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## GRAND BAHAMA COMMUNITY BUILDERS CLUB

### Economic Empowerment through Community Building

Freeport, Grand Bahama

Moving from Diversity, to Unity, to Community

June 6 - 8, 2007

#### The Chairman's Vision

The Bahama Community Builders Club, officials from Freeport, The Grand Bahama government, the Turks & Caicos Island government in collaboration with ICB Productions Inc., hosted a three-day conference on economic empowerment on June 6-8<sup>th</sup>, 2007. This marked the 7<sup>th</sup> annual conference for the Grand Bahama Community Builders Club. This year, the conference was a response to the critical need for fostering a sense of community ownership in economic development. The conference theme was "Economic Empowerment Through Community Building." The goal of this event was to assist in

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**Honorable Lillian Boyce**  
**Minister of Health & Human Services**  
**Turks & Caicos Islands**  
**Government Sets the PACE**



"Caribbean politicians have quoted democratic presidential candidate Senator Hilary Clinton in saying that it takes a village to raise a child and build a nation. It is my submission, however, that what she has said and written about, is nothing more than a well-established Caribbean tradition. Without a doubt, the one thing that separates and distinguishes the Caribbean from anywhere else in the world is the strength and uniqueness of our community spirit."

Minister Boyce challenged policy makers to ask themselves whether or not their commitment to community building is comparable to those who came before and laid a foundation and history of community building. The question of whether the Turks and Caicos communities are advancing at the same rate as their nation's prosperity came through during the Minister's presentation.

The Minister began her comments by sharing the accelerated economic growth of some Caribbean countries such as Barbados, The Bahamas, Trinidad and The Turks and Caicos Islands. She pointed out that, "The middle-classes and upper-classes in the region are now perhaps larger and wealthier than at any point in Caribbean history." Her contention is that this phenomenon can mislead policy makers into thinking things are improving; however, poverty remains an issue in many Caribbean countries.

The Minister pronounced a profound observation on the work ethics of the Caribbean poor. She noted how strong the work ethics are among even the poorest in the communities and how their work

**Honorable Zhivargo Laing**  
**Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance**  
**West End, Grand Bahama**  
**Where Do We Go From Here?**



The Honourable Minister Zhivargo Laing, Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance for the Bahamas began with the assertion that economic empowerment at

the individual level means being able to manage one's resources to promote health, wellness and spiritual wellness. The Bahamas has recently experienced a resurgence in its economy after a period of significant dearth, due in part to the influx of investments from mega resorts. However, as a result of high levels of unemployment (8.4% in Grand Bahama Island alone) and perceived lack of opportunity, Bahamian residents feel virtually unempowered economically. Consequently, Grand Bahama's economic resurgence is critical to the sustained growth and development of The Bahamas. It will be accomplished by promoting the renewal and promotion of its tourism product; and through the promotion of the Grand Bahama Port Authority and facilitation of a climate conducive to both domestic and international investment.

Minister Laing recognized that the Bahamas' economic resurgence is not merely a function of procuring new investments. It is also a matter of giving Bahamians greater means to start and grow their own businesses by reducing bureaucratic obstacles; establishing a Facilitation Centre to assist with business plans, funding and operational support; promoting development in the agricultural and industrial sectors; increasing access to guaranteed government loans and

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## The ICB 7-Step Process



On the opening day of the conference, a diverse group of people ranging from educators, social workers, pastors, business persons, and leading governmental officials from The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands gathered and were privileged to hear a lecture on the Seven Step Process in Economic Empowerment through community building presented by Dr. Claire Michele Rice, President of Rice Training Solutions. The approach is a unique one because it focuses on the individual's character development as a precursor to successful economic development.

Dr. Rice described the process in action: G-O-M-A-B-C-D. The letters on the vertical plane from left to right represent Goal, Objective, Method, and Attitude. The letters displayed vertically, starting from "A", represent Attitude, Behavior, Communication, and Discipline. *Attitude* intersects and joins other key concepts. The audience was encouraged to apply the process to themselves and to become change agents within their respective communities. The goal of PACE is citizenship empowerment through community development. This can

be achieved through a 7-Step Process, in which government plays a central role. It is the method by which its citizens are empowered, and the objective is to alleviate poverty. She discussed how abject poverty comes down from generation to generations. However, the government can serve as a mentor who provides freedom of opportunity to its people to thrive socially and economically. The government's mentoring would not create a welfare state, but rather, it models the right example to its



people. It must be apt to teach its citizens the skills necessary to build and to harness technology. The traditional model of operation, where the government seeks only to advance its own wealth, does not demonstrate an attitude of honor but one of conquest. Government must adopt an attitude of respect and honor when dealing with its citizenry. The correct attitude must be displayed through the government's behavior. When the attitude and the behavior are aligned, the government communicates positive messages to its people and the world. Discipline is required in order to work through the obstacles that are presented until a solution is obtained. Disenfranchised citizens are encouraged by the government to be innovative and productive in developing new businesses. The individual contributes to the process by seeking to do his/her best in whatever he/she undertakes. His/her attitude is one of professionalism.

Dr. Rice concluded by showing how "the proper role of government is to provide for the welfare of the people." The people, in turn, give back to the government by paying their taxes, providing charitable contributions, and participating in the governmental process.



Honorable Lillian Boyce, *Government sets the PACE*

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status can leave a veil of deception in the minds of those politicians. They may see this work as progress even though many remain in a state of poverty. She proposed, "What then happens is that poverty is passed on from generation to generation because politicians and governments, all of whom enjoy boasting about progress and prosperity of their countries, are either unaware of, or in denial about poverty."

Minister Boyce continued to challenge policy makers to strive to develop their communities from within. She feels strongly about citizen empowerment as was echoed through her own policy initiative in the Turks and Caicos Island entitled, Poverty Alleviation and Citizens Empowerment or PACE. She asserts that "whenever there is a situation where people feel poor, powerless, voiceless and insecure, but yet they have to try against all odds to make ends meet for their families, there is a serious problem." Her initiative seeks to empower citizens through collaborations between the government and the community. Minister Boyce declared, "PACE is a Turks and Caicos Islands brand of social and economic engineering and transformation, which we sincerely hope can be extended throughout the Caribbean and other parts of the world. Basically, PACE is designed to eradicate poverty in every single community in the Turks and Caicos Islands, by ensuring that each and every household is provided with basic needs, such as decent housing, indoor bathrooms, electricity, clean running water, employment opportunities, proper health care and education, among other things."



The Minister feels that this approach is necessary as the Government's goal is "the harmonization of government policies to ensure that there is effective community building." Honourable Boyce's presentation was informative, eye-opening, and thought-provoking. This was evidenced by the standing ovation she received at the conclusion of her presentation.

Honorable Zhivargo Laing, *Where Do We Go From Here?*

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venture capital funding; and introducing a system of apprenticeship in essential disciplines such as house-building, and carpentry. Crown land will also be made available for the construction of 3000 homes, and home purchases will be facilitated with the reduction to of down payments to 5% of the total cost.

Minister Laing concluded his remarks by noting that even if the Government does all it must do, the economic empowerment of Bahamians will not be fully realized because much of economic empowerment rests with private initiative, planning and execution. It is absolutely necessary for workers and employers alike promote their own economic empowerment.



## Citizen Involvement in economic empowerment from a business perspective

Panel Presentation by Kenneth Williams,  
Chief Executive Office (CEO),  
Ellen's Hats & Accessories

During the panel presentations on "Citizen Involvement in Economic Empowerment," Mr. Kenneth Williams discussed how business leaders can assist citizens in economic empowerment. He proposed that by seeking to enhance their well-being—building people internally and then outwardly—the focus moves from just making money, to actively working with the community. As Mr. Williams states, "It is not about money; it's about serving people first." When these leaders build, teach, train and motivate their

employees effectively, money will come later

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) must create a good working environment for the workers that is stress free and that provides the necessary tools for the job. A stress free employee is a productive worker. This behavior and attitude are firstly seen in the CEO, exhibiting honor, trust and respect for others. The CEO acts as a mentor, coach, a teacher, a trainer and a motivator. He is able to bring out the best performance from his workers through his own role-modeling.

He is upright and honest in all of his dealings. He is focused and disciplined. He executes fair play

and is not about favoritism and taking sides. His behavior is positive and inclusive as he builds the character of leadership in his workers. What is the CEO communicating through his actions? He is communicating teamwork, unity, oneness and peace.

**"It is not about money;  
it's about serving  
people first."**

If the organizational leader is not practicing those basic, positive precepts, control and domination become part of the organizational culture. This type of leader is building an environment of dishonesty, distrust, disrespect and fear.

He is about making money and is not concerned about the welfare of his workers. This kind of negative attitude, behavior and communication will impact the work place and community negatively, causing his workers to mistrust him and each other. Eventually, the overall production of his business and workers will diminish.

In conclusion, Mr. Williams asked the audience to examine how they are building in their communities, organizations, or businesses. Is it done in a positive or negative manner? Since we are all agents of change, Mr. Williams encouraged each person to be a positive community builder.

# the role of the citizen in economic development

## COMMUNITY TABLES: A *Meeting of Minds*

The community tables workshop was an integral part of the two-day sessions. During these sessions, participants from the audience were able to engage representatives from each of the four major societal sectors: business, government, education, and religion. Speakers were given time to address the timely topic of "The Role of the Citizen in Economic Development."

### BUSINESS

Panelist Mrs. Eleanor Williams, Business Partner of Eleason's Men's Store, spoke on the ABCD's of business management, which represent the fundamentals of business decision-making and practices that she employs in her business. She has found much success using these principles.

Mrs. Williams said that having the right attitude is very important. If one's attitude is right, one is able to provide good customer service, which leads to repeated business. A right attitude drives good behavior. There is a direct correlation between the attitude and the behavior. When one's behavior in business is right (using right ethical principles), one's communication will also be positive. Discipline, she stated, must be a part of life. We must be willing to change our lives—making right decisions and staying on the right path that is good for the business. In other words, our conduct in business should be one that wins customers and grows a business.

Mrs. Williams sees dealing with customers in business as a Christian ministry. It is not all about dollars. It is important that we all also make deposits into people's lives, even if the business does not show a manifest profit.



*Mrs. Eleanor Williams, Business Partner, Eleason's Men's Store*

**ABCD** is an acronym, which stands for...

**A = Attitude**  
the inward perspective or how one views a person, object or idea.

**B = Behavior**  
the outward manifestation of the attitude that a person exhibits

**C = Communication**  
verbal dialogue, factors that influence people, as they communicate

**D = Discipline**  
the self-restraint necessary to sustain oneself toward attitudes, behaviors, and factors of communication that facilitate the fostering of positive interpersonal and intra-personal relationships.



### RELIGION

Mr. Frank Hagan hails from the School of Prophetic Ministry. His workshop's theme was based on the works of an Israelite of Biblical days named Abraham. Mr. Hagan asked the question, "How do we as a Christian people, help our Country or Community?" One of the participants responded, "By acknowledging God in all our ways, and he will direct our paths." He cited the ability to work and earn a descent living as an important gift. Mr. Hagan stressed the importance of God's people being used as change agents, setting a right example for others to follow. God wants his people to prosper first spiritually, then manifestly. Prosperity comes by way of obedience.

God teaches his people entrepreneurship. He charges us all to be stewards over all that we have including our finances. It is God who multiplies what we have, to his honor and glory. As citizens we must do all things in honor—not dishonor. Many of God's people want the harvest but do not want to endure the trials along the way before you obtain the harvest!

## Citizen Involvement in economic empowerment from a religious perspective

Panel Presentation by Pastor Bradley Handfield,  
Community Fellowship Church  
Turks & Caicos Islands



The Presentation by Pastor Handfield stressed the importance of unity among the people of The Bahamas in order for the nation to prosper. He used the nation of Is-

rael as an example and how the nation prospered when David was king. David promoted unity, but in contrast King Solomon levied heavy taxes on its citizens. King Solomon lived lavishly in his palaces while the citizens became increasingly impoverished. In turn the citizens became restless and rebellious under his leadership. The kingdom was ultimately divided.

Pastor Handfield stated that underdeveloped countries have problems due to selfishness, greed, and more importantly their inability to develop infrastructure. When a nation ignores God, sin and division become contributing factors to its decline. Pastor Handfield spoke of rebuilding a nation and the need for repentance. He further stressed the need to promote civility, unity, and honor among the people when the nation is restored. He pointed out how good leaders are interested in citizens' well being and in ensuring fairness and equity for its citizens.



Mr. Leo Selver, PS  
Ministry of Social Development  
Turks & Caicos Islands

Mr. Leo Selver served as moderator for the panel presentations on "Citizen Involvement in Economic Empowerment." He took the opportunity to highlight the importance of current projects in economic development that the government of the Turks and Caicos is undertaking through its PACE initiative .



Bishop Sobig Kemp, Kemp Freedom International Ministries

Bishop Sobig, Kemp from Kemp Freedom International Ministries also covered the religious sector. Bishop Sobig stated that God gave mankind his Spirit to prosper. He believes it is God's desire to bless mankind. He cited the example of Abraham and his children as they were associated with God's blessing. He used this theme to show that every citizen has a right to expect blessings from God through Government. Government has an obligation to empower its citizens; citizens have a right to be employed. Citizens can then pass that blessing on to others by mentoring. He spoke of the need for promoting morality in the nation in order for its citizens to prosper. He then stated that citizens have a responsibility to pay taxes to Government. Citizens have an obligation to honor the less fortunate and the poor and needy—those on welfare, using the social services offered by the government. Bishop Sobig stated, "The citizens shall reap what is sowed; blessing comes from labor of one's hands legally." He also stressed the need for citizens to be law abiding—citizens of integrity.



Mr. Kenneth Romer, Principal  
St. Georges High School

### EDUCATION

Mr. Kenneth Romer, Principal of St. Georges High School enlightened conference goers concerning the educational challenges on Grand Bahama Island. Romer established the tone with the primary problems contributing to the decline of scholastic achievement with the "three 'E's: Economics, Education and Empowerment." With regard to economics, Romer expressed, "We have to apply the principle of *supply and demand*." Romer explains that, "There is a [big] demand for skilled workers, but there is a scarcity of educated citizens among the people." Romer explained that education is about changing one's mindset: "We must ask the question, is the educational process meeting the needs and demands of our society?" If not, what must be done to achieve this goal?

"Presently there seems to be a *disconnect* among the stakeholders," said Cyprianna Williams, group participant, "A partnership among schools, parents and children is necessary to effect change." Williams believes that this partnership will emerge with Poverty Alleviation and Citizen Empowerment, PACE, and ultimately evolve into CEAP, Citizens Empowered Alleviating Poverty. Romer explains that education must be "re-engineered, bringing about a radical re-design among the teachers, the students and the curriculum." This effort would be to empower the people of the Bahamas with the essential tools needed to break free of uncompromising traditions.

Currently, the most recent industrial endeavor undertaken by Bahamians is underwater welding. However, according to Romer, "No school on the Island has it as a part of its curriculum." He pointed out that this is a prime example of why it is necessary to stimulate the people and convey that they have a charge as citizens to advocate for their needs. Often, "The parents and community are left out of the decision-making process or development of the curriculum for their children," said Romer, As such, citizens must take a stand to ensure the well-being and advancement of their future within the Bahamas.

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## ABCD'S of Urban Renewal

After more than a half century of existence, urban renewal is yet being discussed. As an example of mega project development with a focus on physical structures, urban renewal has been quite successful. Examples can be found in large scale road projects in the United States and other countries making it possible to travel from course to course with relative ease. Airports and other transportation systems have reduced travel time between countries and blighted areas have also been cleared and replaced by cultural centers, sports arenas, business centers and other projects. When urban renewal is viewed in terms of its impact on the lives of city dwellers, the jury has also spoken, but the verdict is not as favorable.

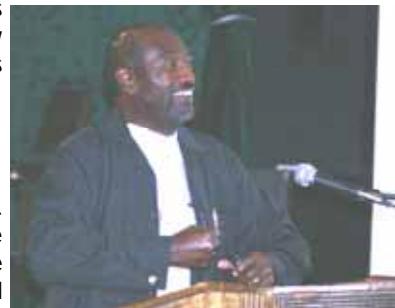
***"Renewal, while internal and individualistic, is inclusive in outlook."***

In too many cases governments partnered with businessmen to move middle class residents from cities via the highways they built. Mega projects like transportation systems produce needed jobs too far from the inner city for poor urban dwellers to benefit. Blighted neighborhoods have indeed been cleared but gentrification has too often resulted. Cities like Chicago and St. Louis to cite two examples, built large scale high rise housing projects for the poor, only to see them turn into vertical ghettos. Urban planners, developers and politicians have historically valued exclusion over inclusion. Their exclusionary approach to urban renewal was both myopic and callous in nature.

In this paper, renewal focuses on people renewing themselves. Renewal, while internal and individualistic in nature, is also inclusive in outlook. The value of *inclusion* under girds the renewal process. As we have indicated above, exclusion has been valued in failed urban renewal projects of the past. Exclusion leads to division not unity. A society needs to be unified in order to live up to its potential. When any group is excluded from the benefits of society, thereby causing marginalization, the whole society loses its potential for greatness; its productivity is reduced; and its creativity is dampened.

Integrity, accountability and openness, while not discussed systematically in the paper, are core values we embrace. These values are tied to a method of service characterized by genuine caring, sharing and loving principles. This approach, while behaviorally directed, is rooted in an inward disposition of the heart where inclusive service is held to be not only good, right and proper but makes for good business.

In cases where people lack the right attitude for renewal, a mentor is needed. When people see their prized possessions destroyed and loved ones lost, they give up hope. In other words, they lack the will to renew themselves. Renewal is yet possible for those who have lost hope, but a mentor is needed to intercede on their behalf. The role of the mentor is crucial in the renewal process as the mentor sets the right example and encourages others to begin to believe that not only is renewal possible, but that it is something that is desirable. The mentor is a person already renewed and has the wherewithal to guide others in the process, a process we call the ABCD's of urban renewal.



*Dr. Deryl G. Hunt, Sr.  
Senior International Consultant*

### ***"A" is for Attitude***

The starting point is the inward disposition of the heart where a positive **Attitude** is needed. Without the positive attitude toward renewal, it is not possible to renew. Therefore the critical aspect of renewal is not the outward relationships but the inward disposition of the heart. As "A" is the first letter in the ABCD's, attitude is the primary focus of the inward renewal process. After we have discussed the right attitude needed for renewal, we then take up the discussion of the remaining letters: BCD where "B" stands for **Behavior**, "C" for **Communicate** and "D" for **Discipline**. This is done in the context of urban renewal as an outward experience.

Though infrastructures are necessary for an urban society to exist, at its heart, the term *urban* means people living in a densely populated area. People must be taught the proper ways of behaving toward their neighbors. They must learn wholesome values to guide their daily living, but they have to be convinced that urban renewal is both desirable and doable. How does one renew him/her self when he/she is disaster prone? Renewal certainly does not begin with the person buying a new house or a new car or even a new suit of clothing. While these items may be important in the renewal process, in many cases, they are not available. This is especially true when a major disaster occurs like a hurricane. To understand how to renew the urban area, one needs to work from the individual to the group, from the internal to the external. Renewal begins with a right spirit or attitude.

We take the position that people don't naturally know how to renew themselves. Through socialization too many have learned a divisive approach to relationship building where others are seen as animals and the city is viewed as a jungle. Needed is socialization that embraces inclusive community building values where caring, sharing and loving relationships predominate. As pointed out in the

introduction, communities have been built with exclusion in mind. This has led to division and discard among the people where the dominant group imposes its will and marginalizes others. Too many government officials, businessmen and civic leaders who should be mentors in inclusive community building or urban renewal have been part of the problem. The attitudes of those sworn to serve and those they serve must be examined to see if they stand in need of renewal themselves. The mentor, having been renewed, is able to empathize with those in need of renewal. He or she is as the skilled guide who safely brings his followers through a dangerous jungle venture.

As previously indicated, a right attitude is the starting point in any successful urban renewal. One does not just happen upon a right attitude. Training is needed because one's attitude reflects how the person feels or thinks about what is being presented to him/her. A person's attitude is influenced to no small degree by their perception of whether those seeking to renew them believe in urban renewal. It is therefore critical that the mentor leaves no doubt in the minds of the people that he/she fully endorses urban renewal. This is not done by words alone because people say one thing but do another. Urban renewal must be demonstrated in the personal character of the mentor.

#### ***Behavior, Communication and Discipline: Outward Dimensions of Urban Renewal***

Right behavior is driven by right attitude. The mentor's behavior is a reflection of this right attitude. There is no place for hypocrisy in the renewal process. Transparency, integrity and accountability characterize the behavior of the mentor. So you can see that while urban renewal begins with the internal it quickly moves to the external where the outward renewal expresses an inward disposition of a servant with caring, sharing and loving attitude toward those he/she serves. In a word, those in need of renewal need to know whether their mentors are renewed. They therefore watch their mentors for signs of a servant: trust, honor, respect, etc. If the words spoken by mentors are not verified in their deeds (behavior), those needing renewal will act on what they perceive their mentors expect of them.

***"Mixed signals lead to confusion among those in need of renewal, and they are left to their own devices in dealing with life's daily issues."***

Hence, effective Communication is a necessary condition in urban renewal. Communication relates to the message the mentor sends to those in need of renewal regarding the sustainability of urban renewal. If those in need of renewal feel the mentor is not serious about sound moral and ethical standards, he/she is not likely to produce the desired results. Those in need of renewal must hear from their mentors the message of inclusion: A positive message that renewal is a good thing and is indeed possible. The message communicated helps to prepare those in need of renewal for the long haul where a disciplined lifestyle is needed.

Discipline has to do with patience as those in need of renewal will face many challenges transitioning from the prior renewal status to urban renewal. Challenges they face come from without and within. Discouragement born of negative thoughts is a natural tendency. These are buttressed by discommunity building examples and even ridicule from close associates. Mentors have gone through these same things so they are able to help guide those in renewal training through the mine fields of doubt. Again this done by the mentor demonstrating the character development they want those in need of renewal to mimic. With proper discipline, mentors and those in need of renewal, come to trust each other. Time verifies urban renewal as a valued commodity in them, and this makes for greater productivity in renewing the community. Remember, those making use of urban renewal services will be able to distinguish between those who fake renewed behavior from those who actually practice it.

***"The Community Center is not just a physical structure; it is a 'center of life' where people come to be renewed."***

#### ***The Urban Renewal Community Center***

Key to successful urban renewal is the Community Center. It is a place for fellowship, training, and development with on-site accommodations for its activities and programs, including a kitchen, meeting/classrooms, and a community gathering area. It is an inclusive community building initiative offering a continual series of workshops on business development and entrepreneurship, conflict resolution, leadership, management, and diversity training toward sustaining the vision of urban renewal. The government assists in bridging the business community with participating residents, where both groups work together to provide training and development opportunities for all residents.

To realize the goal of urban renewal as the center of life, the Inclusive Community Building (ICB) approach based on The Ellison Model is employed. The Ellison Model is an approach to inclusive community building where people learn to work together in a spirit of unity to achieve individual and community goals. It is an internal renewing conflict resolution model aimed at first renewing the individual and then the community at-large. The community, in turn, embraces a way of life that demonstrates a caring, sharing, and loving attitude where trust, honor, and respect are demonstrated in daily living and sustained over time. The individual embraces these values and adopts inclusion and equity as a way of life.

# the role of the citizen in economic development

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At the Community Table's session on Government, Mr. Rudy Sawyer explored a number of areas in which the government should take the initiative in equipping the citizens with the essential tools to participate in sustainable economic development: developing early education in entrepreneurship; teaching citizens to refine their skills and to manage businesses; funding, marketing and promoting homegrown businesses; and facilitating affirmative action.

Educating the citizens for economic development must start with early education. It is necessary at this stage to begin introducing students to business curricula, teaching entrepreneurship and changing the mind set of "when I finish school I will get a job" to

"when I finish school I will start 'X' business." Not every child will become entrepreneurs; however, we must begin exposing children to entrepreneurship early on. The citizens must be also taught about business ownership, planning, time and people management. For existing business owners, providing training that assists them in refining their skills, such as how to integrate information technology into their businesses, is critical to sustainable economic development.



Mr. H. Rudy Sawyer, Assistant  
General Manager, BAIC

Government should explore ways of funding entrepreneurial ventures and to market and promote upstart businesses. It is the government's business to buy from its citizens instead of importing from abroad. Government should offer incentives to citizens such as tax breaks and other subsidies as they embark on their own economic development initiatives. Collaborative efforts such as business owner and government partnership will be very important for the citizen to sustain economic development. As the government initiates the process and weans the citizens, they may become more self sufficient in business. In terms of affirmative actions, it is not enough for government to give to its citizens, the desired end result is for the citizen to give back to the government and the society. Therefore, a mechanism must be in place, allowing the systematic weaning of the citizen from the government.

## The Role of the Grand Bahama Port Authority

### *in Community Building*



Mr. Dillon Knowles, Vice President, Grand Bahama Development Company, spoke on the subject of "The Role of the Grand Bahama Port Authority in Community Building." When most people think of community building, they think mainly about the social aspects of building a community. Mr. Knowles believes that before we can build a "community," we must build up a population. Before we can build up a population, we must build an economy.

According to Knowles, The Hawksbill Creek Agreement signed in 1955 in The Bahamas allowed the Grand Bahama Port Authority (GBPA) to do two things as it relates to the economy: 1) Create businesses of its own that employed people, and 2) Create an environment that fostered the creation of businesses by others, the licensees.

Grand Bahama Island's industrial, maritime, wealth management and tourism economies support a population of approximately 50,000 and contributes well over \$100 million to the Public Treasury on an annual basis. The GBPA has promulgated by-laws for matters such as the establishment of basic and necessary municipal services. The GBPA is also very conscious of its obligation with respect to social development. They provide financial assistance to schools, housing and medical facilities, all of which have been and will continue to be met. Mr. Knowles suggests that the real hero is the Hawksbill Creek Agreement itself. The GBPA is only the instrument used to carry out its vision, which is community building via economic empowerment.



## A Governmental Perspective: *Empowering Citizens to Build the Community*

Recognizing the necessity of establishing partnerships was the theme of Dr. Howell's luncheon address. He indicated that many people are reluctant to develop such relationships because of a lack of trust in their fellow man. In order to effect change within a community, Howell suggested that the various community entities (i.e. citizens, businesses, churches and



government) must have a shared vision, a reciprocal relationship and most importantly, biblical principles of conduct, which must be applied in working relationships. He encouraged members of the audience to see

themselves as did Gideon. We have been called to more than just survive in hostile environments but have been charged with the responsibility to transform the hostile environment into one that is an economically empowering community for all citizens. When a community seeks to empower its citizens, Howell expressed that the opinions citizens have of government and their role to the government is critical. He outlined several questions: 1) How do we see Government? 2) Do we understand the role of Government? 3) Do we understand and appreciate our role in Government? 4) Do we understand and appreciate our responsibility to the Government? Providing clear answers to these questions will assist citizens in establishing positive and mutual relationships among the various entities of a community. This will, in turn, produce sustainable economic empowerment of its citizens.

## The Executive Speaks

Mr. Christopher Lowe, President of The Grand Bahama Chamber of Commerce, spoke on how empowering employees was instrumental in turning around a company that had been in business for forty two years in The Bahamas, Kelly's Freeport. He stated that the key element of trust was lacking, not only in relationships between the government and private sector but also among private companies themselves. In the past five years, the company more than tripled their gross sales, doubled employment and increased employee retention.

The transformation begins with the belief that Bahamians can provide service or a product at the same level as the rest of the world. He was able to take approximately forty seven employees and gradually begin to build trust between the workers at the ground level and management. He encouraged the workers by letting them know that he would deal with them honestly and fairly. He began to empower employees with information about labor laws and company fringe benefits. He believed that sharing information and resources would allow them to understand their role in the company's progress.

Employees at the ground level began to display a sense of commitment they had not displayed before. They, in turn, put pressure on their supervisors, who in turn put pressure on management to increase production. The company's employees began to get involved with community projects. Mr. Lowe reports that the staff are happier. Turnover of employees remain the same, however, the staff provides appropriate notice. Several of the employees were able to glean from what they had learned at Kelly's to start their own businesses, and some received scholarships to continue their education. Mr. Lowe stated that he hopes to bring a similar transformation to the Chamber of Commerce.

## THE TRANSFORMATION



**The Grand Bahama Community Builders Club (GBCBC)** was formed in 1996 out of a need to engage Bahamians in meaningful dialogue as it relates to inclusive community building. The visionary and current president, Patterson Williams, adopted a model developed by Dr. Deryl G. Hunt who was at the time a professor at Florida International University (FIU). The model is called, The Ellison Model. The Model focuses on using grassroots principles such as loving, caring, sharing, trust, honor and respect as the driving force behind all its interactions and development.

As The Model has expanded its reach and has evolved so has the Grand Bahama Community Builders Club. The Club has partnered with ICB Productions, a community based organization located in Miami, Florida. As a result of this partnership GBCBC has worked with and supported ICB Productions in initiatives with Florida International University, Florida Memorial University and Nova Southeastern University. A very noteworthy accomplishment has been The Club's



*continued on back page*

## A CULTURAL NIGHT OF EXPRESSIONS

The crowning conclusion to the Grand Bahama Community Builders Club 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference came on the evening of June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007, as the Hilton Outten Convention Center erupted with the *A Cultural Night of Expression*. The evening activities was infused with a medley of songs, a theatrical performance, and a red-carpet fashion show.

More than two hundred guests ranging from young children, to government officials, hailing from numerous parts of the region including Georgia, Florida, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and other islands of The Bahamas basked in the excitement of the evening in celebration of new hopes toward poverty alleviation for the island of Grand Bahama and the surrounding territories.

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## CHILDREN'S

**A  
M  
P**

This year's annual children's conference focused on character development using the five-booklet series entitled, *The ABCD's of Character Development*. The five-booklet series introduces the reader to Goma and uses realistic fictional accounts to chronicle situations with which readers can identify . They demonstrate the right attitude, which leads to the right behavior and communication and finally sustainability or discipline of these traits. As the children discussed each book and participated in the Creative Expression activities, they were able to examine their own attitudes, actions and communications to ensure that desirable qualities of leadership are sustained in them.

These project-based activities gave students an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the positive character concepts that have been taught through Goma. One of the activities included generating words that would describe Goma's attitude and then designing a Goma character dressed or *armed* in these words. Another way students were given the opportunity to express their understanding was through designing an original comic strip, depicting a situation that required positive behaviors to avoid conflict. The culminating activity gave children the chance to write an original poem or story or to design or draw a collage that illustrates discipline.



Finally, the children were able to apply what they had learned as they toured the island of Freeport. Various outings were incorporated into the week. While the children were able to taste the native cuisine, attend the Junk-a-Noo festival, visit the straw market, and take a ferry over to a sister hotel to enjoy the beaches of The Bahamas, they were able to apply the ABCD's of character development as they encountered people of different cultures.

## Learning 'bout GOMA!



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The songs of the evening, written by Dr. Deryl G. Hunt, were appropriately titled and choreographed. Firstly, 'Akili,' a Swahili word, means knowledge, wisdom and intellect. Secondly, the Community Building anthem, encompassed the theme of the Conference. The final song of the evening was "Tourism is everybody's Business," a message encouraging everyone to work in unity.

The theatrical performance, entitled "The Freeport Experience" also written by Dr. Deryl G. Hunt, exposed the economic and social calamities affecting the development of the people of Freeport and other neighboring islands. The play, directed by Arnold Veira, emphasized that "It ain't necessary" for people to live in poverty. The fashion show followed.

Ellen's Hat and Accessories and Eliean's Men's Clothing captivated the evening with top models, sporting slick hats, and cool linen. The models showcased casual wear, business/church attire and evening apparel fit for every occasion.

"This evening is only the end of the beginning," said Patterson Williams, Conference Chairperson. Williams also expressed, "That the citizens of the Bahamas are now aware of what needs to be done to advance us economically."



## THE CAST

**McQuella Williams**  
**Keturah Williams**  
**Katie Rolle**  
(Women under the Tree)

**Dominique Storr**  
**Burnell Moxey**  
**Elijah Stevens**  
(Students)

**Sandra Knowles**  
(Teacher)

**Ellen Williams**  
**Stanley Williams**  
(Business Professionals)

**Angela Storr**  
(Shop Owner)

**Georgette Solomon**  
(Tourist/Concerned Citizen)

**Eleanor Williams**  
(Haitian Advocate)

**Ricardo Thomas**  
(Haitian Pastor)

**Eleason Williams**  
(Government Official)

**Special Thanks to:**

**Will Stubs**  
Master of Ceremony  
Comedian

**Elrod Outten**  
Master of Ceremony

**Shelly Carey**  
Fashion Fair Commentator  
Radio Personality

**GRAND BAHAMA  
COMMUNITY BUILDERS  
CLUB BUILDING  
SUSTAINABLE  
COMMUNITIES...**

The dedication of GBCBC was evident at the conference held at The Hilton Outten Convention Center, June 6 - 8, 2007. The organization of 30 members, brought together a delegation from Florida, Georgia, Turks & Caicos and Nassau to discuss and develop strategies as it relates to the topic: Economic Empowerment Through Community Building. These discussions featured speakers such as The Hon. Zhivargo Laing, Minister of State for Finance and Member of Parliament for Marco City; The Hon. Lillian Boyce, the Minister of Health and Human Services of the Turks & Caicos Islands; Dr. Deryl G. Hunt, founder and CEO of ICB Productions, Dr. Conrad Howell, Interim Chair of the Civil Service Commission in the Turks & Caicos Island, Dr. Michele Rice, CEO of Rice Training Solutions, and many others.

**GRAND BAHAMA  
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Mr. Patterson Williams

*Conference Chair*

Ms. Cyprianna Williams

*Conference Co-Chair*

Ms. Georgette Moxey

Ms. Kathie Rolle

Mr. Dominique Storr

Mrs. Petra Thomas

Mr. Ricardo Thomas

Mr. Arnold Williams

Mrs. Eleanor Williams

Mr. Kenneth Williams

Ms. Keturah Williams

Ms. McQuella Williams

Mr. Stanley Williams



*The Chairman's Vision*

*continued from front page*

improving the state of affairs and collaboration between government and the citizenry. The theme was echoed over the three-day proceedings as participants from the Freeport, Nassau, Miami, Georgia, and the Turk & Caicos all embraced the need for citizens to become more involved in the community developmental process. Heightened awareness of civic involvement, societal challenges, and business development through education were all realized. The message of inclusion and relationship building as key elements of community building was clearly articulated.

There is no doubt in my mind that this conference had a great impact on the island of Grand Bahama and indeed The Bahamas. I took note that all of the workshops were very interactive with spirited discussions. Our facilitators shared with me that they were pleased to have served and were edified by their sessions.

The Freeport News and ZNS did an excellent job of covering the conference. In my travels around the island, I continue to receive positive testimonies from many persons regarding the conference. Grand Bahama citizens were able to learn about the work of the GBCBC during this conference.

I wish to express thanks to Dr. Hunt and the fine staff at ICB Productions, for their dedication to this conference as well as members of the GBCBC for their invaluable contribution, our speakers, facilitators, participants, management of the Hilton Outten Convention Centre, Queenie's Catering, the Pelican Bay Hotel and everyone that contributed to the success of this conference. This conference was certainly an empowering experience and a great success.

Patterson Williams  
*Conference Chair*

*About GBCBC*

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ability to raise scholarship dollars for Bahamian students to attend Florida International University.

To this day, funds are still available. GBCBC has collaborated with an organization in Nassau Bahamas, The Margaret McDonald Policy Management and Administration Centre to develop community based service initiatives. They have hosted a number of conferences, training programs and ground-breaking dialogue in Freeport and Nassau. The Club has extended its reach to the Turks & Caicos Islands where they are working with government officials to implement the PACE-CEAP program in their

Grand Bahama community as well. In this program, the government develops programs and strategies to alleviate poverty by mentoring and empowering its citizens to continue their work in alleviating poverty on their own. Grand Bahama Community Builders Club has taken this mantra and, as PACE-makers, we have begun life changing discussions in Grand Bahama around this very topic.

Visit our website at  
[www.gcbc.com](http://www.gcbc.com)

**ICB PLANNING  
COMMITTEE**

Dr. Larry Rice, Chair  
Mrs. Alicia Brown

Dr. Claire Michele Rice

Dr. Helen Ellison

Mrs. Natasha Garrick

Mr. Richard Garrick

Mrs. Crystal Harvey

Mr. Deryl G. Hunt, Jr.

Mrs. Genevieve Cavé-Hunt

Mrs. Karen Lundy

**SEE  
YOU  
IN  
2008!**