

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **LOCAL DISABILITY GROUPS UNITE TO SPREAD AWARENESS OF DISABILITIES**

More than ten local schools, nonprofit organisations and government programmes that serve persons with disabilities will join forces to stage the first-ever Antigua and Barbuda Disability Awareness Fair that will be held on SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2008, from 8 am to 3 pm at Heroes Park in St. Johns. The goals of the event are to educate the public about disabilities; to increase awareness of and access to local resources for and about persons with disabilities; and to reduce negative stereotypes of persons with disabilities. Featured activities will include information sessions, entertainment, motivational speeches, and inclusive children's activities.

*"This is a revolutionary event in that it is the first time in many years that all of these groups have united their voices to work toward the common goals of improving public awareness of disability issues and to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities,"* said Mr. Leslie Emanuel, Regional Development Officer of Disabled Peoples' International North America and the Caribbean (DPI NAC), the organisation that is coordinating the event.

*"The best way to combat stigma and discrimination is through education,"* added Mindy Nissenberg, a Peace Corps Volunteer working with DPI NAC to develop the Disability Awareness Fair as well as other public awareness initiatives in Antigua and Barbuda. *"This event will provide people in Antigua and Barbuda with much-needed information, and open people's eyes to the vast and varied abilities of persons with disabilities,"* she added.

In addition to DPI NAC, other confirmed presenters at the Disability Awareness Fair include Adele School, AIDS Secretariat, Antigua & Barbuda Association of Parents of Exceptional Children, Antigua & Barbuda Association of Persons with Disabilities, Industrial Workshop for the Blind, Kids Unlimited School, National Association for Mental Health, National Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for the Disabled, School for the Deaf and Unit for the Blind. The Leo Club will be facilitating children's activities. Entertainment will be provided by Total Kayos, a local hip-hop and reggae group whose two lead singers have visual disabilities, and Chickie's Hi-Fi, who has graciously offered to play free of charge.

More groups are expected to sign on within the coming week.