stab at it!" she enthused.

Stating that the while you may not completely fix or wipe out the problem in one year, you may still be able to significantly reduce it, and find ways of training and helping others to work with you to reduce it, she noted, "You may not be able to completely get rid of unemployment in one year, but over the course of several years and operating projects to get people skills training, or to get people entrepreneur training,



Those are the things that JCI can offer, so we never say 'No you can't do it or that's too big of a problem' we say 'Yes, let's tackle it, let's find the partners that we need in order to create a sustainable solution together', because we are not in this alone, we need to find other partners that have like-minded goals that will work with us towards a common goal."

Gracey, who is responsible for the JCI Chapters in the Americas and Canada, described her trip, which will see her here in Barbados for two days before jetting off to St. Vincent, as an opportunity to train, motivate and inspires JCI Barbados members as



**ABOVE:** These youths came to the Training to lend their voices on what they perceived as issues that needed to be fixed.

**AT LEFT:** Here, JCI IVP Jennifer Gracey, jots down some of the identified issues in Barbadian Society during the JCI Impact training course.

well as potential members, business partners and other organisations or Governmental officials, to continue to be active citizens in their community.

Noting that through her organisation, an individual could accomplish just about anything, she noted that we can no longer rely on Government or anyone else to fix our problems, instead we as youths must take ownership and endeavour to find ways to address the issues we see.

"It starts with one person saying, I want to fix this problem and it takes that one person to work together with others and get them inspired to

go after a common goal, a common solution. So it is more about inspiring the members to take action rather than necessarily learning specific things about the organisation. It's essentially getting them to understand that no matter how big the problem is, we can tackle this and we can do this," she noted.

In the light of youth taking ownership, she also spoke of the Ten Outstanding Young Persons in the world project (TOYP), which was 'an honour that's bestowed among ten people that are between JCI age range, which is 18 and 40,'.

She noted, "These are peo-

ple who are making a huge contribution to their local community through either their business efforts or their community efforts.; essentially they are doing something amazing and we want to recognise them ... in their progressive active citizenship, in taking ownership and of either a community issue, or they are working towards finding a cure for a disease, things like that, we want to utilise their experience and their nomination to inspire other active citizens, so the TOYP programme is really one of those programmes that recognises young up and coming active citizens".



**Jennifer Gracey (fourth from right) with JCI Barbados members.**