

ANNUAL REPORT

2022



smileawhilefoundation.org

(929) 382-8464

1850 Amsterdam Ave, New York, NY 13001

Dear Supporters:

We wanted to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support of our nonprofit organization. Your generosity has helped our startup grow and serve special needs children in Jamaica in ways we never thought possible.

Thanks to your contributions, we have been able to provide professional training to Jamaica resident therapists, which enhances the services provided by these skilled professionals dedicated to improving the lives of children in Jamaica with special needs.

We are thrilled to announce that we will be bringing our first therapists to Jamaica in 2023 to kickstart our program. This is a major milestone for us, and we couldn't have done it without your support.

Throughout our journey, we have forged many valuable partnerships and learned a great deal about the challenges facing special needs children in Jamaica. We are committed to continuing our work and making a positive impact on the lives of these children.

Once again, thank you for your unwavering support. We could not have achieved any of this without you.

Sincerely,

Joanne Oates

Joanne Oates, OTLR/L
Founder





OUR VISION

We believe every child with special needs in the Caribbean can have a bright future when given the support they need.

OUR MISSION

We provide therapy services to neurodiverse children in areas where access to such support is not widely available.

Therapeutic intervention for special needs children drastically improves their quality of life, yet many children around the world receive only sporadic support, if any. Consistent access to trained professionals is key, and our programs provide training and additional hands on deck to make this happen.



SPLINTING CLINIC

IN THE WORKS

We know that therapeutic intervention for special needs children drastically improves their quality of life, yet many children around the world receive only sporadic support, if any. Consistent access to trained professionals is key and our programs provide training and additional hands on deck to make this happen.

Custom splints and bracing support fit each child in a way that provides range of motion and enhanced movements while decreasing pain and discomfort.

We are excited that share that in 2023, we will be opening a splinting clinic in Jamaica! At our splinting clinic, children will be fitted for custom splints to support individual needs. Custom splinting is essential in providing protection and support that meets individual needs for optimal quality of life. Custom splinting or bracing can provide additional comfort and mobility that will not exist from hand-me-down products, which is a huge reason we are excited to be able to bring this to kids in Jamaica.

All splints and bracing will be provided at no costs to children and their families.

Our clinic will also provide education and training to island professionals on how to prepare custom splints, so that they may continue to use our supplies and provide this service during times that volunteers, fellows or sponsored therapists are not available.

The final location of our splinting clinic is being finalized in January 2023. We are looking forward to sharing updates of our project in 2023!

"SPLINTS HELP CHILDREN WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES IN REGARD TO STRETCHING THE MUSCLES, KEEPING THE LIMB IN A FUNCTIONAL POSITION, AND PROVIDING SENSORY INPUT. ALL OF THESE SUPPORTS THAT A SPLINT WILL PROVIDE TRANSLATES TO HELPING A CHILD TO BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN CHILDHOOD OCCUPATIONS, LIKE PLAYING AND LEARNING."

– Joanne Oates, Founder of Smile A While Foundation





ITTS PROGRAM PAVES WAY FOR INCREASED 'AUTISM-FRIENDLY' APPROACH IN JAMAICA

In our world, information and technology is constantly changing. This makes the need for continuing education essential for occupational therapists to maintain clinical excellence and update their skills, knowledge and technique to best serve patients.

Thanks to our Interdisciplinary Team Training Series (ITTS) program, we were able to sign up four (4) professional therapists in Jamaica for a virtual conference, 'Autism: Beyond Limits' in Fall 2022.

Since, we have surveyed and met with a few of the participants on what the experience has meant both personally and professionally.



After the conference was complete, we reached out to learn what participants thought of their experience and how it will impact their work with kids in Jamaica.

The individuals who participated in the follow-up survey included:

- Shanique Westcarr, Manager and Clinical Psychologist at Mico C.A.R.E Centre - St. Ann
- Sharon Anderson-Morgan, Director of the Mico C.A.R.E Centre - St. Ann
- Georgette Johnson-Grant, Special Educator at Mico C.A.R.E Centre - St. Ann
- Shelleka Matthews, Head of Clinical Services and Clinical Psychologist at Mico C.A.R.E Centre - St. Ann

The group in general agreed that the conference was very practical, and each professional walked away with ideas to improve their services. One example was a meltdown session (a time when a child is having a tantrum and is unable to self regulate), which explored different intervention techniques to prevent meltdowns or at least reduce their severity. The session offered tips on assessing behavior leading up to a meltdown in order to redirect before a major meltdown occurs.

The group also enjoyed sessions that focused on helping children to key into their individual strengths and interests.

"WE ARE INDEBTED TO SMILE A WHILE FOUNDATION FOR ALLOWING US THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THIS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WHICH FEATURED WORLD RENOWN RESEARCHERS AND EXPERTS IN THE FIELD. THROUGH THIS EXPERIENCE WE HAVE GAINED USEFUL STRATEGIES TO INCLUDE MANAGING SENSORY CHALLENGES AND MELTDOWNS, AS WELL AS SUPPORTING SELF-REGULATION AND QUALITY OF LIFE. THE KNOWLEDGE GAINED WILL GUIDE US IN MAKING OUR PROGRAMMES AND SPACES MORE AUTISM-FRIENDLY AND PROVIDE US WITH A ROADMAP FOR MEETING OUR STRATEGIC GOAL OF PROVIDING TARGETED INTERVENTION FOR AUTISTIC STUDENTS."

-excerpt from a Thank You letter received from MICO Care Centre

IMPACT REPORT

We are proud of the partnerships and growth that have allowed us to move towards helping every disabled child in the Caribbean lead a fulfilling life.



PROFESSIONAL THERAPISTS

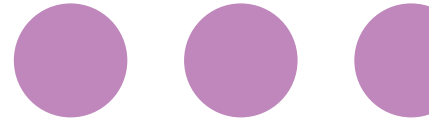
sent to a virtual conference, 'Autism: Beyond Limits' through our Interdisciplinary Team Training Series (ITTS) program.



TOTAL FOLLOWERS

on social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram).





LOOKING AHEAD

The Splinting Clinic opportunity that we are currently wrapping up details on is HUGE for our mission work. We are very excited to continue to expand the ways we are able to support and provide therapy so that every disabled child in the Caribbean can lead a fulfilling life.

Support access to life changing therapy for children with special needs in Jamaica.

WAYS WE NEED SUPPORT

BECOME A
MONTHLY DONOR



provide children in need with the life-changing therapy year-round.

JOIN OUR
EMAIL LIST



stay up-to-date on program updates, new partnership, and ways you can get involved.



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