

12/12/2011 - Sandals Foundation Kicks off Annual Holiday Treats across the Caribbean



The Sandals Foundation and Hasbro Inc., one of the world's leading toy manufacturers and valued partner for Beaches Resorts, have joined to bring Christmas cheer to the Caribbean's children. The Sandals Foundation's annual Christmas treats kicked off in grand style with over 70 students of the Roehampton Basic School in rural St. James, receiving an early visit from Santa on Thursday December 8, 2011. The treat represented the first of over 60 holiday events scheduled to take place throughout Jamaica and the Caribbean in the coming weeks. The activities will be held in the parishes of Kingston, St. James, Hanover, St. Ann, St. Mary and Westmoreland and across the islands of Saint Lucia, Turks & Caicos; the Bahamas and Antigua. The Sandals Foundation will be reaching out to schools, community institutions and infirmaries over the festive period, which will see community members and over 10,000 children receiving toys and being treated with festive luncheons and dinners.

Coordinating this year's first treat for the St. James region was Public Relations Manager Khadine Daley who along with volunteers, including resort guests and staff were on hand to share festive treats and Christmas cake as well as engage in reading activities. Soon the excitement started when Santa made his presence, with screaming and shouting from the excited youngsters who were then flourished with gifts. Daley noted, *"This year in the St. James region we have a number of treats organized and we have made it a priority to reach out to our rural areas as well as our towns and city because they get easily forgotten, but are equally as important. These treats are also a great way for our guests to experience our culture, how we celebrate Christmas and for the children to understand more about other cultures."*

June Patterson, Principal at the Roehampton school, shared her gratitude by commenting on the event, "*We are delighted to have this new relationship with the Sandals Foundation. Usually in the rural areas, we are forgotten and these Christmas gifts are a blessing for us. This annual event is a blessing for many families across the Caribbean and we are thankful.*" During the treat, students performed Christmas carols and entertained the volunteers to say 'Thank You' for their gifts.

Heidi Clarke, Director of Programmes at the Sandals Foundation remarked on the significance of these treats to be undertaken leading up to Christmas Day. "*These treats go a small way to helping the thousands of needy individuals across the Caribbean. The holidays can be a difficult time and it's our responsibility to be there for our neighbors, for our communities, to help make a difference and bring a smile to those who may otherwise not have a reason to enjoy the holiday season. Whether it is giving a toy to a child who would normally go without or sharing a special lunch with the elderly, the Sandals Foundation is committed to bring cheer to those less fortunate.*"

Each year the Sandals Foundation launches an international Holiday Toy Drive inviting travel and industry partners, team members and the public to donate a toy to a needy child. This year the Sandals Foundation launched the Holiday Triple "Play" campaign in partnership with Hasbro Inc., with any donation of \$10 being matched by Sandals Resorts International and Hasbro also donating a toy ? growing the gifting three-fold.