

Deez

SEPTEMBER 2026
ISSUE 3

SEPTEMBER
2026
ISSUE 3

Art of Living

MAIN FEATURE

DR. CECILE DENNIS

TEACHING.
MENTORING.
TRANSFORMING LIVES.

A story of purpose, passion
and the power of education
to change generations.

Plus

TRAVEL
FOOD
WELLNESS
& MORE

Education
is Legacy.

CARIBBEAN PULSE

Voices, stories and
perspectives that
capture our rhythm.

OUTDOOR LIVING INSPIRATION

Beautiful spaces,
thoughtful design
and island style.

THE GARDEN ADDICT

Grow. Green.
Thrive.

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EQUIPPING MINDS.
EMPOWERING FUTURES.
BUILDING A BETTER CARIBBEAN.

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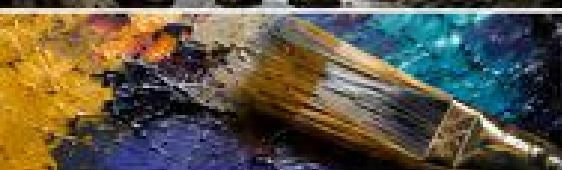
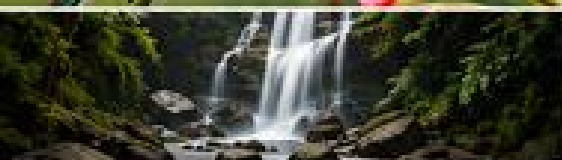
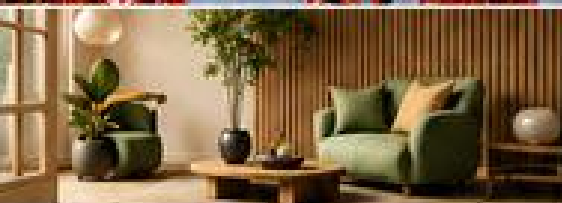
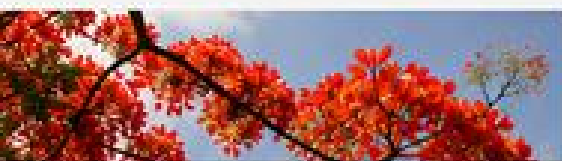
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DONNA M. HUNTER

EDITOR'S LETTER



EDITOR'S LETTER

Tomorrow Begins With Us Learning Today. Leading Tomorrow.

There are certain seasons in life that remind us that the future is not something we simply wait for—it is something we prepare for. September has always felt like a season of new beginnings: new classrooms, new goals, new opportunities, and renewed purpose. This month, we celebrate education as a foundation for the future of our Caribbean.

Education is deeply personal to me. I work in recruitment at a local university and serve as an adjunct lecturer, giving me the privilege of supporting students at different stages of their journeys. At home, I am also a mother of four, watching my own children learn, grow, and discover who they are becoming.

My connection to education began long before my career. My mother dedicated 42 years to education, and teaching has also been part of the lives of my aunts and brother. Through them, I learned that education is about far more than qualifications. It can build confidence, create opportunity, and change the direction of a life.

That belief shapes how I see this month's theme: Tomorrow Begins With Us!

Inside this issue, we celebrate educators, students, mentors, and young people who are learning, leading, and creating possibilities for the future. We also look at careers, innovation, and the importance of continuing to learn long after we leave the classroom. Because learning never really ends.

You do not have to know everything today to become who you are meant to be tomorrow. Keep learning. Keep growing. Keep asking questions. Keep showing up. The future is being shaped by what we teach, what we learn, and what we choose to pass on. Tomorrow begins with us.

Welcome to September.
Let's learn. Let's lead. Let's shape tomorrow.

Donna M. Hunter, MBA

Editor-in-Chief | Educator | Lecturer
| Recruitment & Enrolment Professional
| Life Coach | Author

THANK YOU

TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

We are deeply grateful to our contributors for sharing their time, talents, stories, and expertise in this issue. Your voices inspire, inform, and uplift our readers, and we are honored to feature you in *Deez Art of Living Magazine*.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Donna M. Hunter

Founder & Editor-in-Chief

Editorial Leadership • Lifestyle • Education
Wellness • Culture

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS



Thais Beckford

Section: Thrive
Focus: Wellness & Balance
Role: Wellness & Balance Contributor



Faith Waltson

Section: Thrive
Focus: Mindset & Personal Development
Role: Mindset & Personal Development Contributor



Janique Campbell

Section: Travel Around the Caribbean
Focus: Travel & Adventure
Role: Travel Advisor / Contributor

Her Blue Mountain feature is specifically credited to her as a Travel Advisor.



Claudia Buchanan-Morris

Section: Island Style
Focus: Makeup & Beauty
Role: Makeup Artist & Beauty Contributor



Shauna-Kaye Whitter

Section: Island Style
Focus: Fashion
Role: Fashion Contributor



Britney McKnight-McIntosh

Section: Thrive
Focus: Mommy & Me / Family & Personal Development
Role: Mommy & Me Contributor



Kewanna Lavan Campbell

Section: Lifestyle & Culture
Focus: Interior Design, Feng Shui & Art
Role: Interior Decorator • Feng Shui • Artist Painter





Dacoda Mitchell

Section: Arts & Culture

Focus: Arts, Culture & Creative Expression

Role: Arts & Culture Contributor



Kayon Vaz

Section: Arts & Culture

Focus: Storytelling, Media & Caribbean Perspectives

Role: Digital Content Producer & Media Coach / Contributing Writer

Author of "What's Your Story? — Learning, Growing and Finding Purpose." The issue describes him as a contributing writer and identifies his professional focus as Digital Content Producer & Media Coach.



Shereka Swaby

Section: Thrive

Focus: Personal Growth & Purpose

Role: Contributor



Adjoni Scale

Section: Living Well

Focus: Floral Design & Lifestyle

Role: Certified Florist / Contributor



Renée Y.D. Beckford, MBA

Section: Thrive

Focus: Identity, Purpose & Personal Transformation

Role: Writer / Contributor



FEATURED VOICES



Yulanda Davis

Section: Education /
Tomorrow Begins With Us

Feature: *A Teacher's Journey Across Borders, Motherhood, and the Power of Education*

Role: Featured Author / Educator



Jerome Taylor

Section: Arts & Creativity

Feature: From Farm Life to Fine Art

Role: Featured Artist



Brianna Lindo

Section: Arts & Creativity

Feature: From Childhood Imagination to Creative Event Stylist and Visual Artist

Role: Featured Creative / Entrepreneur



Diana E. Phillip

Section: Thrive

Feature: From Shadows to Light: The Testimony Behind My Writing

Role: Featured Author



THANK YOU



TO OUR GUEST CONTRIBUTORS & PARTNERS

We are deeply grateful to the remarkable individuals, businesses, destinations and sponsors who shared their time, talents, stories and support in this issue.

Your voices inspire, inform and uplift our readers and help us celebrate the people, purpose and culture that make the Caribbean extraordinary.



FEATURED PEOPLE

Dr. Cecile Dennis
Sonia Davidson
Yulanda Davis
Brianna Lindo
Diana E. Phillip
Jerome Taylor
Shaquiel McKenzie
Shan Anderson
Latoya C. Spence
Victoria Gordon

FEATURED PLACES & CREATIVE LIFESTYLE PARTNERS

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Andromeda Botanic Gardens – Barbados
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*Thank you for being part of our journey and for helping us
shine a light on the stories, creativity and culture
that enrich our Caribbean life.*

WE APPRECIATE YOU!





CARIBBEAN PULSE

The Heartbeat of Our Islands 

“

The future of the Caribbean
is written every day by ordinary
people doing extraordinary things.

”



A Journey of Purpose *and Mentorship*

— ♦ —
A STORY OF RESILIENCE, LEARNING
AND LIFTING OTHERS
ALONG THE WAY.

If someone had told me 40 years ago that I would be a leader in the academic world today, they would have received a shocked look and a hearty laugh.

Born at a private nursing home in eastern Kingston, Jamaica, I grew up in a close family unit with my older sister and brother, and a very industrious mother. Even though I found out later that I did not share the same father with my siblings, there was no division in this family.

My mother kept it all together using the salary she made working in the finance department of the Jamaica Omnibus Service – the local bus company at the time and taking in boudiers to supplement the income.

My early education pursuits were at the Calabar Infant School and St. George's Girls School, where I was awarded a 'free place' in the Common Entrance Examinations to Excelsior High School. I entered that prestigious institution with headmaster A. Wesley Powell, trailing in the footsteps of my brother and sister, who were by that time leaving after completing their 5-year programme. You can just imagine the many comparisons I received from teachers, as my sister was the 'goody two shoes' that served to cramp my style.

“

*There is room for all of us.
Leadership is not only about
getting into the room.
Sometimes it is about holding
the door open for the person
coming behind you.*

”

After high school, the decision was to be made about the future. At the time, I saw advertisements for Air Stewardesses and broached the conversation with my mother who just shut me down. "You are not going to become some glorified waitress" were her exact words, not forgotten.

So, the decision there and then was back to school, where I became a part for the first cohort of the EXED Community College. After a year, I made the transition to a 4-year degree programme in the Faculty of Natural Sciences at the University of the West Indies, Mona campus.

Lifelong friends were made at UWI... I enjoyed all the good and bad things that university students get involved in. After graduating from UWI, options were slim and ended up being hired to teach fourth to sixth formers at St. Andrew High School for Girls, located in Half-Way-Tree, Kingston. It became a time for mentoring almost four years like a big sister, as I was no more than 4 – 5 years older than some of the students being taught.

This was a springboard for how my life would progress after this teaching stint. As time came to get married and start a family of my own...movement was made into the private sector.

Throughout my journey in 'corporate' this mentoring theme continued. I always encouraged my staff to continue with academic pursuits or training in skills that would give them options, while doing the same for myself. That led to me pursuing programmes in Business Studies, Supervisory Management and eventually a master's degree in communication studies from CARIMAC, at the UWI.

The joy for me as a manager, was getting feedback from my staff that my encouragement meant a lot to them and led to success in their endeavours. The mentoring did lead to 'jealousy' on the part of others, as I carry a memory of a peer saying to me 'you are mothering the staff.'

“

I always encouraged my staff to continue with academic pursuits or training in skills that would give them options, while doing the same for myself.

After leaving 'corporate,' decisions were again to be made. The thought came to me: Why not make yourself useful in mentoring young adults as you did with your staff?

For some reason unknown, my eyes turned to this university, that at one time in my early working years offered short courses under IMP for professional development, one of which I pursued and was successful. I just made the application and lo and behold was called to an interview for a lecturer position.

The conversation opened during the interview and one of the panelists asked: "Would you be willing to head the business department?" The answer was: "I am willing to give it a try." And so, the journey began.

It has been a joy for me to continue playing this mentoring role to the thousands of students who have come through my path over these years. It is the young adults that give me energy and make me want to show up each day.

SONIA D. DAVIDSON

Dean - School of Business, Entrepreneurship & Management at a local Caribbean university.

She is a passionate educator and mentor committed to developing leaders and empowering students to achieve their fullest potential.



Artist - Jerome Taylor



**Tomorrow
Begins with
Us:**

**A TEACHER'S
JOURNEY
ACROSS
BORDERS,
MOTHERHOOD,
AND THE
POWER OF
EDUCATION**

**YULANDA DAVIS,
AUTHOR**

TOMORROW BEGINS WITH US:

"Tomorrow Begins with Us" is more than a magazine theme, it is a truth I have lived every day for more than two decades. As educators, we are entrusted with something extraordinary. Every lesson we teach, every encouraging word we speak, every child we refuse to give up on becomes part of tomorrow's story. Education is not simply about preparing children for exams; it is about preparing them for life. It is about helping them discover who they are, what they value, and what they are capable of becoming.

My own journey began in the beautiful parish of St. Mary, Jamaica, where I first discovered my passion for teaching. Those early classrooms taught me that education is never defined by the size of a building or the resources available. It is defined by relationships, compassion, and the unwavering belief that every child deserves the opportunity to succeed. That belief has carried me across oceans.

Teaching in Jamaica gave me a strong foundation rooted in discipline, resilience, culture, and community. Later, when I accepted the opportunity to teach in the United States, I entered a completely different educational system. I had to adapt to new standards, instructional practices, technology, assessments, and expectations. Like many international educators, I learned to balance two cultures while remaining true to the values that shaped me. Yet wherever I have taught, one truth has never changed: Children flourish when someone believes in them before they fully believe in themselves.

Over the years I have learned that the best teachers are also lifelong students. My professional journey led me to earn a Diploma in Teaching and a Bachelor of Education in Primary Education from the College of Agriculture, Science and Education, a Master of Education in Educational Planning and Policy from the University of the West Indies, and later a Master of Education in Literacy in the United States, where I was honored as a Distinguished Graduate.



My passion for storytelling or my culture eventually led me to become an author. In my memoir, Me & My World: A Memoir in Verse and Prose, I reflect on education, migration, motherhood, resilience, and identity. Through poetry and prose, I share not only my personal journey but also the experiences of many women, educators, immigrants, and parents who quietly build futures every day.

Every degree represented more than academic achievement; it represented sacrifice, determination, and the belief that growth never ends. Education has taught me that learning is not confined to classrooms. Every experience, successes, failures, disappointments, and triumphs becomes another lesson if we are willing to grow from it.

Being both an educator and a mother has transformed how I see children. As a teacher, I understand curriculum, assessment, interventions, and instructional planning. As a mother of four sons, I understand the hopes, fears, and prayers that parents carry into every school year. Those two roles have never competed with each other; instead, they have strengthened one another. Motherhood reminds me daily that every child sitting in a classroom is someone's greatest treasure. Every child deserves patience. Every child deserves dignity. Every child deserves someone willing to see beyond today's struggles and believe in tomorrow's possibilities.

That conviction influences every lesson I teach.

TOMORROW BEGINS WITH US

Throughout my career, I have become especially passionate about literacy because reading is far more than decoding words on a page. Literacy opens doors. It gives children the confidence to ask questions, think critically, solve problems, and imagine futures larger than their circumstances.

As our world changes through technology, artificial intelligence, and global innovation, literacy remains the foundation upon which every future career is built. Before children become engineers, entrepreneurs, nurses, teachers, scientists, or business owners, they must first become confident readers, thinkers, and communicators. That is why education remains one of the greatest investments any society can make.

Working in both Jamaica and the United States has also shown me the beauty of diversity. My Caribbean heritage has never been something I left behind; instead, it has become one of my greatest strengths as an educator. I have learned that when children see their cultures respected, their identities celebrated, and their voices valued, they become more confident learners.

Education should never ask children to leave who they are at the classroom door.

Instead, it should help them discover how their unique stories can enrich the world around them.

One passage from the book captures my philosophy perfectly:

"I teach my boys to stand tall and stay kind, to read the world as carefully as books. I teach my students that mistakes are teachers too, that their voices matter, even when they shake... For every seed I plant, in a classroom or a home, I believe in the harvest that's coming. I'm not just raising children or teaching lessons. I'm shaping a future I fully expect to see."



Those words remind me why I continue teaching.

They remind me that every lesson matters. Every conversation matters. Every act of kindness matters. Every child matters.

As educators, parents, mentors, and entrepreneurs, we are all shaping tomorrow in different ways. Whether we are building businesses, teaching children, mentoring young professionals, or serving our communities, our daily choices become investments in future generations.

Success is not measured only by personal achievement. It is measured by how many lives we help lift along the way. If there is one lesson my journey has taught me, it is that purpose often requires courage. Sometimes courage means crossing oceans. Sometimes it means returning to school after a long day's work. Sometimes it means standing before a classroom with hope even when life outside that classroom feels uncertain. But courage is always worth it.

The future of the Caribbean will not be built by governments alone. It will be built by teachers who inspire curiosity, entrepreneurs who create opportunities, parents who encourage dreams, mentors who invest in young people, and communities that believe education is the greatest gift they can offer the next generation. Tomorrow truly begins with us.

As I continue teaching, writing, learning, and raising my sons, I remain guided by one simple belief from my memoir:



“

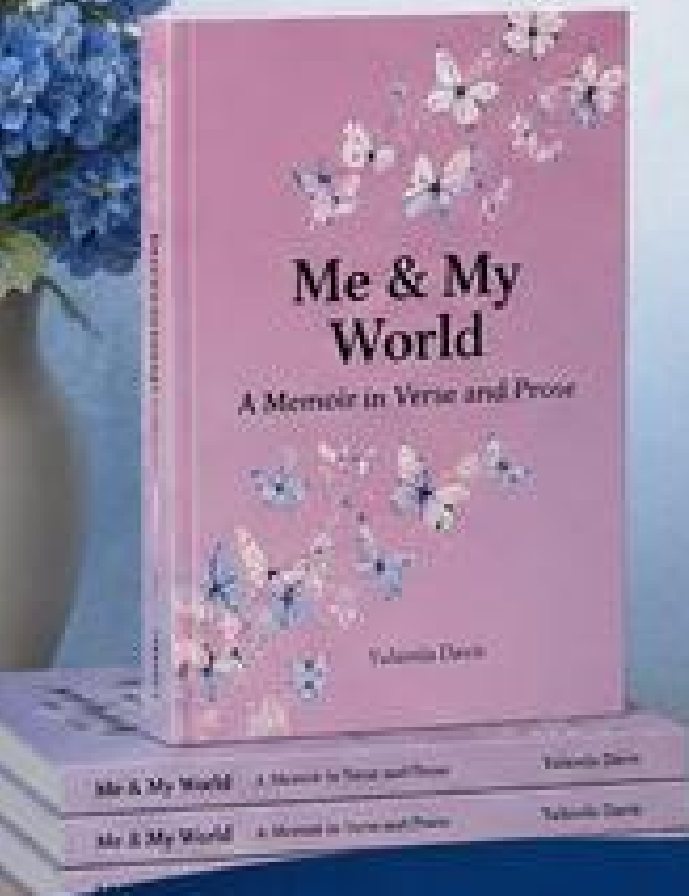
***I am not just raising children. I am
teaching tomorrow how to recognize itself.
And I expect it to be kind."***

Yulanda Davis

Meet YULANDA DAVIS

Educator. Author. Advocate. Mother.

“Education is more
than a profession—
it is a calling to
transform lives and
strengthen
communities.”





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yulanda Davis is a Jamaican educator, literacy specialist, author, and mother of 4 kings with more than twenty years of teaching experience in Jamaica and the United States.

She holds a Diploma in Teaching, a Bachelor of Education in Primary Education, a Master of Education in Educational Planning and Policy from the University of the West Indies, and a Master of Education in Literacy from the American College of Education, where she graduated as a Distinguished Graduate.

Passionate about literacy, culturally responsive teaching, and lifelong learning, she believes education has the power to transform lives and strengthen communities.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Me & My World: A Memoir in Verse and Prose is a reflective collection exploring education, motherhood, migration, identity, resilience, and hope. Through poetry and prose, Yulanda shares her personal journey—offering encouragement to anyone navigating life's challenges while holding on to their dreams.

“

This book is for anyone who has ever had to start over, stay strong, and keep believing in a better tomorrow.

”

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MOTHER

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Meet

Zuri

Blaze

Zahara



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MY CREATIVE JOURNEY:

From Childhood

Imagination to Creative

Event Stylist and Visual

Artist

by: Brianna Lindo

Brianna Lindo is a Jamaican entrepreneur, creative director, event designer, and storyteller with a passion for transforming ideas into memorable experiences. As the founder of Angelique's Fiore Decor, she has built a creative brand rooted in imagination, visual artistry, and excellence. Inspired by her faith, journey, and love for creativity, Brianna uses her experiences to encourage others to pursue their purpose, embrace their talents, and build boldly.

Close Up

My creative journey began when I was very young. Even as a toddler, I was always creating, building, designing, performing, and finding ways to express myself. I was naturally drawn to art, colour, music, drama, and anything that allowed me to turn an idea in my head into something real. Creativity was never something I had to learn to enjoy; it was simply a part of me.

My faith in God has also played an important role in my life and in the development of my company. Throughout my journey, I have looked to God for guidance, strength, and direction. I believe the abilities and opportunities I have been given are part of a greater purpose, and I want God to remain at the centre of everything I build.

My family has also shaped who I am. My parents and my aunts, especially Auntie Arlene, have always supported my creativity. My father, the CEO of Lindo Haulage and Wrecking, encouraged me from a young age by buying me paint, paintbrushes, and other art supplies. Lindo Haulage and Wrecking was founded by my grandfather, and watching my family build and carry forward a business gave me an early understanding of entrepreneurship, hard work, and legacy.

My parents and family attended my music performances, drama recitals, school productions, and art exhibitions. At Ardenne High School, my mother would wait for me in the parking lot when I stayed late working on productions with Miss Myers, Miss Beadle, and Mr. Robinson. Their support gave me the freedom to explore my creativity and helped me understand from an early age that the things I loved could become meaningful parts of my life.



At about 14 years old, I performed in the Independence Grand Gala and helped some of my castmates with their makeup, giving me an early opportunity to work both on stage and behind the scenes. At Ardenne, I was a straight-A Visual Arts student and consistently topped my class. Some of my pieces were selected for CSEC exhibitions featuring outstanding student work from across the Caribbean. Mixed media was my favourite form of art. Today, I realize that this was preparing me for event styling; instead of creating on a canvas, I would eventually create within an entire space.

At 16, I began exploring makeup artistry, and my interest eventually led to an opportunity to work with Steven Bernard of Creative Concepts Limited, the company's CEO, producer, and director. Steven recognized my creativity and gave me opportunities to work on music video productions, where I became involved in creative production and set design. This introduced me to creative direction, production design, and set building. I developed concepts, created props, sourced materials, designed sets, and helped shape productions. More importantly, I learned that a creative idea requires planning, resources, teamwork, and problem-solving to bring it to life.

From Childhood Imagination to Creative Event Stylist and Visual Artist

These experiences broadened my perspective as a creative and showed me how visual experiences can connect with diverse audiences. I have worked with government entities such as TPDCo and NCTFJ, corporate brands including Wray & Nephew, Smirnoff, and Red Stripe, and major entertainment productions such as Jamaica Reggae Sumfest. These opportunities have allowed me to work across the creative and events industry and deepen my understanding of bringing a creative vision to life on a larger scale.



My Creative Journey:

Today, my work has expanded into birthdays, baby showers, funerals, corporate events, balloon installations, floral arrangements, gift baskets, and larger productions. I see myself as a visual artist who uses spaces as my canvas. Whether I am designing a small intimate celebration or contributing to a large-scale production, I approach each project as an opportunity to create something that is visually engaging, meaningful, and memorable. My Jamaican heritage is also an important part of my work. I want my designs to reflect where I come from while remaining modern and relevant, showing that Jamaican culture can be presented in new and exciting ways.

Building my business has not always been easy. One challenge has been establishing myself in an industry where many professionals have been working for years. Being young can sometimes affect how people view your experience and ability. Instead of allowing that to discourage me, I use it as motivation. I know I still have much to learn, but I also know what I can create. Every experience, whether positive or challenging, has taught me something about myself, my industry, and the type of creative and businesswoman I want to become. I have learned that growth requires patience, resilience, humility, and the willingness to keep showing up even when the journey is difficult.

My vision goes beyond personal success. I want to build something that can provide for my family and become a legacy. I want to create jobs, give other Jamaicans opportunities, support young creatives, and collaborate with others in the creative industry. I also want to show young Jamaicans that it is possible to take your talent and turn it into a business, even if you do not have everything figured out at the beginning. My goal is to grow further into weddings, luxury events, large-scale productions, brand activations, entertainment productions, and major corporate experiences while continuing to develop as an event stylist, visual artist, creative director, and production designer.

When I look back, I can see how each stage of my life prepared me for where I am today. The little girl who loved creating became the Visual Arts student who topped her class. That student became a teenager exploring makeup and production. Those experiences eventually led me to study business and build my own company. I may have started with balloons, but my vision has always been bigger than balloons. Today, I am building more than an event décor company. I am building a creative business that represents my art, my Jamaican identity, my family, my faith, and my purpose. I want my work to speak for itself and continue learning, creating, and growing. Most importantly, I want to remain faithful to the purpose I believe God has placed on my life. The imagination I had as a child is still with me, but now I have the experience and knowledge to turn it into something bigger. My story is still being written, and I believe the best part of my creative journey has yet to be created.

From Childhood Imagination to Creative Event Stylist and Visual Artist



From Shadows to Light:



Meet Diana E Philip , Author THE TESTIMONY BEHIND MY WRITING

Writing has become more than a passion for me; it is a testimony of my life, my faith, my struggles, and the grace of God that carried me through. My journey as an author began from a place I never imagined I would find myself—a place where darkness, pain, disappointment, and difficult experiences became chapters of my story. Yet, through it all, God gave me the strength to rise.

My book, *How I Rose from the Shadows: A Journey from Darkness to Light*, was inspired by God and born from my desire to share the testimonies of my lifetime. I believe our experiences can become powerful lessons, and sometimes the very things we go through can be used to encourage someone else who is struggling.

Through my writing, I want readers to understand that their circumstances do not have to define their future. There may be moments when life feels overwhelming, when the road ahead seems impossible, and when the darkness appears to have the final word. But I am living proof that darkness does not have to be the end of the story.



My hope is that readers will see themselves in my journey and realize that they, too, can overcome. I want my words to inspire courage, faith, healing, and hope. Most importantly, I want them to know that no matter how difficult the journey becomes, God can bring light into the darkest places.

I write because my story is a testimony. I write because someone may need the encouragement hidden within my experiences. And I write to remind others that if I could rise from the shadows, they can too.

HER STORY, HER JOURNEY.

Her Light.

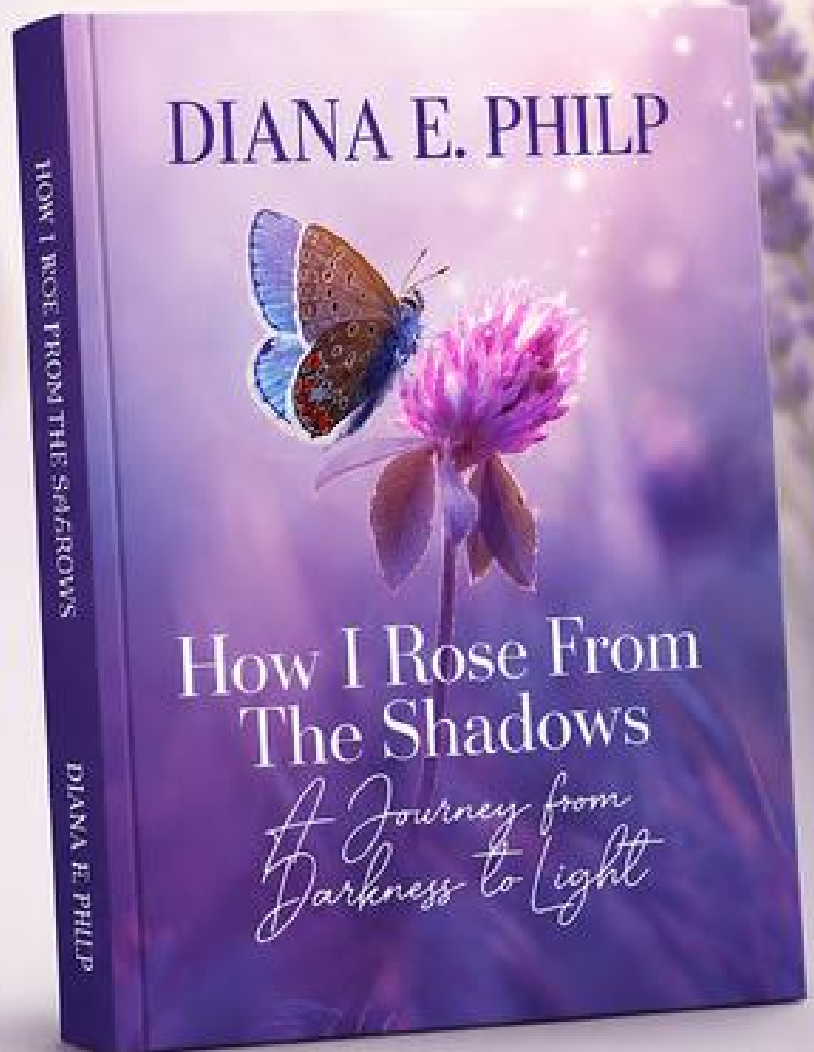
A JOURNEY OF FAITH, RESILIENCE
AND UNWAVERING LOVE.



Diana E. Philp 

A devoted mother, proud grandmother, and woman of faith, Diana Philp shares a powerful testimony of how God's love carried her from the darkest seasons into a life of purpose and light.

From her early years in Highgate, St. Mary, to her calling in ministry and her passion for writing, Diana's story will inspire you to rise above your shadows and walk boldly in your purpose.



INSPIRING LIFE STORY

A raw and honest
journey of faith,
forgiveness and grace.



FAITH THAT TRANSFORMS

Discover how one
encounter with God
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ENCOURAGEMENT FOR YOUR JOURNEY

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your purpose and shine
your God-given light.

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"From my heart to you. I hope you find solace in my journey." 

Frangipani PALM

CULTURE YOU CAN CARRY.

An exclusive conversation with founder Victoria Gordon on creativity, culture, and building a Caribbean-inspired brand that the world loves.

Meet the Founder

VICTORIA GORDON FOUNDER & DESIGNER

Born in the Bronx and raised in South Florida by parents from Guyana and the Commonwealth of Dominica, Victoria Gordon is the creative force behind Frangipani Palm.

What began as a personal birthday gift—a Guyana-shaped bag she could wear to Carnival—blossomed into a globally recognized accessories brand inspired by Caribbean islands, culture, food, and nostalgic memories.

Today, her whimsical, statement-making bags and accessories are carried by thousands of customers across the world and stocked in cultural spaces like the Pérez Art Museum Miami.

MEDIA CONTACT



info@frangipanipalm.com



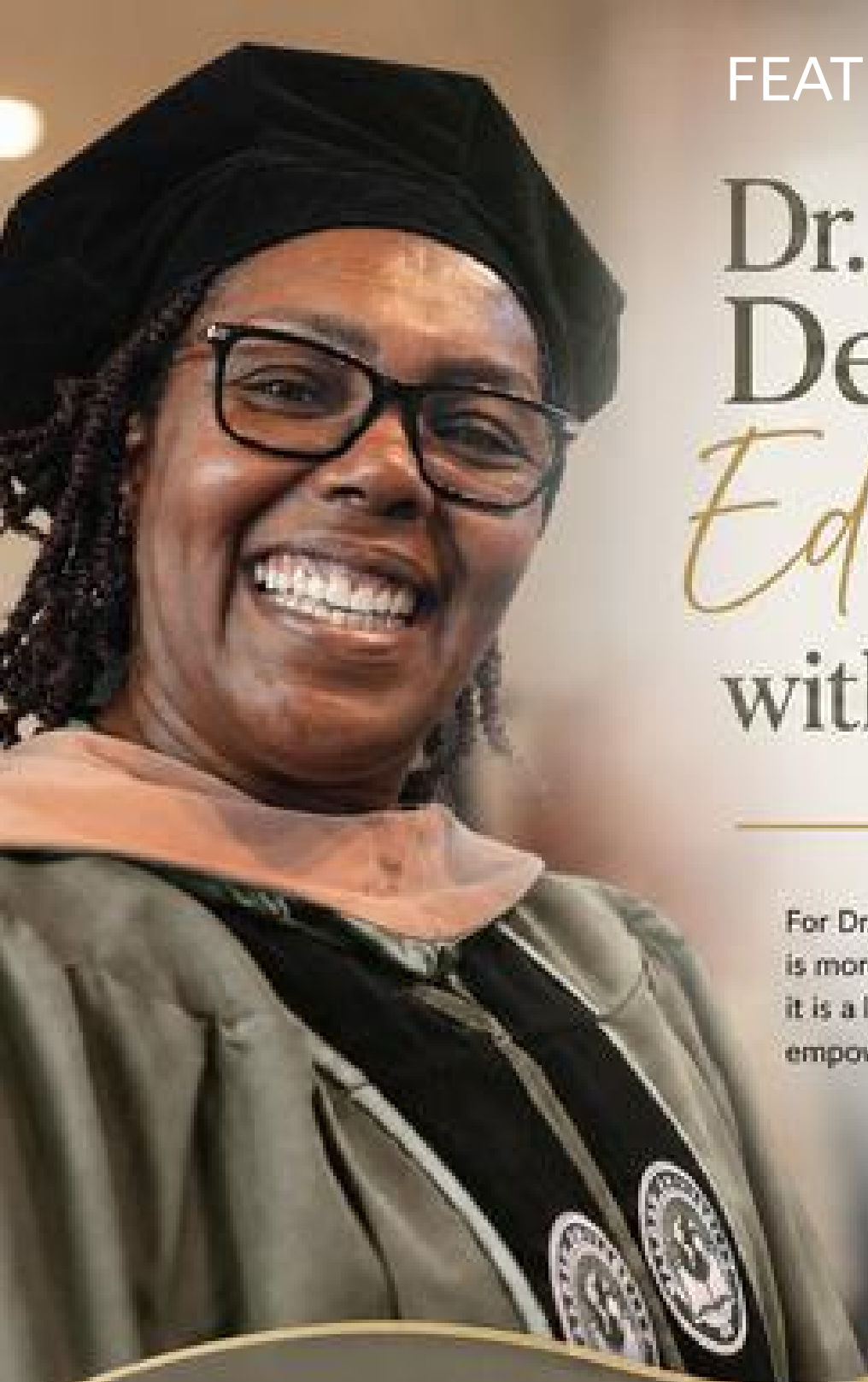
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“ I design products that make people smile, spark conversations, and carry a piece of home. ”

— Victoria Gordon



FEATURE STORY

Dr. Cecile Dennis: *Educating* with Heart



For Dr. Cecile Dennis, teaching is more than a profession—it is a lifelong calling to mentor, empower, and transform lives.

“

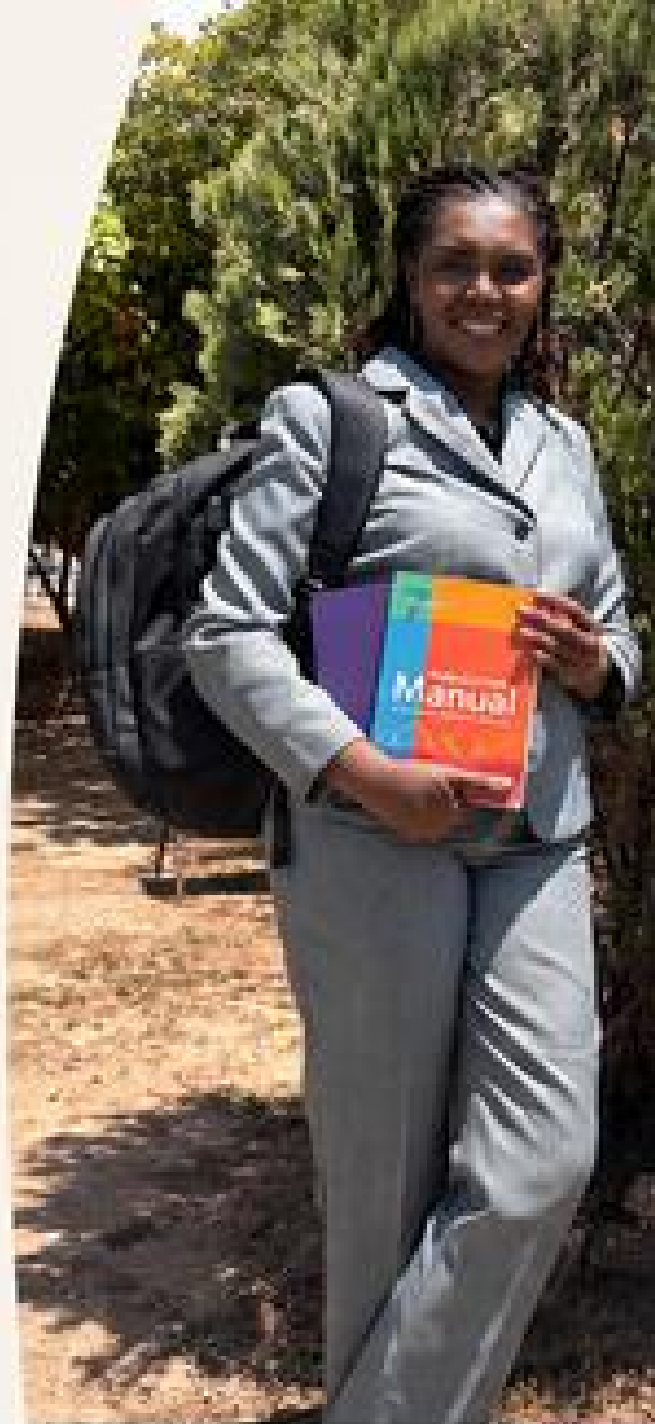
Teaching is a calling,
not a career.

Taking a Leap of Faith

In 2021 I took a leap of faith and left the very stable, certain, corporate world to pursue my dream of changing lives one lesson at a time. While transitioning was more than disruptive, I was determined to complete my doctoral journey and fulfil my dream of lecturing at the university level. In 2022 I joined the Local University family, first as an adjunct faculty member and later in 2023 as an assistant professor.

The journey toward my teaching career was greatly influenced by my parents, both of whom were lifelong educators, retiring after a combined 75 years of service. Being the child of teachers had its ups and downs, but the determination of my parents to positively influence lives never left me. As I observed how they changed the lives of their students, I began to see myself positively influencing the many individuals who I encountered, and especially young lives, many of whom reached out to me for advice in just about any circumstance you can think of.

In my early high school years, I found myself helping students, teaching them concepts just as my parents did for a living. I found myself helping students in many ways, solving problems or even seeking assistance for them. I remember one student whose parents could not afford to pay her exam fees, and I lobbied and raised the funds that set her on the path to becoming the teacher she is today.



Mentoring For Success

During my childhood years, my father taught me the game of table tennis and coached me until I successfully made the national table tennis team. As my coach, I grew very close to my father. Because of this close relationship, he became not just my coach, but my mentor. It was through this relationship that I learned the value of mentorship and its importance in changing lives.

In my early career years, I was formally introduced to mentorship while working in corporate Jamaica, and within three years was awarded for my contribution to mentorship. As I mentored students who lived in less than acceptable circumstances, I honed my talent of engaging in and sharing information about another way of life, about greater possibilities, and about seeing yourself beyond your current circumstances, in a whole new world.

Students began to achieve beyond what they imagined, transitioning to higher educational levels despite early failures, and even achieving employment in organizations, where they never imagined they would be.

Teaching is a Calling, *not a Career*



Since embarking on my career in education, it has become more apparent that teaching is a calling, not a career. Inside this calling, students rely on you and trust you for guidance in personal decisions, financial decisions, career pathing, and many look to you for the experienced advice from a mentor, or just a listening ear as they navigate unclear paths.

On days when you are daunted by the volume of work, and sometimes by hints of ingratitude, very quickly you are reminded that a future generation of students depends on you.



MY FATHER, MY FIRST MENTOR

“

*A teacher affects eternity;
he can never tell where his
influence stops.*

— Henry Adams

Promoting Inclusion: *Learning from Intellectual Disability*

My role as mentor has also been influenced by the challenges faced by my twin brothers, both of whom are intellectually challenged. For them, learning is different, and difficult because they exist in a society which is largely insensitive to the needs of those among us, who learn differently.

This passion of becoming the voice for the voiceless took me on a path of advocacy, that landed me directly into the Jamaican Association on Intellectual Disabilities, creating awareness of intellectual disability (ID) while adding to the body of knowledge on inclusion in education.



Celebrating Student Success

Through the avenue of educator, some of my greatest moments have included witnessing mentees overcoming seemingly insurmountable challenges to achieve significant milestones such as graduation.

I recall three clear instances where my guidance and mentorship resulted in positive outcomes. Following the onslaught of hurricane Melissa in 2025, two students reached out to me. One student bluntly gave up on completing his studies, while another one lamented on losing his livelihood, and sharing a grim outlook on continuing.

In March of 2026 a student called me in tears, as she recalled that her husband had been badly injured in an accident, and that she just could not go on.

Through constant talks of motivation, presenting alternative solutions and simply encouraging them in the face of challenges, two of three successfully graduated at the university's 2026 commencement ceremony.

“

As I heard their names called, I was overwhelmed with pride, but more so, satisfied that the seed of hope I planted had grown into something extraordinary.



Looking Ahead

My commitment remains unwavering: to educate with heart, to mentor with purpose, and to continue changing lives—one lesson, one conversation, and one act of kindness at a time.



Dr. Cecile Dennis

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
AT A LOCAL UNIVERSITY

*Educating with heart.
Mentoring for life.*



Dr. Cecile Dennis is an educator, mentor and advocate who believes in the power of education to transform lives and open doors to limitless possibilities. With a deep commitment to her students and a heart for service, she continues to inspire and guide the next generation—one lesson, one conversation and one life at a time.

A Journey Rooted in Purpose

The daughter of two lifelong educators who dedicated a combined 75 years to teaching, Dr. Dennis was raised with a deep appreciation for the impact of education. Inspired by their example, she discovered early on her own passion for helping others learn and succeed.

From tutoring classmates in high school to advocating for a fellow student who couldn't afford exam fees, her calling was clear—she was meant to make a difference.

After a successful career in the corporate world, Dr. Dennis took a bold leap of faith in 2021 to pursue her true passion—education. In 2022, she joined a local university as an adjunct faculty member and, in 2023, became an assistant professor. Today, she is living her dream: changing lives through teaching, mentorship and advocacy.



MENTORING FOR SUCCESS

Mentorship has been a guiding force throughout Dr. Dennis's life—first from her father, who coached and mentored her, and later through formal mentoring programs in the corporate world. She has mentored countless young people, helping them see beyond their circumstances, rise above challenges and achieve more than they ever imagined possible.



TEACHING IS A CALLING

For Dr. Dennis, teaching goes far beyond the classroom. It is a calling that involves guiding students through life's decisions, offering encouragement, and being a trusted source of wisdom and support. Every student's success is a reminder of why she does what she does.



CHAMPION FOR INCLUSION

As a passionate advocate for individuals with intellectual disabilities—especially inspired by her twin brothers—Dr. Dennis works to create awareness and promote inclusion in education. Her advocacy with the Jamaican Association on Intellectual Disabilities reflects her commitment to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to learn and thrive.



CELEBRATING STUDENT SUCCESS

From helping students overcome personal setbacks to cheering them on at graduation, Dr. Dennis finds her greatest joy in seeing her students succeed. Their victories confirm the impact of faith, perseverance and the power of never giving up.

“ That is the legacy I hope to leave them: not the image of a perfect mother, but the example of a woman who loved them deeply, embraced life with them, and continually pointed them towards Christ. ”

OUTDOOR
LIVING
and
HOME
DECOR



PLANT STORIES

The Ties that Bind.

Senna alata

There are so many plants throughout the Caribbean that unite, creating some wonderful evidence of the ties that bind. *Senna alata* is a popular plant in Barbados, signalling the approach of the festive season with its yellow flowers, reflected in one of its common names, *Christmas candles*.

“Many of those stories involve the use of plants and I will continue to share a selection of these with you – these ties that bind.”

One of the most wonderful aspects of my job, and yes, there are so many, is doing the tours. I provide a bit of superficial knowledge about plants, hoping the visitors are tempted to delve more into some amazing plant stories. I also receive much more than I give. Visitors from Jamaica, St Vincent and Antigua have shared their own stories about *Senna alata*. And these are the same stories!

The plant contains sennosides, well known as a laxative (some readers might be familiar with the brand name Senokot). Across the width of the Caribbean and the one thousand miles that separate some of our countries, I am told that, as children on the first day of the school term, their parents gave them tea made from senna leaves. This would flush them out and prepare them for the months ahead.

Logic suggests that this use must have been passed down from our shared African ancestry, perhaps a substitute for the African native *Cassia sieberiana*.

✿ We are different, across the Caribbean, of course. But we have shared histories that unite.

— these ties that bind.

Not only is the plant used as a laxative, but it also has fungicidal properties to treat conditions such as ringworm. Although native to tropical America, *Senna* can be found across countries of West Africa where it is grown ornamentally and as a medicinal plant. And the uses are similar.

So yes, we are different, across the Caribbean, of course. But we have shared histories that unite. Many of those stories involve the use of plants and I will continue to share a selection of these with you — *these ties that bind.*



— ABOUT ANDROMEDA BOTANIC GARDENS —



Sharon Cooke is the curator and business owner at Andromeda Botanic Gardens, one of the finest gardens in the world with over 600 plant species within its incredible 8-acre landscape. She focuses on ensuring this organic heritage site is inclusive; accessible for everybody; relevant; and a haven for the rather fragile biodiversity of Barbados.

Facebook Andromeda Botanic Gardens
Instagram @andromedagardens
Website www.andromedagardens.com

*A garden for all.
A legacy for future generations.*

KEWANNA LAVANA CAMPBELL

INTERIOR DECORATOR | FENG SHUI & ARTIST PAINTER

“

*The more your
environment is at
peace, the more
you'll thrive in life.*



DESIGN WITH
INTENTION



BALANCED BY
FENG SHUI



ARTISTRY IN
EVERY DETAIL



SPACES THAT
INSPIRE LIVING

My Story



Born and raised in Kingston, Jamaica, my foundation in design began at my father's drafting table. As an architect, he taught me to see beauty in structure, in the line of a roadway, the geometry of a face, the rhythm of nature. That early training in precision and detail shaped how I approach every space today.

The Power of Color

My love for color bloomed in high school. A neighbor who was studying at the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts saw my passion and began teaching me how to paint on canvas. That mentorship opened my eyes to color as emotion, and to art as healing.



Building My Craft

After completing my studies in Interior Decoration and Diploma in General Construction, I started volunteering in my community, assisting neighbors with painting their homes and restyling their spaces. Those early projects built my craft in artistic painting and gave me the confidence to step out as a freelance painter. Today, I take pride in every brushstroke and every project I touch.



Design That Feels Good

My philosophy is simple: luxury is not just about what you see. It's about how a space makes you feel. Drawing from Caribbean wisdom like do not sweep your house after 6pm or ensure your house is clean so an angel can pass through build my passion for ancient Feng Shui principles. I decorate environments that cultivate peace, prosperity, and positive vibration. A home should restore you.

Every project is curated to reflect sophistication, balance, and timeless style while honoring the soul, story, and energy of the people who live there.



SPACES
CURATED.
ENERGY
ELEVATED.



Let's Create

BEAUTIFUL SPACES.
POSITIVE ENERGY.
LASTING IMPACT.

Vervain HUMMINGBIRD



Nicholas Lee
MEMBER, BIRDLIFE JAMAICA



BIRD FACTS



NATIVE TO JAMAICA

The Vervein Hummingbird (also called the Jamaican mango) is endemic to Jamaica, meaning it is found only on our island.



ONE OF THE SMALLEST BIRDS IN THE WORLD

It is among the smallest birds globally, measuring about 6–8 cm (2.5–3 inches) in length and weighing around 2–3 grams.



FEEDS MAINLY ON NECTAR

It gets its energy from the nectar of flowers, using its long, slender beak and specialized tongue.



IMPORTANT POLLINATOR

As it feeds, it helps pollinate many native plants, supporting the health of Jamaica's forests and ecosystems.



FOUND IN FORESTS AND GARDENS

You can often spot it in wooded areas, gardens and hillsides across Jamaica.



A TREASURE TO PROTECT

The Vervein Hummingbird is a vital part of Jamaica's biodiversity and a reminder of the beauty and importance of our natural heritage.

*Let's protect
what makes Jamaica
extraordinary.*



HONORABLE SHIPPING

SHIP YOUR BARRELS TO

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HONORABLE SHIPPING



Tomorrow Begins With Us:

The Decision to Bloom

Who knew a single rose could cause so many selfies?
I certainly didn't until I started giving them away.

There have been several moments in my life when I have had the opportunity to make someone feel appreciated through a simple gesture. In different work environments, I would surprise the women around me with something as simple as a rose placed on their desk. When everyone arrived and discovered the unexpected flowers, the reactions were priceless. There were smiles, excitement, photographs, selfies, and sometimes even disbelief.

Some carried their roses with them, treasured them, and days later would still tell me that they had the photographs to remember the moment.

What touched me most were the people who told me it was their first time receiving flowers or their first rose.

Knowing that I had helped create that experience for someone was incredibly fulfilling. I realized that I wasn't simply giving flowers; I was creating a moment. And perhaps, without realizing it, I was also discovering something about myself.

My decision to pursue certification as a florist in Kingston, Jamaica, actually grew from another dream: becoming an events planner. As a certified events planner, I understand that creating an unforgettable event requires more than coordinating schedules and selecting vendors. Every detail contributes to the atmosphere and emotion of an occasion. Flowers, bouquets and floral arrangements can transform a space, communicate a feeling and bring an entire concept to life.

So I began asking myself: Why stop at coordinating the beauty when I could learn how to create it too?

That question led me toward floristry.

I have always loved flowers, but learning about floral design has shown me that there is much more to being a florist than placing pretty roses into wrapping paper with a card. Floristry involves colour, texture, balance, proportion, flower selection, design and presentation. Most importantly, it involves understanding the person receiving the arrangement.



“

A flower may be temporary, but the feeling it creates can linger long after the petals fall.

Adjoni Scale,
Certified Florist

For me, that last part matters tremendously.

Imagine ordering a birthday gift basket for someone you love. Would you simply choose the prettiest arrangement available, or would you choose something that feels like them?

I would want to know their favourite colours, flowers and fragrances. Are they a chocolate lover? Do they enjoy body-care products? Are they elegant and understated, or playful and expressive? Those details can transform a standard gift into something personal.



I experienced this with a birthday floral basket I created for a client.

The recipient wasn't someone who wanted anything overly loud or extravagant. Instead, the arrangement was thoughtfully curated around their preferences, incorporating items they genuinely enjoyed and flowers that complemented the overall gift.

When the recipient received it, the response was everything I hoped for. The excitement in the voice message, the feedback and the reviews from the experience reminded me why the details matter.

It confirmed something for me: I had made the right decision to pursue floristry.

A Passion That Brings Everything Together

That is what excites me about becoming a florist. I am discovering that this journey is not simply about adding another certification to my name.

It is about bringing together talents I already possess—event planning, creativity, coordination, gifting and an appreciation for beautiful details—and building something meaningful for the future.

Perhaps that is what "Tomorrow Begins With Us" means to me.

“
Tomorrow begins
when we decide
to begin.

”
We often wait for the perfect moment, the perfect plan, the perfect amount of confidence or the perfect circumstances before pursuing something we desire. But tomorrow doesn't begin when everything is perfect.



A Simple Gesture, A Lasting Impact

If there is a passion sitting quietly in your heart, don't be afraid to explore it. Your talents may connect in ways you never expected. What begins as a simple interest can become a skill, a business, a career or simply a beautiful part of who you are.

And when choosing flowers for someone, don't only ask, "What looks beautiful?"

Ask, "Who am I giving this to, and what will make them feel seen?"

Because sometimes, the smallest gesture can create a memory someone carries for years.

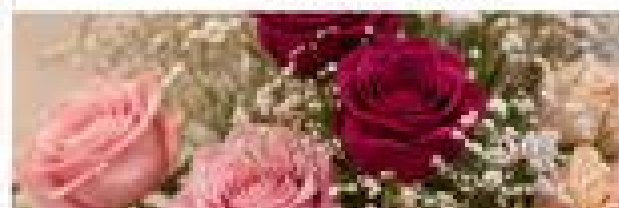


My journey into floristry is still blooming, but I am learning to embrace the process. I don't have to know exactly where every petal will fall.

I simply have to keep creating, keep learning and keep giving myself permission to discover what I am capable of.

After all, tomorrow begins with us and sometimes, it begins with a single flower.

Adjoni Scale 
CERTIFIED FLORIST





Botanical

THE GARDEN ADDICT

STRIKING IT RICH

— *with the* —
HOPE ZOO ZEBRAS

*Nature's Icons.
Kingston's Pride.*



43
LOVE THEM

RESPECT THEM

ACCEPT THEM

PROTECT THEM

If you think you have a hard time picking out an outfit in the morning, spare a thought for the zebras at Hope Zoo. They rock the exact same bold, high-contrast monochrome look every single day—and honestly, they absolutely pull it off.



THE RUNWAY STARS OF KINGSTON

As you stroll through the zoo, the zebras are impossible to miss. They carry themselves with a mix of runway-model confidence and chaotic donkey energy. Watching them is pure entertainment. One minute they are grazing with absolute elegance, looking like a living optical illusion against the lush green Kingston backdrop. The next minute, one will suddenly decide to bust out a high-speed zoomie across the enclosure for no apparent reason, leaving their companion looking deeply judged.



NATURE'S QR CODES

Here is a fun insider secret: to us, they look like a matching set of patio furniture, but to each other, they are completely unique. Every zebra's stripe pattern is as individual as a human fingerprint. In a way, they are walking, galloping QR codes! Zoo keepers can actually tell them apart by looking closely at the specific swirls and chevrons on their shoulders and flanks.



WHY THE PAJAMAS?

While they look like they are permanently dressed for a cozy slumber party, those famous stripes are actually high-tech survival gear. Scientists believe the pattern confuses biting flies and acts as a built-in air conditioner. The black stripes absorb heat while the white stripes reflect it, creating tiny swirling micro-currents of air across their backs. So when you see them chilling under the Jamaican sun, remember: they aren't sweating, they're just engineering.



They love a good audience, so next time you pass by their enclosure, give them a wave. Just don't ask them if they are black with white stripes or white with black stripes—they've heard that one before, and they will absolutely give you the side-eye.

OUR JOURNEY

— THEN & NOW —



1961-2005

THE EARLY YEARS

The central government operated the Hope Zoo from its opening in 1961 until 2005, when direct government management ended due to budget shortfalls and facility deterioration.



2005

A PERIOD OF DECLINE

Years of limited resources led to the deterioration of infrastructure and a decline in the overall condition of the zoo.



2011 & BEYOND

A NEW BEGINNING

The revitalization of Hope Zoo after 2011 was driven by a **\$500 million** master redevelopment plan spearheaded by the Hope Zoo Preservation Foundation (HZPF) under executive chairman Kenneth S. Benjamin.



TODAY

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The foundation transformed the facility from a severely deteriorated space into a modern, **60-acre** non-profit zoological garden and wildlife rehabilitation center.



From Preservation to Purpose...
Protecting Wildlife, Enriching Lives.

Hope Zoo Kingston is more than a place to visit. It is a living legacy of conservation, education and hope for generations to come.

When are
YOU coming to
visit us?
See you soon!



LOVE THEM



RESPECT THEM



ACCEPT THEM



PROTECT THEM



www.hopezookingston.com

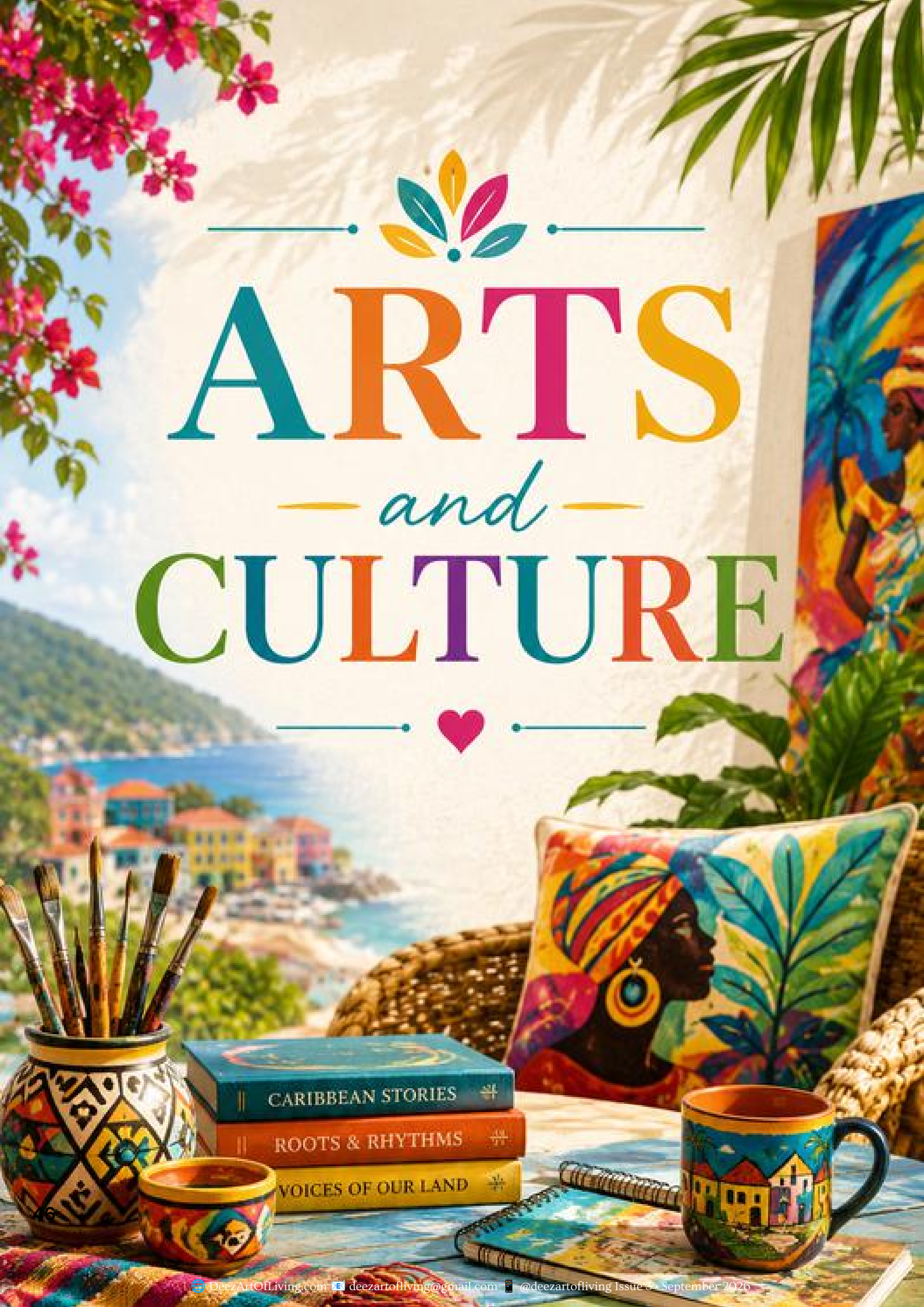


Hope Zoo Kingston



@hopezookingston

ARTS
— and —
CULTURE





JEROME TAYLOR

The Journey of Self-Taught Jamaican Artist

[@havasartworld](https://www.instagram.com/havasartworld)

Jerome Taylor was born in Whitesand District, in the rural parts of St. Ann, with the Wild Cane Post Office serving the area. It was in this rural Jamaican setting, surrounded by family, farming and the natural environment, that the foundation of his artistic journey was laid. His childhood was a world of simple experiences—going to the farm with his father, playing outdoors, working with clay and finding ways to create and entertain himself. Long before he knew where his creativity would take him, the environment around him was already shaping the way he looked at the world.

Long before the dream of galleries, international collectors and taking his artwork to the world, there was a young Jamaican boy growing up in a rural community with a sketchbook, crayons, clay and an imagination that seemed to know no limits. For Jerome Taylor, art was not something that arrived later in life. It was there from childhood, quietly developing until he began to understand that what he enjoyed doing might actually be his calling.



FROM FARM LIFE TO FINE ART

By Donna M. Hunter

Photographs Contributed

For Jerome Taylor, the love of art began long before he knew where it would take him. From about six years old, he remembers being drawn to drawing. As a child, he would pick up a book, pencils or crayons and begin creating. There was something about drawing that continued to hold his attention, and by the time he was 12 or 13, he was already thinking about what he wanted to become in life. "I would love to become an artist," he remembers telling himself.



Growing up in the rural parts of St. Ann, Taylor did not have the advantage of being surrounded by people who were pursuing art professionally. He says that he had not experienced anyone doing art in the rural areas where he grew up. Even at school, art was not something that was widely discussed. "Nobody talks about art," he recalls. Yet despite that lack of exposure, art was the subject in which he excelled. He remembers achieving the highest grade in art, and the interest that had begun in childhood continued to grow.



By the time he was 15 or 16, Taylor had made a decision. He wanted to take art seriously. At 16, he went to a training centre, determined to find a way to pursue the path he had chosen for himself. The journey was not straightforward. His mother did not have the money to help him continue along the traditional educational route, and he had not completed the CXC subjects that would have allowed him to follow that pathway.



The Journey of Self-Taught Jamaican Artist

JEROME TAYLOR CONT'D

Rather than abandon the dream, Taylor began to look for another way. He started following people who were involved in art, observing what they were doing and learning whatever he could. Much of his development came from watching, experimenting and practising. He had to find his own way into the world of art. "I told myself, somehow, some way, I have to figure out how we can get to do art," he recalls.

His determination to learn took him beyond the places where he lived. Taylor remembers going to visit a popular furniture store, where he would look at the artwork being displayed and sold. He would pick up pictures, study them and try to understand the style. He paid attention to how the colours were blended and tried to "catch the style" of what he was seeing. These visits became another way of learning for an aspiring artist who had no formal artistic pathway laid out before him.

He also became interested in American landscapes. By looking at photographs, he studied the light and shade in the images and began trying to reproduce what he saw. He paid attention to the colours, shadows and details in the landscapes and gradually learned how to create landscapes with greater realism.

Taylor's learning was not confined to looking at paintings. He spent time observing the world around him and moving from place to place with his artwork. He went from shop to shop, market to market and arcade to arcade, looking for opportunities to sell his work while continuing to observe different artistic styles and techniques.

By the time he was about 19, Taylor had begun painting seriously. His journey eventually led him into the craft-market environment, where he began selling his artwork to craft vendors. He identifies 2000 and 2001 as important years in this stage of his development and says that for approximately 27 years he has been selling art to craft vendors in Port Antonio.

Those years became an important part of his artistic education. Through the craft vendors and the people he encountered, Taylor continued to develop his skills. He learned different techniques, practised and gradually became more confident in his ability. The craft market gave him an opportunity to sell his work while continuing to develop himself as an artist.

FROM FARM LIFE TO FINE ART

Jerome Taylor cont'd

But Taylor eventually realised that he wanted more!

In 2010, he made a conscious decision to take his art to another level. He wanted to master the art in detail and was prepared to put in the time, patience and effort required. Around that period, someone from Washington, D.C., became interested in his artwork, and the experience encouraged Taylor to think beyond the craft market.

Taylor began looking toward art galleries in Washington, D.C., and other places. He started taking his work more seriously and thinking about art not simply as something he could produce and sell, but as a craft that he wanted to master.

The experience also showed him that his artwork could reach beyond Jamaica. He began selling art to people in Washington, D.C., and other places overseas. The international interest reinforced his decision to continue developing his work and to push himself further.

Today, Taylor's ambitions extend beyond simply selling paintings. He wants to continue taking his art to the next level and does not want to limit himself to one location. His art has already spread across Jamaica and to other parts of the world, but his ambition is to expand even further. One of his dreams is to have more than one location when it comes to having an art gallery.

For Taylor, however, the journey is about more than achievement. It is also about the message his experience can offer to young people.

With September bringing renewed attention to education and young people returning to school, Taylor's story carries particular relevance for those who may not have obtained the CXC subjects they hoped for or whose parents may not have the financial resources to support the path they want to take.

His message is to believe in yourself.





Looking back 25 or 35 years, Taylor remembers the struggles, the uncertainty, the mistakes, the restless nights and the constant effort to learn. He moved from one place to another looking for opportunities. He studied different angles and techniques. He practised. He experimented. Sometimes he would toss and turn at night thinking about his art and wondering how he could become better.

But he kept believing.

His parents are both alive, and Taylor says they are proud to see how far he has come. He speaks with appreciation about being able to have his parents witness his journey and see what became of the artistic gift he carried from childhood.

When he thinks about that young boy today, Taylor sees someone who did not give up on his dream even when he did not know exactly where he was going. He believes that the young man he became was able to continue because he believed in what he believed in. There were struggles, but there were also lessons. There were mistakes, but there was also growth. There were difficult roads, but there was always another step to take. Taylor describes life as having valleys and mountains. Sometimes you will be in the valley and sometimes you will be on the mountain. The important thing is not to stop believing when the road becomes rough.

His message is rooted in experience. He wants young people to understand that limited qualifications or financial resources do not have to end a dream. His own journey—from rural St. Ann through the craft markets and eventually to international audiences—shows what persistence, self-belief and continued learning can achieve. Today, he remains focused on taking his art further, expanding his reach and achieving his dream of having more than one gallery.

Looking back at the little boy with the sketchbook and clay, Taylor sees the many stages of a journey that began simply with a love for drawing. Through photographs, nature, visits to Courts Jamaica, landscapes, craft markets and years of practice, he continued to develop his gift, reaching a major turning point in 2010 when he committed himself to mastering his art. The road has not always been easy, but his message remains clear: “Believe, trust and have hope.” For Jerome Taylor, the dream is still alive, and the canvas is still being painted.

"God helps those who help themselves,"

Taylor believes that if a person loves something and genuinely wants to pursue it, they cannot allow a lack of resources to automatically end the dream. He refers to the words, "What a man thinketh in his heart, so it is," and believes that a person has to trust their own instinct and find ways to help themselves.

For young people interested in art, Taylor encourages them to study. Study photographs. Study other artists. Look carefully at the techniques being used. Practice and find ways to push yourself to another level. He believes that a person has to get their mind into the rhythm of what they want to do and focus on it.

His own inspiration can come at unexpected moments. Taylor describes waking during the night after dreaming about art and wondering why he is dreaming about it. Those moments cause him to reflect on his ideas and think about how he wants his artwork to look. Nature is another important part of his creative process. Taylor encourages young artists to go into the hills, take a moment and observe the sunrise, the mountains, the valleys and the landscape around them. He believes that artists must learn to observe nature closely. Photography has also been an important part of his development. Before art became his primary focus, Taylor was a photographer. He photographed landscapes, rivers, scenes of the sea and other places that inspired him. Those photographs became another way of studying the world around him.

For Taylor, photography and art are closely connected. He believes that to be inspired by art, you must also learn to appreciate nature. "You have to be a nature person to love art," he explains. He believes artists should learn to adapt to Mother Nature, allowing the natural world to speak to them and responding through their art.

Taylor is also a father of four children. He has three daughters and a son, and he says that none of them has developed the same love for visual art that he has. One of his children became involved in music. He has sometimes wondered why he was the one who received such a strong artistic gift when he has seen other families where the artistic abilities of parents are adopted by their children.

His experience has been different. His children have their own interests and paths, while art has remained the passion that has shaped his own life.

When Taylor looks back at himself as the young boy who first discovered his gift, he sees someone who could not have known how far the journey would take him. He remembers the youngster with the sketchbook, the child who picked up clay and experimented with creating things. That young boy had a gift, but he did not have a clear map showing him where the gift would lead.



Adjoni Scale

CERTIFIED FLORIST



THOUGHTFUL DESIGNS.
LASTING MEMORIES.

“

A flower may be temporary, but the *feeling* it creates can linger long after the petals fall.”



EVERY BLOOM
TELLS A STORY.





MEET SHAQUIEL MCKENZIE

Muralist • Visual Artist • Storyteller



“I want people to feel something. I want every piece to leave a lasting impression.”

At just 25 years old, Jamaican muralist and visual artist Shaquiel McKenzie is using colour, scale and storytelling to transform ordinary spaces into powerful works of art. Based in Montego Bay, Shaquiel is the founder of SVMMER Gallery, a creative practice built on the belief that every wall has a story waiting to be told.

SHAQUIEL MCKENZIE CONT'D

WHERE ART BEGAN

Shaquiel's journey into painting began at a young age. Art became his way of making sense of the world around him. What started with sketching gradually evolved into a passion for painting large-scale murals that speak not only to the spaces they occupy, but also to the people and communities surrounding them.

For Shaquiel, a mural is much more than paint on a wall. It can preserve culture, celebrate identity, inspire hope and create conversations that continue long after the final brushstroke.

Today, Shaquiel's work explores resilience, humanity, nature and community. From vibrant Jamaican landscapes to public murals celebrating our heritage and immersive interior spaces, his work is designed to make people pause and feel.'

His creative philosophy is simple: art should leave an impression. He wants each piece to remind people of the beauty, history and stories that exist within their communities.

ART WITH PURPOSE

Shaquiel's creative vision extends beyond his individual artwork. It also inspired the establishment of the SVMMER Foundation, where art becomes a bridge between creativity and service.

Through the foundation's annual exhibition, Still We Bloom, more than 70 artists and over 250 pieces of artwork have been showcased, while support has been raised for school supplies and organisations serving vulnerable members of the community.



Artist: Shaquiel McKenzie

Artist | Muralist | Founder of SVMMER Gallery & SVMMER Foundation
Instagram: @svmmergallery

SHAQUIEL MCKENZIE CONT'D



We Triumph in Gold

Created for VistaPrint in 2026, this piece celebrates Jamaica's rich culture, resilience, and global influence. It brings together sports, creativity, nature, and industry, with the track athlete representing Jamaica's excellence in athletics and netball reflecting another beloved national sport. The Miss Lou-inspired figure celebrates our language, storytelling, and cultural identity. The ocean, landscape, greenery, and industrial elements come together to reflect Jamaica's strength, beauty, culture, and enduring resilience.

For Shaquiel, creativity and service are deeply connected. His work demonstrates how art can transform not only physical spaces, but also perspectives, communities and lives.

As he looks toward the future, his mission remains clear: to create meaningful work, strengthen communities and inspire others to see possibility even during difficult seasons.

Because sometimes, all it takes is a blank wall, a little colour and the courage to tell a story.

And even in life's most difficult seasons, we still have the capacity to bloom.





Artist: Shaquiel McKenzie

Artist | Muralist | Founder of SVMMER Gallery & SVMMER Foundation

Life at Sea

This piece was created for Harbor City Hotel, located in Montego Bay, as part of a sequence of designs inspired by the aquatic beauty of the ocean. The piece serves as a reminder of the beauty that exists beneath and beyond the surface of the sea, while seeking to connect a beautiful space with the comforting feeling of being embraced by the ocean.

This piece is entitled "Life at Sea."

Instagram: @svmmgallery

Kaye Anne's

KOLLECTION



STYLE
THAT
EMPOWERS



FASHION THAT MOVES WITH YOU.

BOLD. FEMININE. FEARLESS.

'The Art of Saying Yes'

Shan Anderson Art



Shan Anderson is a self-taught Jamaican acrylic artist and face painter

whose journey began in 2022 with a simple decision to pursue her lifelong passion for art. Since then, she has grown her creative business by embracing new opportunities and sharing the joy of art with others.

Shan Anderson Art

Artist. Dreamer. Doer. That's Shan in a few words. Based in Montego Bay, Shan Anderson is a Jamaican visual artist, face painter and creative entrepreneur who is passionate about using art to inspire, uplift and bring joy.

From an early age, Shan was drawn to colour, texture and imagination. Art became her safe space, the place where she could express herself freely and make sense of the world around her.

What began as a love for painting gradually grew into a purpose. Today, Shan creates original acrylic paintings that reflect her love for culture, people, nature and the everyday beauty of life in Jamaica.

Her work is vibrant, heartfelt and full of story. Whether she's painting a canvas, transforming a child's face into a butterfly or designing a creative experience for kids, Shan's goal is the same - to spark joy, encourage self-expression and leave people a little brighter than she found them.

This is far more than a passion.
It's a calling.



“Art is more than what I do. It's who I am and what I believe in.”

Today, I'm continuing to grow as both an artist and an entrepreneur. Recently, I've begun introducing 'Kids Paint & Create', a creative experience, a service I provide that is designed to encourage children to explore their imagination through painting in a fun, welcoming environment. It's still in its early stages, but seeing children proudly hold up their finished paintings reminds me why I started this journey in the first place.

This is only the beginning.

One of my biggest dreams is to open an art gallery and creative studio right here in Montego Bay, a space where children, adults, families, schools and visitors can gather to experience art in different ways. I envision a place that showcases artwork created by both emerging and established artists while offering creative experiences that bring the community together. I hope to continue expanding Kids Paint & Create and create opportunities for young artists to proudly display their work alongside adults, reminding them that creativity has no age limit.

When I think about my own journey, I don't see someone who had a perfect plan. I simply see someone who loved art enough to try.

Every brushstroke, every canvas, every face painted, and every child I've met has become part of my story. I've learned that growth doesn't happen overnight, and success isn't measured only by achievements, but also by the people you encourage along the way.

My husband has been a great support system in my life and I am so grateful for him and family who has made all the difference in world by encouraging and supporting me through this journey. Most of all, I am grateful to God, whose grace, strength and guidance have carried me through every season. He has reminded me to trust His timing and keep moving forward.



Today, Shan creates original acrylic paintings, provides professional face painting for events, and is launching 'Kids Paint & Create', a creative experience designed to inspire kids and young artists through fun, imagination and self-expression.

Her dream is to one day open an art gallery and creative studio in Montego Bay, where artists of all ages can learn, create and proudly showcase their work. She believes that every masterpiece begins with the courage to take the first step.

Shan
ANDERSON
ART

THE JOURNEY *Continues...*

CREATING. INSPIRING. BUILDING A LEGACY.

Today, I'm continuing to grow as both an artist and an entrepreneur. Recently, I've begun introducing 'Kids Paint & Create', a creative experience, a service I provide that is designed to encourage children to explore their imagination through painting in a fun, welcoming environment. It's still in its early stages, but seeing children proudly hold up their finished paintings reminds me why I started this journey in the first place.

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If there's one thing I hope readers take away from my journey, is this: **Follow your passion.**

Don't wait until everything feels perfect. Don't convince yourself you're not talented enough or experienced enough. **Every artist starts somewhere**, and every dream begins with one small step. You never know where one decision or one "yes" might lead.

My story is still being painted, and I believe the best chapters are still ahead. Until then, I'll keep creating, learning, laughing and hopefully **leaving a little more color** wherever I go.



ABOUT SHAN ANDERSON ART



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Shan
ANDERSON
— ART —

SHAN *Anderson*

ART THAT SPEAKS.
COLOR THAT CONNECTS.



Shan Anderson is a Jamaican artist whose vibrant paintings celebrate nature, culture, and the beauty of everyday moments. Through bold colors and meaningful imagery, she creates art that inspires joy, sparks conversation, and leaves a lasting impression.

*From imagination
to creation.
Made with heart.*





ISLAND STYLE



FASHION • BEAUTY • CONFIDENCE

Frangipani PALM

Frangipani Palm is a Florida-based accessories brand creating whimsical, conversation-starting bags and accessories inspired by Caribbean culture. From country-shaped bags to fruit-inspired totes, every design is created to celebrate identity, nostalgia, and the joy of carrying something unexpected.



INSPIRED BY CULTURE.

Made to stand out.



Victoria Gordon

FOUNDER & DESIGNER
FRANGIPANI PALM



CULTURE YOU CAN CARRY.

Victoria is the founder and designer behind Frangipani Palm, a Florida-based accessories brand creating whimsical bags and accessories inspired by Caribbean islands, culture, food, and other culturally relevant objects.

Known for transforming everyday items into conversation pieces, she designs everything from country-shaped bags and fruit-inspired totes to playful accessories that celebrate identity, nostalgia, and the joy of standing out.



A STORY ROOTED IN THE CARIBBEAN

Born in the Bronx and raised in South Florida by parents from Guyana and the Commonwealth of Dominica, Victoria grew up surrounded by the colors, traditions, and stories of the Caribbean. Those influences became the foundation of Frangipani Palm, a brand dedicated to creating products that help people proudly carry a piece of home wherever they go.



CREATIVITY WITH PURPOSE

Victoria is known for transforming everyday items into conversation pieces. She designs everything from country-shaped bags and fruit-inspired totes to playful accessories that celebrate identity, nostalgia, and the joy of standing out.



DESIGN. STORYTELLING. IMPACT.

A graduate of The Art Institute of Miami with a degree in Digital Film & Video Production, Victoria combines storytelling, design, and social media to build products that connect with communities around the world. What began as a single idea has grown into a globally recognized independent brand, with thousands of customers across dozens of countries and nearly 4,000 orders shipped worldwide.



THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT

Frangipani Palm continues to expand its collection of thoughtfully designed accessories while partnering with retailers that celebrate art, culture, and creativity. Victoria remains committed to designing products that make people smile, spark conversations, and celebrate the beauty of Caribbean culture in unexpected ways.

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MEDIA CONTACT

- Victoria Gordon
- info@frangipanipalm.com
- www.frangipanipalm.com
- Instagram: @frangipani_palm



Frangipani PALM

An exclusive conversation with Victoria Gordon, founder and designer of Frangipani Palm, on creativity, culture, and building a Caribbean-inspired brand that the world loves.

1. Tell us about your business.

- **What is the name of your business?** Frangipani Palm
- **What products or services do you offer?** We offer uniquely shaped bags and accessories inspired by Caribbean islands, culture, food, and other culturally relevant objects.
- **What makes your business unique?** Frangipani Palm is one of the few brands focused specifically on creating uniquely shaped bags through a Caribbean lens. Instead of simply putting Caribbean imagery on traditional bags, the bags themselves become the statement.

2. What inspired you to start your business?

After a trip to Guyana, where my mother is from, we came across handcrafted leather bags in the shape of Guyana. I loved the idea and wanted one, but I didn't feel like it was a bag I could comfortably jump at Carnival in. So, as a birthday gift to myself, I designed and commissioned my own sample Guyana bag, along with Trinidad, Dominica, and Barbados. What started as something I genuinely wanted for myself eventually became Frangipani Palm.

3. What challenges have you faced, and how have you overcome them?

One of my biggest challenges has been learning that I can't do everything at once. The Caribbean is incredibly diverse, and as the business has grown, I've received requests to represent more countries, more cultures and more products. As a small business, it's impossible to satisfy every request immediately. I've had to learn how to listen to my customers while still making decisions based on what is sustainable for the business. I've also learned that sometimes growth means saying "not yet" instead of automatically saying yes.

4. What impact has your business made?

The impact I'm most proud of is seeing Caribbean people recognize themselves in something I've created. Sometimes it's a bag shaped like their island, and other times it's something as simple as a plantain, mango or coconut that immediately reminds them of home. I've had customers tell me that the products remind them of their childhood, their parents or grandparents, or where they grew up. Seeing something so culturally familiar turned into something whimsical and wearable has created a really special connection with our customers.

Frangipani Palm has now fulfilled thousands of orders, reached customers around the world, and most recently, our bags became available at Pérez Art Museum Miami. For a brand that started with me simply wanting a Guyana bag, I could wear to

5. What is your vision for the future?

Over the next three to five years, I'd love to continue expanding what Caribbean-inspired design can look like. Frangipani Palm started with flag-shaped bags, but it has grown into fruit bags, culturally inspired accessories and products based on everyday Caribbean memories. I want to keep exploring that idea of turning familiar things from our culture into unexpected, whimsical products.

I'd also love to expand our retail and wholesale presence so customers can discover Frangipani Palm in more museums, boutiques and stores, both in the Caribbean and internationally.

6. What advice would you give to aspiring entrepreneurs?

Focus on getting really good at one product first, and then branch out. When you're creative, it's very easy to have ten ideas at once and convince yourself that you need to launch all ten. You don't. Give one idea the opportunity to work, learn everything you can from it, and build from there. You can always come back to the other ideas later. Also, don't wait until everything is perfect. Some of my best ideas came from simply trying something and seeing how people responded.



Frangipani PALM

CULTURE • CREATIVITY • CARRY IT

More
than a bag...

A PIECE OF
THE CARIBBEAN
YOU CAN CARRY.

Island
inspired.



Culture
inspired.



Unexpected.
Whimsical.
Uniquely
Caribbean.

Frangipani Palm creates uniquely shaped bags and accessories inspired by Caribbean islands, culture, food and everyday memories.



CARIBBEAN
INSPIRED



ONE OF A KIND
DESIGNS



A GLOBAL
COMMUNITY

Carry Your Culture.
Wear Your Story.

Inspired
by the
Caribbean

THE JOURNEY HOME

Finding Purpose Beyond the Titles, Achievements & Expectations

To a child, life is simple bliss, and problems disappear with the completion of an in-breath and out-breath cycle. I grew up in Westmoreland Jamaica, where in the abyss of nothing but sugar cane fields, I found beauty very early on. I'd peer endlessly, face pressed up against through the concrete air blocks from a sixth grade classroom, at the haze of greys and green, of dancing sugar canes whenever it rained, breathing in the damp musky smell of the countryside, and when I started high school, and moved away from the cane fields, I found a new sight to marvel: a hillside at a deep corner, on the road that led Grange Hill into the town of Savanna-la-mar. It was a regular hillside that towered the road, with steep edges cut in deep, and a grazing field below for cows that I'd see on occasion. That particular hillside became the new source of my bliss. There was something about the way the branches of the trees upstretched towards the sky, in hues of brown, grey, and green, and how still they stood, while the sun transformed their leaves to shimmering yellow diamonds under the early morning light.

I easily found heaven in the smallest things, and it made everything glow with magic in a town most saw as dull, and although I excelled in courses like visual arts and writing, I ended up doing the business courses because Art wasn't considered practical for success - at least, that wasn't a mainstream idea. Coincidentally, I also performed well academically in the business courses, which unsurprisingly led me to pursue business at the University of Technology, Jamaica, and afterwards, ACCA, becoming a chartered accountant.

WHEN SUCCESS ISN'T ENOUGH

In the becoming of these roles and titles, over time, I realized, something was missing. It wasn't something I could place my finger on at first, having gone years of reading only academic books, buried at my desk, studying way past midnight. It was all work and very little play. Eventually, after I'd migrated to another country, in search of financial success, and international experience, the feeling followed me.

It was an ache, but not in the body, and only years later would I realize that the soul can hurt, and that when it does, it is signaling something that is out of alignment on the physical plain. It feels like heaviness in the body and mind, and even with an efficient to-do list checked off, and enough money saved and invested, there's a lingering question: why am I doing this?



THE JOURNEY HOME CONT'D THE DEEPER WHY

I began to question my identity. I'd dedicated years to becoming successful by traditional measures: the degree, the certification, and I was even beginning to work on a new certification in reinsurance, but I was completely bored. The highlights of my days were watching the birds wander the dock where I'd eat lunch, and looking at flowers, and something about noticing these smaller things made me nostalgic. My mind kept wandering back to the days I'd watch the rain, and the sun kissed hillside. The question 'Why?' became even louder when I started wondering how in all our pursuit, we became almost robotic in interactions with very little compassion and sweetness. That is when the concept of identity became fascinating. I started questioning who we were and who we were becoming and why.

I'd always loved books, and after academics was out of the way, I'd read whenever I had a break. I started the journey with development and financial advice, but I somehow ended up finding interest in spirituality and psychology books. There, I began to dismantle the identity complex, peeling back the layers of who we truly are without role-playing and attachments. I pondered the questions: Who am I really? Who am I without the job title? Who am I without how much I earn? Who am I outside of where I live and what I do? Who am I without what I own, who I associate with, and who I know? Without the temporary things, what is left of me?

THE JOURNEY HOME

The answer came in a book 'The Artist's Way' by Julia Cameron, and I found a deeper sense of purpose in another book, A New Earth by Eckhart Tolle. And after months of practicing habits like journaling, meditation, and a dedicated hour of painting every Sunday afternoon, it became clear to me that I was simply a human being hungry for expression, and that all possibilities were available once I got clear on my true identity. Purpose became showing up to each moment as the full presence of the witness of the life I was living; being so present and feeling so deeply that I can express that to serve others in whichever form I express.

Purpose is much simpler than we think, and so easy it's often overlooked. It is a moment-to-moment connection to ourselves, to life, to the people we serve. Humanity is disappearing, and the way we look at 'success' has a lot to do with it. If success is based on accumulating accolades and collecting things to validate our existence, the further we depart from what actually matters, like going slowly enough to notice a hillside for no other reason than that it is there and finding it beautiful.

When we lose touch with what actually matters, our connection to each other and to life itself, we end up with a society that is fed by fear, and separation ensues. From this simple problem comes a wide array of dysfunction, even those that glaringly face us every day, like sustainability and planet life continuity.



READ

THE JOURNEY HOME CONT'D

I think one of the most important questions we can ask is "why?". The question "why?" illuminates the reasoning behind every choice, but most of us don't get to the question or the answer without pausing for long enough to notice just what makes life life. If we focus solely on work and paying the bills, playing roles, and accumulating the external self, we never get quiet enough to see what the layer underneath the performance is. That life itself involves a lot of stillness and silence. If we went slower, we'd find that the peace and acceptance we hope to achieve externally, is accessible without force, and that only when we fully fold into our own self- acceptance, self- love, and self-compassion, can we begin to offer those beautiful, simple, overlooked things to the world. These are the jewels of our humanity. These are what build friendships, community, and convert individual pursuits into one purpose

THE GIFT OF LIFE

It was a gift to realize that I am an artist. Without letting go of the old identity, I wouldn't have stepped into my purpose. It is a gift, to be still enough to revel in the scent of a cup of coffee, to notice the sound of birds in the morning above the silence and feel joy and the simplicity of just mere existence. It is a gift, to be able to reminisce about the hazy blue and green spray of rainwater over cane fields in the countryside, and an illuminated quiet hillside on a school morning. Life is a simple thing.

Life itself is the gift, and an ever giving one. Life does not ask us to be more or less of anything or anyone to be acceptable and loved. Life sees us as whole, and spectacular in our differences, all bringing individual talents to serve others harmoniously. If we dare to go within and find the silence, we'll find everything we need to bring our purpose to the forefront of our lives. Once we remove the egos, all we're left with is love.





Kaye Anne's
KOLLECTION

TIMELESS. STYLISH. CONFIDENT.

EFFORTLESS STYLE

For Every You

Chic pieces. Bold looks.
Endless combinations.
Step into pieces that move
with you and empower
you to own every moment.

STYLE THAT SPEAKS

From everyday looks to
statement pieces, our
collection is designed
to make you feel
confident, beautiful
and unstoppable.



QUALITY
YOU FEEL



DESIGNS
THAT INSPIRE



MADE FOR
EVERY MOMENT



STYLE
THAT LASTS

TIMELESS. STYLISH.

GOLDEN HOUR GLAM

Bold color.
Flowy comfort.
Stand out
all day.



DRESS IT. | LIVE IT.

Anne's LECTION I

SH. CONFIDENT.

LEOPARD LUXE SET

Make a bold
statement in
this matching
leopard set.
All eyes
on you!



E IT. | LOVE IT.

Date NIGHT



Kaye Anne's
74 KOLLECTION!

THE POWER SET

Effortlessly polished and perfectly coordinated. A set that commands attention.



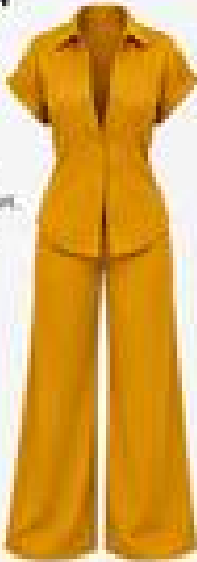
SUNNY DAY CHIC

Bright, breezy and beautifully you. Perfect for warm days and big plans.



GOLDEN HOUR GLAM

Bold color. Flirty comfort. Stand out all day.



WILD AT HEART

Leopard print that brings the drama. Unapologetically fierce.



LEOPARD LUXE SET

Make a bold statement in this matching leopard set. All eyes on you!



VACAY VIBES

Flirty, fun and ready for your next adventure.



Kaye Anne's KOLLECTIONI

STYLE. CONFIDENCE. YOU.

Timeless pieces
that celebrate your
individuality and
empower you to
move with confidence
from day to night.

MORE THAN FASHION. IT'S A LIFESTYLE.



CURATED FASHION

Carefully selected
pieces that blend
trends with
timeless style.



QUALITY YOU CAN FEEL

Premium fabrics,
flattering fits and
attention to
every detail.



MADE FOR WOMEN

Designed to
empower, inspire
and celebrate
every woman.



SHOP WITH EASE

Multiple payment
options & delivery
across Jamaica.



SHOP YOUR STYLE. PAY YOUR WAY.



@kayeannes.kollectioni



Telephone Number: 876-439-9215

Is Your Makeup Working Against You?

6 Common Makeup Mistakes That Could Be Ruining Your Look

By Claudia Buchanan-Morris

Makeup Artist, Founder & Owner of ElitePro

You've blended your foundation, defined your brows and applied your favourite lipstick, but something still doesn't look quite right. Before blaming your makeup products, take a closer look at your technique.

Sometimes, the smallest makeup mistakes can prevent you from achieving the smooth, polished finish you desire. The good news is that they are usually easy to correct.

As a makeup artist with over a decade of experience, I'm sharing six common makeup mistakes that could be working against you and how you can fix them.

1. Applying Makeup to Unprepared Skin

Skipping skin preparation is one of the quickest ways to end up with makeup that appears patchy, dry or uneven.

Before applying makeup, cleanse your face and follow with a moisturizer suited to your skin type. If you have oily skin, choose a moisturizer specifically formulated for oily skin. If you have dry skin, select one that provides more hydration. For better results, allow the products a few minutes to settle into your skin.

A common misconception is that oily skin does not need moisturizer. This is simply not true. Properly prepared skin provides a smoother base and helps makeup sit more naturally on the skin.



2. Wearing the Wrong Foundation Shade

Your foundation should look like skin! A foundation may provide excellent coverage, but if the shade or undertone is incorrect, the finished look will not appear seamless. You may end up with foundation that looks ashy, too dark or too light.

Avoid testing foundation on your hand, as it may not match your face. Instead, apply a small amount along your jawline and view it in natural light. The correct shade should blend comfortably with both your face and neck.

You should also consider your undertone—warm, cool or neutral—when selecting a foundation. For first-time makeup users, buying foundation online can be challenging. I recommend visiting a store and having your foundation matched by a professional.



3. Applying Too Much Product at Once

More product does not always mean a more flawless finish. Heavy layers of foundation, concealer and powder can settle into fine lines and make the skin appear textured. Less is more when it comes to your makeup.

My recommendation is to begin with a small amount and build coverage only where it is needed. Use concealer to target dark spots, blemishes or discoloration instead of applying another heavy layer of foundation over the entire face.

Avoid applying foundation directly under the eyes, as this can create a double layer when concealer is added. Apply concealer lightly in that area instead.

Thin layers are especially important in our Caribbean climate, where heat and humidity can affect the lasting power of makeup.



Blend around the jawline and cheeks.

4. Making Your Brows Too Heavy

Your eyebrows frame your face, but applying too much product can make them appear harsh and overpower your other features.

Use light, hair-like strokes to fill sparse areas and follow the natural shape of your brows. The front of the brow should be softer, with slightly more definition toward the arch and tail.

Remember, your brows should complement each other; they do not have to look identical.



Use a light hand and create hair-like strokes.

“Flawless makeup is not always about owning more products. Sometimes, it's simply about using what you already have more effectively.”

5. Forgetting to Blend

Blending will be your best friend during makeup application. It is what separates applied makeup from polished makeup. Harsh lines around the jaw, hairline, eyes or cheeks can make even the best products look unnatural.

Take a few extra moments to soften the edges of your foundation, eyeshadow, blush and contour. Check your makeup in natural light whenever possible, as indoor lighting may hide areas that need additional blending.

Look for patches or areas where the product may have gathered, and make sure there are no harsh lines.



Properly prepared skin creates a smoother base.

6. Using Dirty Brushes and Expired Products

Your makeup may not be the problem; your tools could be. Brushes and sponges can collect product buildup, oil and bacteria, which may affect your application and contribute to skin irritation or breakouts.

Clean your tools regularly and allow them to dry completely before using them again. You should also check your makeup products for changes in smell, colour or texture and pay attention to the recommended period of use after opening.

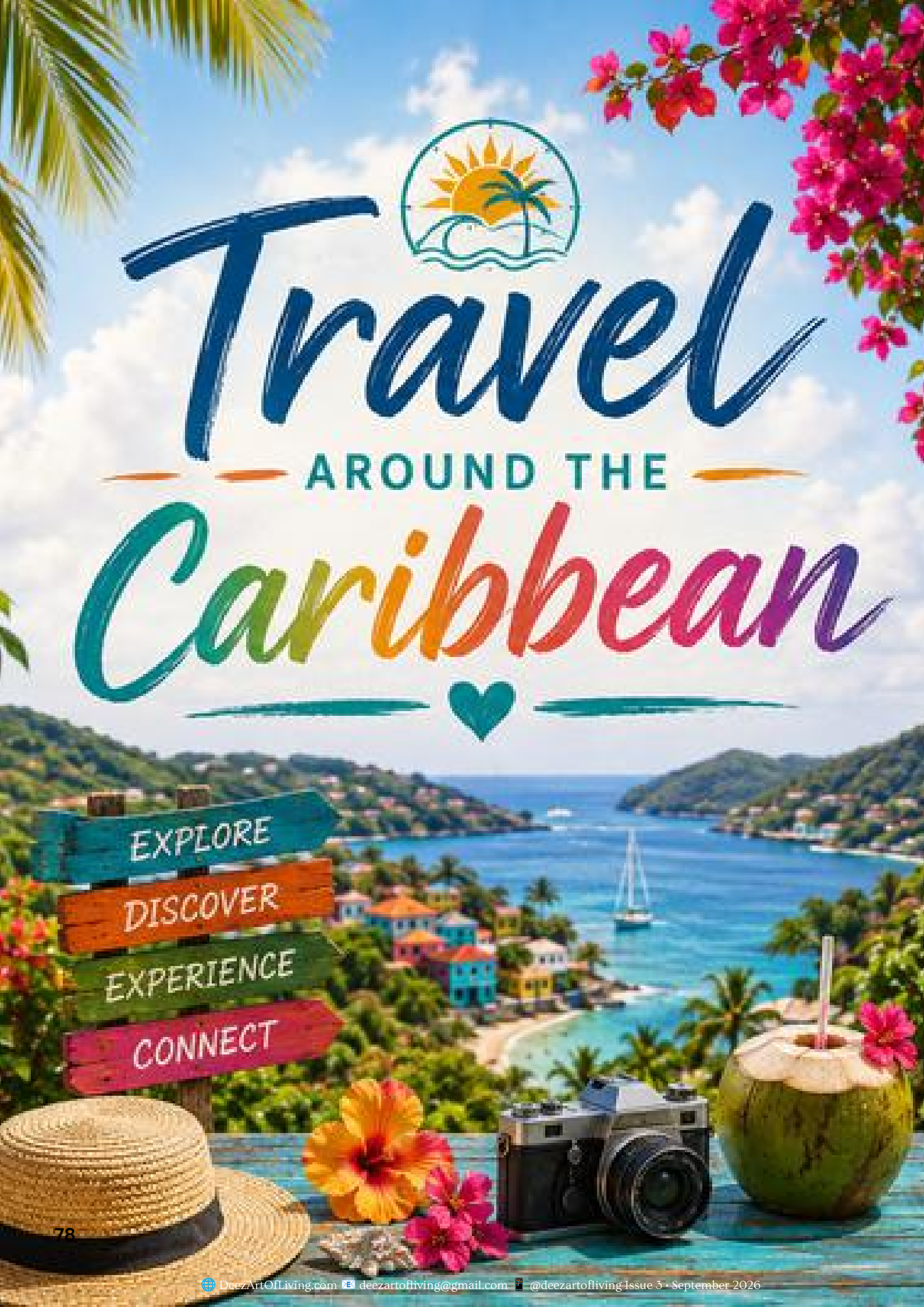
No amount of blending can produce a flawless finish with tools and products that are no longer performing properly.

Claudia's Beauty Tip

Flawless makeup is not always about owning more products. Sometimes, it's simply about using what you already have more effectively. And don't forget to blend, blend, blend!



Claudia Buchanan-Morris is a professional makeup artist, skincare consultant and beauty educator and the founder and owner of ElitePro.



Travel

AROUND THE

Caribbean



EXPLORE

DISCOVER

EXPERIENCE

CONNECT



One Sea. Endless Stories.



BREATHTAKING ISLANDS

Discover stunning beaches and hidden gems.



RICH CULTURE

Experience vibrant traditions, music, art and cuisine.



ADVENTURE AWAITS

From hiking lush trails to sailing crystal-clear waters.



MEMORIES THAT LAST

Connect, unwind and create unforgettable moments.



A hiker wearing a blue cap, a dark jacket, and a backpack is walking down a dirt trail. To the right is a wooden cabin with a corrugated metal roof. The scene is set in a lush, green, mountainous area.

LET'S HIKE THE BLUE MOUNTAIN

by Janique Campbell, Travel Advisor

LET'S



Explore

My Hike to Blue Mountain Peak

by Janique Campbell,
Travel Advisor

My love for travel began at a young age, and it started simply—with a desire to get out of the house, explore the outdoors and connect with nature. What some may call backpacking, we Jamaicans know as hiking. For me, it was curiosity, adventure and an almost irresistible need to discover what existed beyond the familiar.

My first real adventure away from home was a hike to Blue Mountain Peak.

I had heard countless stories about the journey. Everyone seemed to have a different experience—some good, some challenging, some unforgettable. But I wanted to create my own story.

We were told that the hike would begin at night because the temperatures would be much cooler. They were right.

Our group of approximately 15 set off from East Kingston in pickup vans, on a Friday afternoon, winding our way into the hills of St. Andrew. We travelled through Gordon Town and Quavea Ridge before eventually arriving in Mavis Bank, where the Jehovah's Witness church served as our starting point.



The Journey Continues

Our first major rest stop was Penline Castle. By then, we were exhausted, thirsty and hungry. It was time to "put back"—Jamaican for replenishing our energy with food and drink. The break also gave those who had fallen behind an opportunity to catch up with the group.

After approximately 30 minutes, we were back on the trail.

The terrain became flatter, giving us a long, relatively steady stretch of walking for about 50 minutes. But we knew that a major challenge was ahead.

Jacob's Ladder.

The climb was steep, and we were reminded to pace ourselves. Don't stop. Keep moving. We would climb, pause at the lookout to catch our breath, then continue.

Sometime after 2:00 a.m., on Saturday morning, we finally reached the camping cabins.

There was no need for discussion. We went straight to our cabins and crashed.

Waking Up in Another World

The next morning, excitement woke me—not the chill.

I had never experienced cold like that in my entire life. The mountain air was icy, and even something as simple as washing my face with soap or taking a shower seemed impossible unless the sun was blazing overhead. The fire we had built became our best source of warmth.

After breakfast, we began the trek toward the highest point of the peak.

This part of the journey felt even longer and more exhausting, but curiosity kept us moving. We had come this far, and the unknown ahead seemed to fuel our determination.

As we climbed higher, the temperature changed. The biting cold gradually became a more bearable, almost inviting chill.

Then came another unexpected delight.

We discovered raspberry bushes covered in brightly coloured fruit—some vibrant red, others a deep purple. Naturally, we tasted them. They were sweet and delicious. Nearby were small strawberry bushes, their tiny fruits proving that size certainly did not determine flavour.

And then we arrived.

The famous Trig Station.

Standing there was peaceful, serene and absolutely breathtaking.

At approximately 7,432 feet above sea level, Blue Mountain Peak offers spectacular views across the Caribbean. On a clear day, Cuba's Sierra Maestra mountain range can be faintly visible across the sea, roughly 90 to 130 miles away.

For a moment, everything became still. The noise, pressure and hustle of city life seemed impossibly far away.

So this is what it feels like to be on top of the world.

There was something profoundly beautiful about being surrounded by wilderness—breathing fresh mountain air, standing beneath an open sky and experiencing Jamaica in such a raw, authentic way. It was nature without filters, without schedules and without the distractions of everyday life. It was freedom.

The Journey Back

Eventually, it was time to make our way back down to camp.

Back at camp, we cooked, ate, refreshed ourselves and laughed together, enjoying the simple pleasure of good company after such an incredible adventure.

As we continued hiking toward civilization during the warmer hours of the morning, the mountain seemed to come alive around us. What had felt mysterious and almost intimidating during our nighttime ascent now looked completely different beneath the daylight.

The landscape had transformed. So had the energy.

We eventually reached the river we had crossed two nights earlier. This time, there was no urgency. We had time to slow down, cool off and enjoy ourselves. We went swimming, laughed and simply allowed the moment to unfold.

For those few hours, there was truly not a care in the world.

Looking back, my first hiking experience was so much more than a physical journey. It was an introduction to adventure, discovery and the extraordinary beauty of my own island. Unforgettable.





THRIVE

Grow Into Your Best Self ♥

“

Personal growth
is where tomorrow
begins.

”



From mindset to confidence, productivity,
wellness, and purpose—become the person
your future deserves.

SOFT LIFE JAMAICA:

A WORLD OF EXPERIENCES, REIMAGINED AT HOME

MEET SIMMONETTE ROSE, CEO & Founder

A Softer Approach to Wellness

Soft Life Jamaica challenges the idea that wellness has to look one particular way. Wellness can be Pilates and mindfulness, but it can also be reading quietly, learning something new, sharing a meal, connecting with another person, spending time outdoors, or simply allowing yourself to enjoy the present moment. There is psychology behind the philosophy, but there is also life experience. The brand encourages people to see wellness not only as something we seek when life becomes difficult, but as something we can intentionally incorporate into the way we live.

Creating Impact Beyond Events

That philosophy is now expanding beyond Soft Life Jamaica's signature lifestyle experiences. The brand is developing corporate wellness experiences to support employee wellbeing, connection, and engagement, alongside school interventions and mentorship programmes that introduce young people to personal development, wellbeing, and healthy connection. There is also a growing vision for tourism and hospitality partnerships, allowing hotels, villas, Airbnbs, and other stakeholders to offer curated Soft Life experiences to Jamaicans and international visitors alike. From humble beginnings in Portland to experiences inspired by a much wider world, the journey behind Soft Life Jamaica is ultimately one of intentional creation—a reminder that where we begin does not have to determine the entirety of where we go, and that creating the life we desire can happen one intentional decision, one experience, and one moment at a time. That is the philosophy behind the brand and the invitation it extends to everyone who encounters it: Live Intentionally.





SOFT LIFE JAMAICA: A WORLD OF EXPERIENCES, REIMAGINED AT HOME

For the founder of Soft Life Jamaica, intentional living isn't simply a wellness trend, it is personal. Her story began with humble beginnings in Portland, Jamaica, and a determination to make her own strides towards creating the life she desired. Over the years, that journey has taken her through education, philanthropy, authorship and travel, each experience shaping her understanding of what it means to live with intention.

Along the way came an important realization: the life we desire is not always something we simply arrive at. Sometimes, we have to intentionally create it. That philosophy would eventually become the heartbeat of Soft Life Jamaica.

Soft Life Jamaica is a wellness and lifestyle brand creating intentional experiences centred around wellbeing, culture, food, creativity, connection and personal growth. The aim is not to present a "soft life" as a life without challenges, but to encourage people to deliberately create moments of softness, joy, discovery and connection within the lives they already have.

From Portland to a Bigger Vision

Behind Soft Life Jamaica is a proud Portlander, psychologist, author, philanthropist, Justice of the Peace and Governor-General's initiative awardee. As an Applied psychologist, her professional foundation has given her an understanding of human behaviour, emotional wellbeing and the importance of meaningful connection. However, her own experiences have also shaped a belief that conversations about mental health and wellbeing do not always have to begin in clinical spaces. Soft Life Jamaica: wellness informed by psychology, delivered through experiences that feel approachable, enjoyable and human.



SOFT LIFE JAMAICA: A WORLD OF EXPERIENCES, REIMAGINED AT HOME

Bringing Pieces of the World Home

Travel has been another significant influence on the brand. Experiencing different countries and cultures introduced new foods, wellness traditions, creative practices, and ways of gathering. Instead of simply enjoying those moments abroad and leaving them there, the founder began taking something home from each experience—ideas, perspectives, and inspiration. This eventually led to another question: Why shouldn't Jamaicans have opportunities to experience more of the world right here at home? That philosophy feels particularly fitting in a country whose national motto is "Out of Many, One People." Jamaica itself is a beautiful meeting place of cultures, histories, and traditions.

Soft Life Jamaica celebrates that diversity by taking inspiration from around the world while thoughtfully interpreting each experience through a Jamaican lens. The result can be seen in concepts such as Pilates & Chai, bringing together movement, mindfulness, and chai culture; Sip Into Softness, centred around tea and intentional connection; Matcha & Bonsai, introducing participants to matcha and the art of bonsai; and Boards & Bonds, which uses food and the communal charcuterie experience to encourage conversation and connection. Other experiences incorporate creativity, nature, reflection, and personal development. The purpose is never simply to host another event; it is to allow someone to experience something new and take something meaningful away from it.





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SCAN TO VIEW OUR
INSTAGRAM PORTFOLIO

WHEN YOUR NAME CALLS YOU

By Renée Y.D. Beckford, MBA

Before you understood language, recognized your reflection, or knew anything about the world, someone gave you a name.

Since then, it has followed you everywhere. It has been whispered with affection, called across crowded rooms, written on official documents, and spoken during defining moments of your life. Yet how often have you paused to ask:

What does my name mean, and could that meaning be connected to who I am becoming?

Most of us instinctively answer to our names. We rarely consider their origin, the intention behind them, or the message they may carry. However, a name can be more than a means of identification. It can become a seed of hope, a quiet reminder that, despite our circumstances, something greater may be calling us from within.



Could the meaning of your name reveal something about your identity and purpose?

WHEN A NAME CARRIES PURPOSE!

Throughout Scripture, names often reflected identity, circumstances, or calling. Abram became Abraham when God declared that he would become the father of many nations. Jacob became Israel after a life-changing encounter with God. Simon was called Peter, pointing towards the strength and leadership into which Jesus was developing him. But what happens when a name carries pain instead of promise? Jabez offers a powerful answer.

His mother named him Jabez because she gave birth to him in pain. Imagine hearing a name associated with sorrow every day, carrying a description shaped by circumstances you neither created nor controlled. Yet Jabez did not allow the circumstances of his birth to establish the boundaries of his life. Scripture describes him as more honourable than his brothers. He asked God to bless him, enlarge his territory, remain with him, and protect him from harm, and guess what? God granted his request.

Jabez could not rewrite his beginning, but he refused to let it dictate his ending. His story reveals a liberating truth: You are not required to become what happened to you.



THE MEANING WITHIN MY NAME

My name, Renée, means reborn or born again, and the more I examine my journey, the more deeply that meaning resonates with me. Even before I fully understood its significance, I found myself encouraging men and women to see themselves differently. I was drawn to people who carried a deep yearning to become something greater but struggled to believe that transformation was still possible.

Some had been defined by rejection, failure, family history, or difficult circumstances. Others had accepted the opinions of people who could only see where they were, not where they had the potential to go. Even persons who are classified as unkind and wicked, somehow, God has given me the ability to see the light in them. The beauty of their true self, despite the pain, anger, and hurt.

When I observe them, I do not see a finished story. I see someone waiting to be reminded that hope is still alive, life can be happy, and not everyone hurts you. I wanted them to understand:

You are not what happened to you.

You are not the worst thing someone has said about you.

You are not your present circumstances.

Your lowest moment does not have to become your permanent address.

I believe part of my purpose is to help people rediscover their true, God-given identities. I want them to recognize the greatness planted within them, confront the labels that have diminished them, and believe that the desire they carry to rise, grow, help others, and become more may be evidence that they were created for more.

To me, the meaning reborn is the emergence of new life from a place that once appeared devastated. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, or, in the language of Scripture, receiving "beauty for ashes". A person can emerge from painful experiences wiser, stronger, and more purposeful than before. Rebirth does not mean pretending the fire never happened. It means refusing to allow the fire to have the final word.

Rebirth: The fire may have shaped your journey, but it does not have the authority to define your identity or determine your ending.

My name has therefore become more than something I answer to. When someone calls my name, I hear an invitation to awaken hope, restore identity, and help others move towards the person God intended them to become.

THE MEANING WITHIN MY NAME

YOUR NAME IS AN INVITATION: NOT A LIMITATION

A name does not magically determine our destiny. **Our true identity is established in God, not in a dictionary, family tradition, or someone else's expectations.** Nevertheless, its meaning can invite us to reflect more deeply.

What does your name mean? Does it connect with your personality, journey, or the people you naturally feel drawn to help?

Perhaps your name means strength, but life has convinced you that you are weak. Perhaps it means light, but disappointment has caused you to hide. Perhaps it means beloved, although rejection has made you question your worth. Even if your name carries a painful meaning, as Jabez's did, it does not have the authority to condemn you to a painful future. Your circumstances may explain part of your journey, but they do not define the totality of who you are.

Thriving begins when we stop seeing ourselves solely through the lens of what happened to us and begin living from the truth of who God created us to become.

NAME WITH INTENTION

This understanding should also influence the names we give our children. Choosing a name should be about more than following a trend or selecting something attractive.

Explore its language, origin and meaning. Consider the character, values and legacy connected to it. Let your child know why it was chosen and what you hoped they would remember whenever they heard it.

Let the answer to "Why did you give me this name?" be filled with purpose.

Today, take a moment to research your own name. Ask yourself:

- What does my name awaken within me?
- What part of my identity have I neglected?
- Which labels must I release to become the person I was created to be?

Your name may not tell your entire story, but it could open the door to a powerful new chapter.



Your beginning does not
have to become your
boundary.

The next time someone
calls your name, pause and
remember what you carry.

Remember the hope within
you, who you are becoming
and the greatness towards
which God may be calling
you.

Your name is being called!



OUR JOURNEY THEN & NOW



1961–2005

THE EARLY YEARS

The central government operated the Hope Zoo from its opening in 1961 until 2005, when direct government management ended due to budget shortfalls and facility deterioration.



2005

A PERIOD OF DECLINE

Years of limited resources led to the deterioration of infrastructure and a decline in the overall condition of the zoo.



2011 & BEYOND

A NEW BEGINNING

The revitalization of Hope Zoo after 2011 was driven by a \$100 million master redevelopment plan spearheaded by the Hope Zoo Preservation Foundation (H2PF) under executive chairman Kenneth S. Benjamin.



TODAY

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The foundation transformed the facility from a severely deteriorated space into a modern, 60-acre non-profit zoological garden and wildlife rehabilitation center.



LOVE THEM



RESPECT THEM



ACCEPT THEM



PROTECT THEM



HOPE ZOO

KINGSTON

*From Preservation to Purpose...
Protecting Wildlife, Enriching Lives*

Hope Zoo Kingston is more than a place to visit.
It is a living legacy of conservation, education and
hope for generations to come.



MEET Kayon Vaz

Hi, I'm Kayon Vaz—a storyteller, inclusive communicator and, I guess I can now add, contributing writer for Deez Art of Living Magazine.

Come with me on this new adventure as I share Caribbean stories through different voices, experiences and perspectives. I hope these stories inspire us to listen more closely, think more deeply and recognize the valuable lessons within our everyday lives.

WHAT'S YOUR STORY ? – LEARNING, GROWING AND FINDING PURPOSE

BY KAYON VAZ

"There is power in allowing yourself to be known and heard, in owning your unique story."

That message from Michelle Obama's memoir, *Becoming*, has stayed with me. Perhaps it resonated because, for more than a decade, storytelling was at the heart of my work as a television producer. I spent years listening to people, conducting pre-interviews, immersing myself in their experiences and helping them communicate their stories to an audience.

If you know Caribbean people, you know one thing: we are going to tell a good story. Sometimes it is something we experienced ourselves, and sometimes it is something we heard from somebody who heard it from somebody else. Whether every detail is accurate or not, our stories are usually filled with heart, humour, struggle and hard-earned life lessons.

Stories help us understand where we come from. They remind us of what we have survived and, sometimes, point us towards who we are becoming.

My journey into media and communication did not happen by accident. Long before I fully understood the influence of media, it was already shaping how I saw the world. Whether I was reading the *Jamaica Gleaner*, watching the seven o'clock news, tuning in to Ian Boyne's *Profile* or becoming absorbed in one of my favourite films, storytelling was quietly educating me.

”

A person's experience should never be treated as simply another piece of content. When someone allows us into a vulnerable or personal part of their journey, we must handle that story with honesty, care and respect.



KAYON VAZ
Digital Content Producer
& Media Coach

WHAT'S YOUR STORY ? – LEARNING, GROWING AND FINDING PURPOSE

It introduced me to people, places and perspectives beyond my own experience. It also taught me that education does not happen only in a classroom. We learn through conversations, disappointments, opportunities, mistakes and encounters with people whose lives are different from our own.

I remember my late radio lecturer, Dr. Janice Lindsay, teaching us that media should empower, educate and engage. She reminded us that media belongs to the people. I would add that the stories we tell belong to people too. That understanding carries a responsibility.

As a producer, I encountered stories filled with joy, loss, resilience and hope. Behind every interview was a human being trusting us with a part of their life. One thing I learned is that a person's experience should never be treated as simply another piece of content. When someone allows us into a vulnerable or personal part of their journey, we must handle that story with honesty, care and respect.

”

Stories connect us, but only when we remember the person behind the story.

There were also times when guests arrived unsure of themselves. They had knowledge and valuable experiences, but they did not always believe their stories were worth hearing. During our conversations, I would help them identify the message beneath the information and become clearer about what they wanted the audience to understand. Those moments taught me another important lesson: people do not always remember the person with the most qualifications or the loudest voice. They often remember the person who made them feel something, helped them understand a difficult idea or caused them to see life differently. Knowledge is important, but our ability to communicate that knowledge allows other people to benefit from it.

My journey has also deepened my understanding of inclusion. We often speak about "giving people a voice," but people already have voices. Our responsibility is to create spaces where those voices can be heard, respected and included. Inclusion cannot remain an afterthought or something we consider only when it is convenient. It must become the norm. This is especially important when communicating with and about persons with disabilities. Inclusion is not simply inviting someone into the room. It means ensuring that the person can participate, contribute, access information and know that their presence matters.

This is where the true power of storytelling becomes clear. A meaningful story does more than entertain us. It can educate, challenge assumptions and help us see the humanity in someone whose life may look completely different from our own. A story can take an issue that feels distant and make it personal. It can transform statistics into people, headlines into lived experiences and unfamiliar struggles into something we can understand.

WHAT'S YOUR STORY? – LEARNING, GROWING AND FINDING PURPOSE

”

Stories connect us, but only when we remember the person behind the story.

Stories can also give people the courage to speak. Sometimes, hearing another person share honestly about failure, grief, change or uncertainty gives us permission to acknowledge our own experiences. We realize that we are not the only ones who have struggled, started again or questioned whether we were moving in the right direction.

That is why owning our stories is so important. Owning your story does not mean that every chapter must be perfect. It means accepting that the difficult moments, unexpected changes and lessons learned along the way have all contributed to the person you are becoming.



Let's Connect

Instagram@kayonvaz

YouTube@kayonvaz

TikTok@communicatetobegreat

Substack@communicatetobegreat

LinkedIn@kayonvaz

However, storytelling must never become a performance designed only to gain attention. A powerful story must have purpose. Before we share, we should ask ourselves: Why does this story matter? Who could it help? What lesson can someone carry away from it?

Purpose is what moves a story beyond visibility and towards impact.

These are some of the lessons I hope to explore through my writing. I want to connect education, communication, storytelling and inclusion to the everyday experiences that shape us. I want us to examine not only what we are learning, but how that knowledge is helping us grow and serve with greater purpose.

EDITOR'S LETTER

Tomorrow Begins With Us

Learning Today. Leading Tomorrow.

By **Donna M. Hunter**

EDITOR | RECRUITMENT EXECUTIVE | ADJUNCT LECTURER | MOM OF 4

September is a season of new beginnings. New classrooms. New goals. New opportunities. And renewed purpose. This month, we celebrate education as the foundation of the future—and the people who make that future possible.



EDUCATION SHAPES LIVES

It builds confidence, opens doors and gives us the tools to create the life we imagine.



PEOPLE INSPIRE CHANGE

Educators, mentors, parents and students are planting seeds that grow into leaders, innovators and changemakers.



LEARNING NEVER ENDS

Beyond the classroom, learning continues through experience, curiosity and the courage to keep growing.

Inside this issue, we highlight stories of inspiration, innovation and impact—from classrooms to careers, from community to personal growth.

Remember:

“ You do not have to know everything today to become who you are meant to be tomorrow. ”

- KEEP LEARNING.
- KEEP ASKING QUESTIONS.
- KEEP GROWING.
- KEEP SHOWING UP.

The future is being shaped by what we teach, what we learn and what we choose to pass on.

Tomorrow begins with us.

Donna M. Hunter



“ The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you. ”

— B.B. King

LATOYA SPENCE

**Latoya C Spence, CEO & Founder
Yellow Bird Creative Studio**



LIVING WELL



Mind • Body • Home

FIND YOUR FIT

You don't have to love the gym.
You just need to love the
movement you choose.

By Faith Waltson, Fitness Coach

Life is living for most of us. Between work, family, finances, responsibilities, relationships and the countless things competing for our attention, the luxury of feeling excited about exercise can sometimes feel like a far-distant thought.

And when you're already mentally exhausted, the idea of dragging yourself to a gym for an hour can feel less like self-care and more like another chore on an already endless list.



BUT HERE'S THE THING:

**fitness doesn't have
to look like the gym.**

You don't have to force yourself to do something you hate simply because you've decided that exercise is supposed to look a certain way.

FIND MOVEMENT YOU ACTUALLY ENJOY.

- Dance. There's always good old YouTube if you want to move in the comfort of your own home. Or, if you prefer the energy and accountability of being around other people, try an in-person class.
- Try boxing. Kickboxing. Brazilian jiu-jitsu. Or another form of martial arts.
- Go swimming. Try water polo.
- Join a dragon boat team. Play football.
- Try pickleball. Cycle. Hike.
- Take a fitness class.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FEEL STUCK

with the idea that getting fit means walking into a gym, getting on a treadmill and lifting weights.

THE OBJECTIVE ISN'T TO FIND THE 'PERFECT' WORKOUT.

The objective is to find a form of movement that makes you want to come back. Because consistency becomes much easier when you're actually enjoying what you're doing.



“
**EASY
VICTORIES
REWARD YOU.
HARD
VICTORIES
TRANSFORM
YOU.**
”

AND THERE IS AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION: enjoyment doesn't mean everything will always be easy.



There will still be difficult days. There will be workouts where your body feels heavy and your energy is low. There will be moments when you want to stop. There will be skills that take months to develop and movements that humble you repeatedly before you finally master them.

Those are the moments that transform you.

Easy victories feel good. They give you that immediate rush of accomplishment. They remind you that your work is paying off.

But hard victories require something deeper.

- They require patience.
- Discipline.
- Resilience.
- They require you to keep working when the excitement wears off.

EVERY TIME YOU PUSH THROUGH A CHALLENGE,

you walk away with something more valuable than the result itself: evidence that you are capable of doing hard things.

- Maybe you couldn't complete the movement today.
- Maybe you had to modify it.
- Maybe you needed more rest.
- Maybe you weren't as strong, fast or coordinated as you wanted to be.

It still counts.

Because fitness isn't about proving that you're already strong. It's about discovering how strong you can become.

So don't get trapped by the idea that getting fit means spending hours in a gym doing exercises you don't enjoy.

MOVE YOUR BODY.

- Find something that makes you smile.
- Find something that challenges you.
- Find something that makes you curious about what your body can do.
- And then keep going.



MEET THE *Founder*

Motherhood is the greatest adventure I never saw coming—and the one that has changed me in the most beautiful ways.



Kathryn Meghoo

MOTHER. ADVENTURER. FAITH-FILLED.



Before I became a mother, I don't think I could have truly understood what motherhood would be like. People can tell you about the sleepless nights, the sacrifices, the overwhelming love and the responsibility, but I don't think anything can fully prepare you for it until you are living it yourself.

The realities of motherhood can be both hilarious and overwhelming. Sometimes it looks like using the bathroom with the door open because privacy is suddenly a luxury. Sometimes it means realizing that, after six years of motherhood, you can probably count on one hand the number of times you have truly slept through the night. And sometimes it is the little things you never would have considered before becoming a mother—like getting sick and realizing you cannot simply put Vicks on your chest if you are breastfeeding because it may irritate your baby's eyes.

Before children, there is a certain freedom in only having to consider yourself. But motherhood changes that. Suddenly, even your own body, your time, your sleep and your decisions can affect someone else. There are moments when that can feel overwhelming, but somehow, alongside all the sacrifices, comes a love so deep that it changes you.

“

There are moments when it all feels overwhelming, but somehow, alongside all the sacrifices, comes a love so deep that it changes you.

”

Motherhood has certainly changed me.

I think I have become calmer, more affectionate and gentler. I have always had a feisty and strong personality—and I still do—but motherhood has softened me in ways I did not expect. I believe my capacity to care and have compassion for others has grown tremendously. Becoming a mother has taught me a different kind of patience and has made me more aware of the needs and feelings of the little people who depend on me.

Creating a life filled with adventure

One of the things that is most important to me as a mother is creating a life filled with adventure. For my children, I want them to experience amazing things and see that life can exist outside of the ordinary or expected. I want to raise courageous children with imagination, confidence and a willingness to try new things, even when they feel timid.

Some of my favourite memories have come from those adventures: taking my daughter kayaking when she was only two years old, camping in the bush with both of my children, and waking up early together to watch the sunrise.

I try to encourage them to step outside of their comfort zones and experience interesting things, while still keeping them safe. I hope these people who are curious about the world and confident enough to explore it.

Lessons from my children

However, as much as I want to teach my children, they have probably taught me just as much—if not more. One of the greatest lessons they have taught me is what unconditional love looks like from their perspective. There are times when I make mistakes as a mother. I am not perfect, and there are moments I wish I had handled differently. But my children have shown me such a beautiful capacity to forgive. At the end of the day, they still want their mother. They still love me, and there is something incredibly humbling and sweet about that.



Faith, balance & becoming me

Balancing motherhood, marriage, faith and my own identity has not always been easy. There have been times when I became so wrapped up in being a mother that I stopped making space for the things I personally enjoyed. But I have started to rediscover those parts of myself, and I think that has been good not only for me, but for my entire family.

My relationship with God has also changed throughout motherhood. Finding quiet time to sit alone and read my Bible is not always easy with children. But I have realised that perhaps it is not always meant to be done alone. If spending time in God's Word is important—and it is—then sometimes that means doing that in watching me seek God, they will learn to seek Him too.

“ *I hope that when they are older and facing difficult situations, they might think, 'If Mummy were here, she would pray. She would look for the answer in the Bible.'* ”

I don't know that there is anything I wish I had known before becoming a mother, because I truly don't think I could have understood motherhood without experiencing it myself.

The mother I aspire to be is not a perfect one. I simply want to be a safe, kind and loving mother—someone my children can rely on and feel comfortable talking to about anything. More than anything, I hope they remember a mother who had an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.

That is the legacy I hope to leave them: not the image of a perfect mother, but the example of a woman who loved them deeply, embraced life with them, and continually pointed them towards Christ.

Because while I am raising my children, I am still becoming the mother—and the woman—I hope God is calling me to be.



PHOTO CREDIT; RAFJAM CAFE -
IRISH TOWN, JAMAICA

Making Summer Memorable

This summer was quite an interesting one. We had many new experiences and created so many wonderful memories. It was completely different from our usual family vacations, and honestly, it reminded me that you do not have to travel far or spend a lot of money to make a summer special.

by **Britany McKnight-McIntosh**

Finance Accountant | Wife | Mom of Three |
Creator of Every Day In The Life Of A Mom

We started our summer with quick, simple, and affordable activities. These included new experiences such as Vacation Bible School, visits to the library, playdates at the park, birthday parties, and arts and crafts. We also took a trip to the mountains, enjoyed a group outing to the movie theatre, and made time to visit family.

Each activity gave us something different to look forward to. Some days were filled with adventure. On our first visit to the library, for example, my little ones were so excited that they walked in screaming. My eldest immediately whispered, "Shhh! We cannot scream in the library!" It was such a funny moment.

Other days were spent enjoying simple activities at home. Since I had the time, I created a daily schedule filled with activities such as crafting and baking. We even made ice cream from scratch and prepared bag juice, also known as "suck-suck," which they absolutely loved. These activities gave them many opportunities to learn, create, and use their little hands.

We tried to explore somewhere new whenever we had the chance. The children visited the post office and collected the mail for the first time, and they were so excited. When you have young children, even ordinary daily activities can be transformed into valuable teaching moments and exciting new experiences.



We also enjoyed going to the movies. Although it was noisy and they take a million bathroom breaks, it was another experience that became a treasured memory.

On cooler days we went outside and I tried to teach them how to play dandy shandy. That activity made me realize, I need to hit the gym because whew, they out me every chance they got.

Sometimes, we get caught up in the idea that a great summer requires expensive vacations, elaborate plans, or grand adventures. However, this summer showed us that the most meaningful moments can come from the simplest things. A trip to the library, an afternoon at the park, or a visit with family can become a favourite memory when we slow down and take the time to enjoy it.

“.....

The most meaningful moments can come from the simplest things.
.....



A Little Tip for Parents

Keep the learning momentum going!

During the summer, we like to go through the unused pages in the children's textbooks. Nothing too difficult or overwhelming—just a little reading, writing, thinking, and practice to keep their minds active and their skills fresh.

Once we receive their books for the new school term, we also start looking through them as September gets closer. This gives the children a chance to become familiar with what they will be learning, so when school begins, they are already warmed up and ready to go!

The goal isn't to turn summer into school. It's simply to keep those little minds engaged and ready for September.

No matter the activity, make this summer and every summer memorable. You do not have to do everything. You simply have to make time for the people you love, try something new, and appreciate the little moments along the way.

At the end of the summer, it is not always the places we visited or the things we bought that we remember most. It is the laughter we shared, the experiences we enjoyed, the people we spent time with, and the memories we created together.



The Masks We Wear.

Who We Truly Are Beneath the Roles

I woke up one day with a startling realization that I was out of touch with myself!! I could not remember who I was. What's more unsettling, was the fact that I couldn't remember if I had ever truly known myself! I don't know where the lines got crossed, but in that moment, I was faced with the fact that I have been wearing a mask. A safety mask. This begs the question: "Who are we beneath the many roles we have or the many 'hats we wear'?"

Human beings have an innate desire to belong, to feel accepted, included, and loved. This is instinctive, it doesn't have to be trained. Even Adam had this experience; he didn't feel like he belonged to the animal kingdom, so God had to create a helpmate for him.

After service one Sunday, I was watching some children playing. They were carefree, expressive, loud, imaginative and completely themselves. In essence they were alive. It occurred to me that at some point, one or more of them will do something that is not approved by an adult or even a friend; and they will choose to abandon their true selves to be accepted.

Perhaps you are that child.

Remember, you are no longer a powerless child, and rejection no longer decides your survival. There are no more sharp tooth predators waiting outside. You no longer need to fit in. As a matter of fact, the world is waiting to see what you are truly made of. Your light and purpose are needed.

It's time to ask these questions:

- Who am I?
- What do I want?
- What does my soul want?
- What gives me joy?
- What makes me happy?
- What brings me peace?
- What is my purpose on Earth?

The time to act is now!

Remember "the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Lao Tzu.

Stop wearing a mask and be your true self. Your life and the lives of others depend on it.



ARTICLE BY

Shareka Swaby



Have you abandoned yourself so many times that you have forgotten who you were before the world told you who to become?



Have you forgotten the games you loved to play, the music that moved your soul, the dreams that once felt possible, the way you expressed yourself before criticism shaped you?



Take a moment to reflect on these questions.

Piece by piece you have morphed into the person that is more palatable for everyone else. You have chosen the safe career path instead of the soul's career path. You fulfilled expectations instead of exploring possibilities. You did not have freedom of choice, freedom of opinion or freedom of expression. You were given expectations parading as choices and you did your best with what you were given.

But what if you didn't have to do that anymore? What if you could choose to be exactly who you desire to be?

Tomorrow Begins With Us

Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow

By Tanesha Blake

Growing up in Jones Town, Kingston 12, Jamaica, there is one conversation with my father that I have carried with me throughout my life. I remember him asking me to look around at my environment. Then he said, "We are not rich. You weren't born with a golden spoon in your mouth. The way you make it out is through education."

I may not have understood the weight of those words then, but I held on to them. They created in me a love for learning and the belief that where I started did not have to determine where I finished.

While my father taught me about formal education, my mother taught me another kind of lesson. Her formal education ended at age 14 when she became a teenage mother and was pregnant with me. In Jamaica in the 1980s, this was far from ideal, but she never allowed it to stop her from creating better opportunities for her girls.

My mother was extremely business-minded. From as early as I can remember, she ran a small business that helped supplement my father's income. She had a keen eye for opportunity and managed her books like a certified accountant. Before I understood cash flow or profit margins, I was watching my mother practise them.

“

*There is room for all of us.
Leadership is not only about getting into the room.
Sometimes it is about holding the door open for
the person coming behind you.*

I got my drive, resilience and love for entrepreneurship from her. My father taught me to listen so I could create choices. My mother taught me to work with what I had and create opportunities. I needed both.

Interestingly, I never planned to study business. I wanted to become a chef. When I applied to the University of Technology, Jamaica, the program I wanted was not available in the evening. I needed to work full-time during the day to pay for university, so I switched to Business Studies.

My parents had financed my education through high school, but university was something I had to figure out. For five years, I worked full-time at Jamaica National Building Society during the day and attended university in the evenings.

It was hard. It seemed like every semester I was at the dean's office asking for a pass to sit my final exams because I had not cleared my tuition balance. But quitting was never the plan. By the grace of God, I completed my degree while working full-time.

I am proud of that degree, but even more proud of what it represents: discipline, sacrifice and perseverance. Business Studies was initially my second choice, yet it opened doors into finance, marketing and corporate banking and gave me skills I would later use as an entrepreneur.

As my career developed, one belief remained constant: sharing what I know does not take anything away from me. Throughout my life, God has aligned me with people I call destiny helpers – people who offered advice, encouragement, connections or opportunities when I needed them.

My banking and finance experience in Jamaica and Canada gave me an

opportunity to pay that forward. I helped fellow Jamaicans navigate the Canadian banking system and connected qualified Jamaican banking professionals with opportunities in Canada. Some went on to gain employment at Bank of Montreal.

That reinforced something I still believe today: there is room for all of us. Leadership is not only about getting into the room. Sometimes it is about holding the door open for the person coming behind you.

I had always dreamed of creating a brand that celebrated my roots while reminding people that the little moments matter. We spend so much time moving from one goal to another that sometimes we forget to appreciate the laughter, conversations and quiet moments in between.

That belief became part of Aristocrat Candles Home Decor. Our hand-poured candles pay homage to my Jamaican roots through fragrances and memories that remind me of home. Our resin art carries that connection too, especially our beach boards inspired by Jamaica's coastline.

Eventually, I turned the skills I had learned through candle making and resin art into workshops. One of my major life goals has always been to speak on stages. One day I thought, why wait for the perfect stage? My workshops gave me a room full of people



I will never forget my first one. My nerves were on edge, and my biggest supporter – my mother – was sitting in the audience. At the end of the night, I almost had to pinch myself. The little girl from Kingston 12 was using her creativity and her voice to make an impact.

That night taught me to keep showing up. You may not be on the big stage yet, but you can still make an impact on the people already in the room.

Entrepreneurship brought another lesson. In 2023, our handcrafted cement candle vessels took off in the wholesale market. We were shipping to Australia, France and across the United States. We went from orders of 20 units to receiving an order for approximately 750.

It sounded like every entrepreneur's dream, but we were not ready. We had grown faster than our systems and production capacity, and I was working myself into exhaustion while other parts of the business were being neglected.



CREATING BEAUTY. BUILDING CONNECTIONS. CHANGING LIVES.

Every workshop is more than
a creative experience.
It's a moment to slow down,
connect and leave
feeling inspired.

Craft. Connect. Elevate.

RESIN ART WORKSHOPS BY ARISTOCRAT CREATIONS

ROOTED IN PURPOSE, *Creating What Matters*

I had always dreamed of creating a brand that celebrated my roots while reminding people that the little moments matter. We spend so much time moving from one goal to another that sometimes we forget to appreciate the laughter, conversations and quiet moments in between.

That belief became part of Aristocrat Creations Home Decor. Our hand-poured candles pay homage to my Jamaican roots through fragrances and memories that remind me of home. Our resin art carries that connection too, especially our beach boards inspired by Jamaica's coastline.

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It sounded like every entrepreneur's dream, but we were not ready. We had grown faster than our systems and production capacity, and I was working myself into exhaustion while other parts of the business were being neglected.

I made the difficult decision to reduce our wholesale capacity. It taught me one of my biggest business lessons: not all growth is healthy growth. Sometimes leadership means slowing down long enough to build the structure needed for where you are going.

In 2026, I repositioned Aristocrat Creations, connecting my Jamaican heritage more intentionally with our products, strengthening our systems and returning to workshops. That space also allowed me to explore artificial intelligence and how AI can simplify business processes and improve marketing. Once again, I find myself becoming a student. My classroom just looks different now.

Today, the greatest evidence of what my parents taught me is in my two daughters.

I have watched them adapt to a new environment and bloom where they have been planted. I see how seriously they take their education and how they refuse to settle for mediocrity. They understand that education can help them enter rooms they dream about.

When I look at them, I think about that conversation in Jones Town. I think about my father's words and my mother's resilience, and I realize those lessons did not end with me.

I used to think education was simply my way out. Today, I understand that it became my way forward. And once you move forward, I believe you have a responsibility to reach back.

Someone opened a door for me, so I hold doors open for others. Someone shared knowledge with me, so I share what I know. God placed destiny helpers along my journey, and I hope I can be a destiny helper in someone else's story.

My father passed the baton to me many years ago in Jones Town, Kingston 12. I carried it. Now, when I look at my daughters, I know I have passed it on. It is in good hands.





TANESHA BLAKE

FOUNDER, ARISTOCRAT CREATIONS HOME DECOR

Tanesha Blake is the founder of Aristocrat Creations Home Decor. With a professional background in banking, finance and marketing in Jamaica and Canada, she combines entrepreneurship, creativity and lifelong learning. Through her products, workshops and mentorship, she is passionate about sharing knowledge, creating opportunities and encouraging others to keep learning and building.

Life Between the Spotlight and Motherhood: Dacoda Mitchell's Balancing Act

To the public, she is Dacoda the actress—bringing characters to life and entertaining audiences. But when the cameras stop rolling, Dacoda Mitchell steps into one of her most important roles: **Mom.**

Life is a balancing act between scripts, sets, public appearances and motherhood. What is admirable, however, is that her son understands that Actor Dacoda and Mom Dacoda are two different people.

On screen, Dacoda may be loud, dramatic, funny or dangerous—all in the name of entertainment. At home, she is quirky, loves a good laugh and can also be quiet at times.

THE ATTENTION THAT COMES WITH THE TERRITORY

As her visibility grows, so does the attention from fans. A simple trip to the supermarket or a casual outing can quickly become a fan moment—complete with smiles, excited calls of her name and the familiar question:

"Can I get a picture?"

For Dacoda, those moments are humbling and entertaining. "Sometimes I'm just trying to go about my day, and suddenly someone recognises me," she says with a laugh. "Then the phone comes out, and it's picture time!"

While the attention can catch her off guard, she never takes it for granted. Every photo request and encouraging word is a reminder that her work has connected with someone.



“

You do not have to dim one part of yourself to make room for another.

A woman can be the dreamer, the creator, the star and the mother—because the same heart that carries a dream can also carry a family.

”

MOTHERHOOD KEEPS HER GROUNDED

Yet motherhood keeps her grounded. At home, her son sees beyond the actress, the characters and the camera-ready smile. He sees Mom.

It's a dynamic that keeps Dacoda centered. The late nights on set, the lines to memorize, the travel and the events—none of it outweighs the moments that matter most: school drop-offs, deep talks, shared laughter and ordinary days that mean everything.

STAYING TRUE TO BOTH ROLES

Dacoda is intentional about protecting her peace and her presence. She knows the importance of boundaries, of saying no when necessary and of making space for rest, reflection and her family.

"It's easy to get caught up in the noise," she shares. "But I always remind myself why I started. My purpose is bigger than the spotlight. It includes the little hands I hold at home."

A BALANCING ACT, NOT A COMPROMISE

To Dacoda Mitchell, balance isn't about doing everything perfectly—it's about showing up fully, in every season. She embraces each role with gratitude and grace.

She continues to inspire aspiring actors, working women and mothers alike—proving that you can chase big dreams and build a strong home at the same time.

Different roles. One heart. One purpose.

DACODA MITCHELL
MOTHER • JAMAICAN ACTRESS • EVENTS HOST



"WHEN SOMETHING IS IMPORTANT ENOUGH, YOU DO IT
EVEN IF THE ODDS ARE NOT IN YOUR FAVOR"

JEROME TAYLOR, HAVASARTWORLD



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THAT'S WHAT I WANT YOU TO NAME IT

A SIGNATURE COCKTAIL BY
Sophie-Ann Lyon

A vibrant, tropical cocktail that tells a story with every layer—bright, bold and unforgettable.



Flavour Profile

- Tropical
- Fruity
- Refreshing
- Slightly Sweet
- Bright Finish

Sophie-Ann Lyon is a 25-year-old with over six years of experience working with alcohol.

Her journey into bartending began unexpectedly while working at a bubble tea store, where customers kept coming back for the drinks she created. What started as a simple job quickly grew into a passion for creating drinks and memorable experiences.

Outside of bartending, Sophie-Ann primarily works in events and IT, which allows her to blend her creative and technical sides in different spaces.

When it comes to mixology, she believes there's so much more to a drink than simply combining ingredients. She enjoys experimenting with unexpected flavours and combinations, creating drinks that stand out and have their own character.

“

I love creating drinks that spark curiosity before the first sip and leave an impression long after.”

— Sophie-Ann Lyon

For Sophie-Ann, the most exciting part of bartending is the ability to tell a story through a drink. From its presentation to the flavours within it, she believes a great cocktail should spark **curiosity** before the first sip and leave an **impression** long after.

INGREDIENTS

- Grenadine
- 1/2 oz of passion jam
- 2 lychee
- Mint leaves
- 2 oz of Vodka
- 1 oz of triple sec
- 1 oz of clear syrup
- 1/2 oz of lime juice

METHOD

- 1** Muddle the lychee and the mint in the shaker along with the lime juice and the clear syrup.
- 2** Add the passion jam, vodka and triple sec in the shaker with ice and shake well.
- 3** In a rock glass, add a splash of grenadine and then ice and slowly strain the mixture on top.
- 4** Garnish with a pineapple slice.



Sophie's Tip

Great cocktails are more than just ingredients—they're experiences. Don't be afraid to experiment and make each drink your own.

**MORE THAN A DRINK.
IT'S A STORY.**



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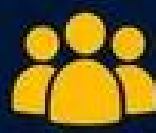
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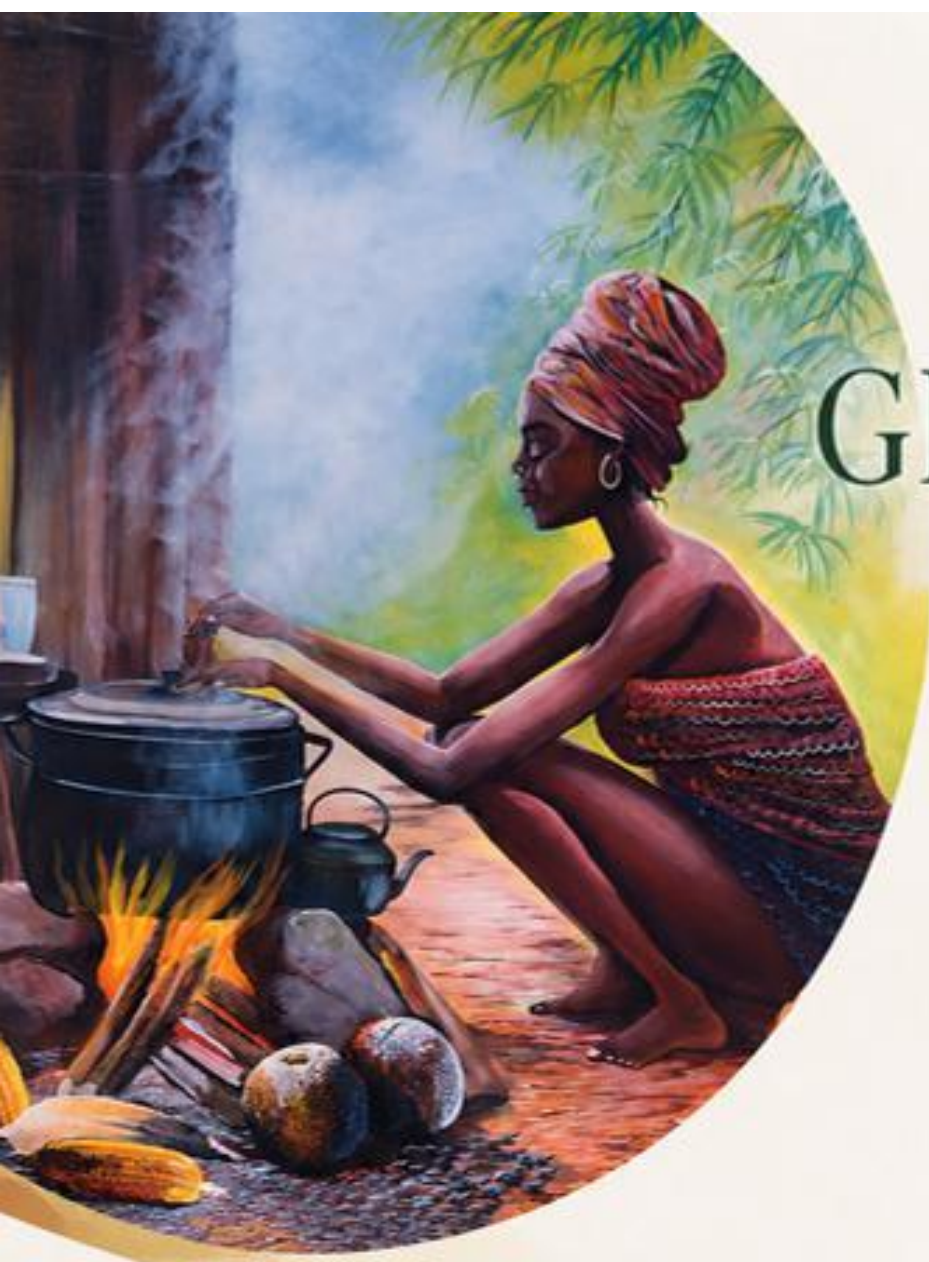
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into enough, and more.”

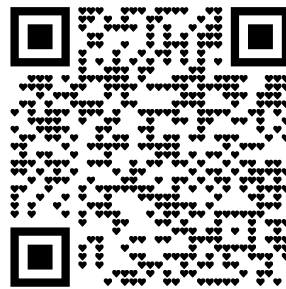
– Melody Beattie

ONE SMALL STEP

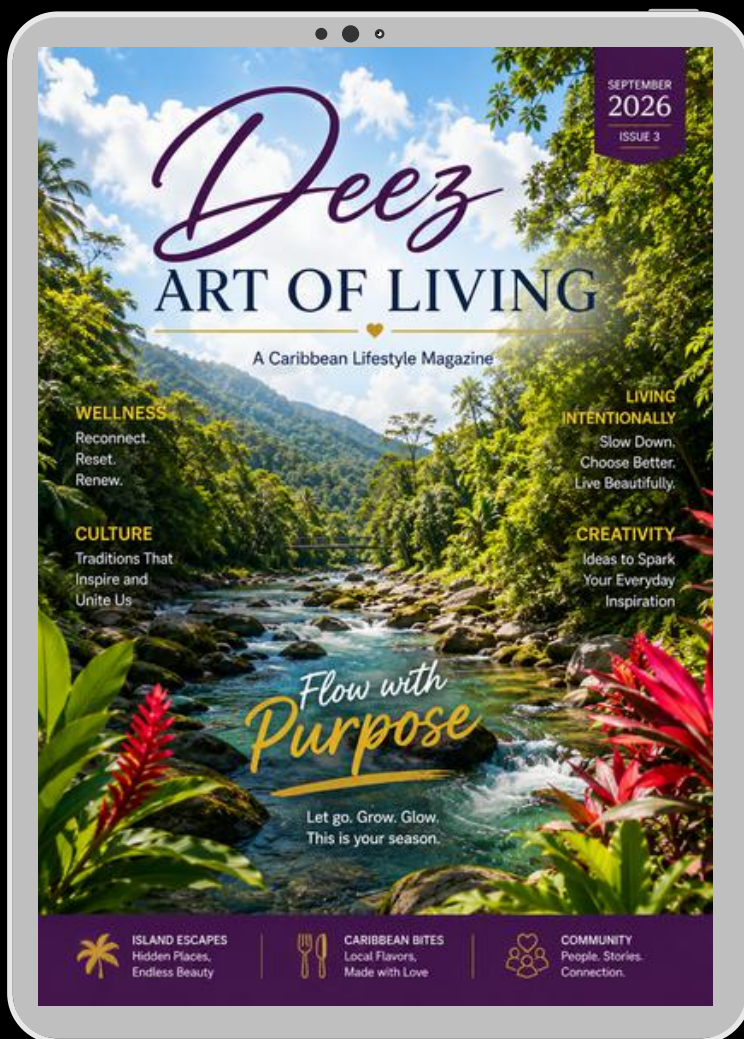
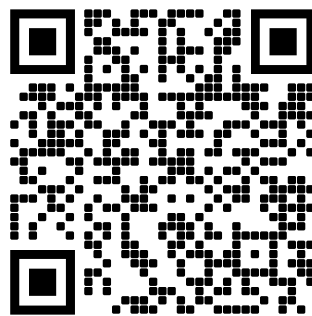
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2026

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Deez

ART OF LIVING

A Caribbean Lifestyle Magazine

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Traditions That
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