



Reggae Artist Taj Weekes Brings Soccer Equipment to Children of St. Lucia Through his Charity, They Often Cry Outreach

St. Lucian recording artist Taj Weekes launches TOCO SOCCER in St. Lucia through his children's charity, They Often Cry Outreach (TOCO) on Friday, May 29th during a press conference at Olympic House in Castries.

New York, NY - May 25, 2009 - St. Lucian roots reggae artist Taj Weekes launches **TOCO SOCCER** in St. Lucia, through his charity, They Often Cry Outreach (TOCO), by bringing hundreds of soccer balls, uniforms and equipment to both primary and secondary schools and local charity groups on the island. The soccer gear will be distributed during a press conference in the Conference Room at the Olympic Committee, Olympic House in Barnard Hill on Friday, May 29th at 1:00 pm.

Built on the belief that one soccer ball can be not only a source of joy to a child but also improve health, self-discipline, self-esteem and confidence, TOCO SOCCER was inspired by Weekes' own childhood in St. Lucia, where he experienced first-hand the benefits of the game. Building these traits in children strengthens their ability to move through society with the knowledge that they can live beyond their circumstances and take responsibility for their own health and well-being, an important element in diabetes prevention, so prevalent in St. Lucia today.

Through TOCO's recent efforts, **BIOLA University** of Southern California has pledged five annual scholarships to qualified soccer players who exhibit strong grade point averages and testing scores. These scholarships will be awarded to St. Lucian students through TOCO SOCCER and are an exciting asset to TOCO's mission, which includes supporting St. Lucia's school soccer programs as well as providing soccer equipment to individuals and small organizations who have already formed or want to form youth teams.

TOCO is collaborating with **RISE (St. Lucia) Inc.** for this event and is honored to have the support of **Dr. Jacqueline Bird** and **Dr. Stephen King**, the latter whom will be addressing the group at the press conference. RISE shares TOCO's common goal of supporting and engaging youth so that they may take the lead in their own development and contribute something of value to the community as well.

TOCO is proud to announce the support of the following individuals and organizations who are expected to be in attendance at the press conference: **Mr. Donovan Williams**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Transformation, Youth and Sports; **Mr. Richard Peterkin**, President, St. Lucia Olympic Committee; and **Dr. Marcus Day**, Director, Caribbean Drug & Alcohol Research Institute. Several regional educators are also expected to attend the conference and accept equipment on behalf of their schools.

TOCO's heartfelt thanks go to: **Mr. Brian Louisy**, Executive Director of the St. Lucia Chamber of Commerce, for his efforts as liaison between agencies to make this event possible; **Mr. Martin Rojas**, owner of shipping company CaribTrans, for shipping the eleven donation boxes to St. Lucia gratis; **Mr. Trevor Philips**, Trevor Philips Agencies, Ltd., broker who is managing clearance of donation boxes through customs; and **Mr. Freeman Stevens**, Documentary Filmmaker & Photographer, who has generously donated his time and talents to capture footage of the press conference and subsequent meetings for an ongoing documentary about TOCO.

They Often Cry Outreach (TOCO) was founded in 2008 by Taj Weekes in effort to help underprivileged, at-risk and orphaned children in the Caribbean and beyond through sport, enrichment, educational and wellness programs. With the support of the **World Association of Former United Nation Interns and Fellows (WAFUNIF)**, the **International Consortium of Caribbean Professionals (ICCP)** has named Taj Weekes a Goodwill Ambassador to the Caribbean in recognition of his efforts through TOCO.

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