PRESS RELEASE

Children’s Registry Appeals to Public to Report Suspected Child Abuse

January 17, 2012

The Office of the Children’s Registry (OCR) is once again appealing to members of the public to be more vigilant of the care and protection of children and to immediately report suspected cases of abuse to the Registry.

The OCR’s latest appeal comes in light of a recent report of a two year old boy whose decomposing body was found in a suitcase in his parents’ home. It is reported that members of the community had suspected that something was wrong but were not certain.

The Registrar at the OCR, Mr. Greig Smith, is reminding members of the public that “it is better to report suspicion of child abuse so that the necessary investigations may be carried out to verify whether the report is valid or not, than to risk further injury to or death of the child.”

The Honourable Lisa Hanna, the newly appointed Minister of Youth and Culture, has issued a similar appeal to the public. In her remarks at the OCR’s 5th Anniversary Church Service held on January 14, 2012 at the Andrews Memorial Seventh Day Adventist Church, she noted that “our children are our most critical resources in building a sustainable country” and appealed for persons to “open your eyes and become more vigilant of cases of child abuse and do not be afraid to report it.”

Under the Child Care and Protection Act (2004), it is an offence to fail to report known or suspected child abuse to the Children’s Registry. The penalty for such an office includes imprisonment for six months, a fine of $500,000 or both.

The Children’s Registry, an agency of the Ministry of Youth and Culture, is advising that persons who wish to make a report to its office may do so by calling the Toll Free number 1-888-PROTECT (1-888-776-8328) or by calling 908-2132/ 822-7031 (LIME) or 878-2882 (Digicel) between the hours 7:00am to 11:00pm, Monday to Friday. People may also visit the Children’s Registry at 12 Carlton Crescent, Kingston 10 or fax the report to 908-0246 or email it to reports@ocr.gov.jm.

The Children’s Registry, which is ‘celebrating five years of breaking the silence’ this year, is responsible for receiving, assessing and recording reports of child abuse. Reports are referred to partner agencies, the Child Development Agency and the Office of the Children’s Advocate for investigation and action. Reports received by the Children’s Registry are held in the strictest of confidence and reporters do not have to give their name.

Since its inception, the OCR has received over 24,000 reports of child abuse, with an estimated 7000 reports received in 2011 alone.

For further information, please contact Trevesa DaSilva Ashman, Public Education Specialist at the Children’s Registry at 298-5992 or trevesa.ashman@ocr.gov.jm

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