

## Digicel makes the holiday bright for Ellerton special needs unit

ALL throughout the year Digicel is involved with charitable efforts and this past Christmas season was no exception. The Digicel team pulled together to bring smiles to the faces of the children of the Ellerton Primary Special Needs Unit, by showering the students with gifts for the holiday.

This heart-warming initiative was introduced by the team members as part of the company's charitable outreach, which saw team members personally shopping for the perfect gifts for each child. This gift-giving is a continuation of an ongoing relationship with Ellerton, where in the past Digicel has assisted with the donation of tablets and painting of the classroom,s as well as a visit by the CPL players to give a pep talk to the student body.

During the visit, Alex Tasker, Digicel Barbados CEO said, "I am proud to have team members



Digicel's Marketing Manager, Sonia Hall-Hunte (right) and Retail Manager, Yasmine Millington (left) with students from the Ellerton Special Needs Unit as they celebrate.

who understand the aim of this company to be a good corporate citizen. That is why I gave my full support to this particular outreach when it was proposed to me, as it goes hand in hand with the company's community

spirit."

Head teacher Maxine Thorpe was thrilled by the cheer the activity brought to the students. She explained that they were eagerly looking forward to it for weeks and they were definitely

not disappointed. Teacher Heather Wiggins was also instrumental in coordinating the successful event.

Digicel has plans to continue

their role in the facilitation of education across Barbados, to ensure that children have opportunities to excel in their chosen fields.

## More opportunities needed

NIFCA Gold Award winner, Kerry-Lyn Coppin, producer of 'Wild Flower' believes, "the challenge in the creative industry is that they are institutions that provide education which is great, but there needs to be opportunities for young perons to showcase their art to the country and then to the world."

The EBCCI graduate spoke to *The Barbados Advocate* last week at the Barbados Independent Film Festival where her emotional film "Wild Glower" which depicts the journey of having an absentee father showed at the Olympus. She said, "It is always overwhelming to see your film start to play, while I was watching it I remember saying when I was younger watching films at Olympus, I never thought my film would be on a big screen. Wild Flower is about an absentee father and I just wanted to share my story and I realised doing my research how many people this story touched. There was no funding it was a

lot of favors and at the Errol Barrow Centre, students were able to access equipment. I have not produced anything since this film."

Coppin who is still passionate about film producing called for more private sector investment to make this a viable industry that you can sustain yourself and make a contribution to the economy. According to her, "there needs to be more awareness of the process and even the festival shows the interest that persons have in local film and the private sector will make a return on their investments. It is also a cultural mind set to start to see these areas as important and viable and not just push young persons to go towards a corporate lifestyle when they are so many creative people out there. They now offer 'creative' subject areas in school but when you leave school they are limited internships, no access to finance and you just can't keep asking for favors, when you look around the world film is a huge industry

but it needs that push."

Keisha Salmon, Director of Communications and Audience Development of Point of View Documentary Series on PBS in New York City, who attended the festival told the *The Barbados Advocate*, "I believe the local films are really well done and because I'm from a documentary world I want to see more documentaries coming from the Caribbean as it is not a doc heavy region and more female produced documentaries. My advice for film makers in the region to get their work out there, they have to think of themselves beyond Barbados this is just the start there is a bigger world out there that needs this type of international film. It is important to participants in Film Festivals because you may get that opportunity. When I spoke to Kerry-Lyn Coppin I told her this is a small sample set of what the bigger story is regarding her film, the subject matter of her film can touch persons around the world..." (NB)

## Develop co-production treaties

SIR TREVOR CARMICHAEL, Co-Director of the Barbados Independent Film Festival (BIFF) believes that the film industry has great potential, however, he suggested that in Barbados we should develop co-production treaties.

Speaking to *The Barbados Advocate* following the festival which took place from January 9-14 2018, he reiterated, "we must seek to develop co-production treaties but we must first look to places such as Canada, USA and Britain, the traditional financial allies, however we should look to co-production treaties with places such as Cuba and other countries where we have double taxation treaties and where we have all of the financial protection treaties which gives the necessary protection for investments. When we enter into serious coproduction treaties that will in itself stimulate the business of movie making right here in Barbados and that is an important element that must take place. In terms of the enabling environment to push the industry, it is very much here, but something such as co-

production treaties will stimulate that environment in a significant way. Our effort here with the Barbados Independent Film Festival and the other festival that takes place in November, these two festivals play a significant role in helping to develop that local industry."

Dr. Carmichael added, "The Barbados Independent Film Festival which is in its second year continues to improve. We have a larger number of producers, directors but more importantly we have a more substantial content in terms of the interaction between local and foreign film makers, that interaction is extremely successful in terms of developing the local film industry. The attendance has grown as well, where the audiences are is happy and we are filling our venues and we have more venues this year than last year ... We are a nonprofit trust and our aim is really to put back in the festival anything that we earn after we pay our expenses, but we could not do this without the generous support of our many sponsors and volunteers..." (NB)