What is PALS?

The letters PALS stands for Peace and Love in Schools. PALS Jamaica is a not-for-profit foundation dedicated to changing attitudes towards violence and promoting conflict resolution in the Jamaican society.

PALS HISTORY
PALS came about as a result of the increasing concern that many shared about the high levels of interpersonal violence in the society and the resulting costs to the nation in social and economic terms. The Foundation became operational in 1994.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Contribute to creating healthy learning environments in which students feel safe, are respected, learn alternatives to violence, have high self-esteem, give respect, are tolerant, understand differences and work together as a community
2. Raise the levels of consciousness of parents and members of the wider society in respect of conflict resolution.

THE PROGRAMME
The activities of the programme include:

1. Implement conflict resolution programmes primarily in the elementary school system
2. Train teachers in the knowledge and skills of positive conflict resolution.

THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAMME
Building community and creating nurturing classroom climates; understanding and resolving conflict; understanding the role of perception; understanding and managing anger and effective communication.

The PALS programme is operational in approximately 250 primary schools across the island and in 6 high schools. PALS has trained 300 students across 16 schools in mediation skills.

PALS has conducted sensitisation and training workshops in selected communities.
PROGRAMME IMPACT

The writers of an institutional assessment of PALS carried out in late 2001 had this to say about the programme:

"...the PALS programme has had a positive impact on the target groups and communities in which it has been introduced. Some of the observed results of the programme include a positive effect in behaviour of school children, improvement in classroom behaviour, strong community support for PALS and significant impact on parent behaviour in and attendance at parent teachers meetings. It is clear that the programme has had a significant level of success in achieving its objectives of reducing crime and violence in the school system and implementing effective conflict resolution techniques." (Institutional Assessment of Peace and Love in Schools. August 2000, prepared for the Planning Institute of Jamaica).

Description:
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