



U.S. Embassy Nassau

2016 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Essay Contest

NAME: Waynisha Saunders

10th grade, C.V. Bethel High School

ESSAY TITLE: A Social Cure, For A National Ill. How can peace and harmony be achieved here in The Bahamas?

Within developing nations like The Bahamas, there will come social ills. Social ills such as low morals, weak family structures, and a lack of love can impede a country's development, economic growth and furthermore harmony amongst citizens - ultimately forming national ills. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said it best, "we must come

to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience." While we must face the reality that there is not one specific way to cease the brutal crime and violence that has polluted our once peaceful nation, we can unite to create strategic plans to guide The Bahamas back to the bedrock in which our country was built upon.

Research depicts that past generations had a multiplicity of civic, religious, cultural and sporting programs that aided in the molding and imparting of morals in children. There has to be a return to strengthen and expand these programs that helped shape and mold the character of youth in our nation. Such organizations can teach children about proper conduct and conflict resolution strategies from a young age. These organizations should also have some measure of authority to impose discipline. Every human being has an innate inclination towards evil and wrong-doing. Therefore, parental skills are vital in order to positively shape the minds of children. The scripture Proverbs 22:6 echoes that parents should "train up a child in a way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart." The foundation of any strong society is based upon healthy families and good values. When there is a weakness in the family unit, it negatively impacts society at large; and as a result 'at-risk-youth' are becoming involved in anti-social behavior. Parents should be held accountable for the actions of their children, and enforce discipline when there is a violation of moral and ethical rules in society. There should also be classes to assist parents who struggle to effectively raise children. Before we can restore peace and harmony to our land, we must deal with the core issue, the disintegration of the family.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend" hence, we must be our brother's keeper. Studies confirm that people who commit heinous crimes and disrupt the peace and harmony in society, are those who have been deprived of love. It is our responsibility to embrace our wayward brother or sister with love, which will cure many of our social ills. I am reminded by the words of Dr. King that "Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle." We must work ferociously at integrating these solution especially when it becomes cumbersome. We must be resolved that with parental training, human development organizations, state legislation and above all, love for one another - there is no doubt that peace and harmony can be restored to our Bahama land.