At the NEF, we believe that all children and young people, with or without disabilities, are equally entitled to the level of social inclusion, education and care that fulfils their fundamental human right to live a dignified life.
Our country has a history of segregating or totally excluding children with disabilities from a young age. This is something the Nathan Ebanks Foundation (NEF) has set out to change. But building the road to human independence and dignity is paved with rocks. For us, it involves leaving the premise of being a developing country behind and consciously redefining ourselves as a developed nation with equal opportunities for everyone. Only in this way can we give all children the chance they deserve. Only when children with disabilities are included in the community, able to participate fully and empowered to contribute to their country can they realise their full potential. This is the minimum that we owe them, surely?”

Christine Staple Ebanks, President and Founder
Nathan Ebanks Foundation
There are an estimated 200,000 children living with disability in Jamaica and a poor social system in place to integrate them.

Children and their families live without any hope of receiving the support they desperately need.
The Nathan Ebanks Foundation was set up by Christine Staple-Ebanks and her husband, in honour of their son Nathan. Nathan was diagnosed with cerebral palsy in 2005 at the age of nine months. The mission of the foundation is inspired by this one mother’s quest to ensure her son and all children with disabilities and special needs in Jamaica are included in the community, able to participate fully and empowered to contribute so as to realise their full potential.

Starting at a grassroots level, capturing the attention of parents and teachers and moving on to professionals, school heads and policy makers, Christine’s innovative attitude towards enabling society to include and empower persons with disabilities is now the vision of the Nathan Ebanks Foundation.
OUR VISION OF THE FUTURE: TO SEE ALL CHILDREN OF VARIED ABILITIES AND TALENT, GROW, THRIVE, LEARN AND UNCOVER THEIR OWN UNIQUE GIFTS.

98.8% of Jamaicans believe education to be a basic right and yet

76% of Jamaicans with disabilities have never taken an exam

In the Jamaican education system 77% of institutions report being totally inaccessible and 86% having no bathroom facilities for people with disabilities

Currently 90% of children with disabilities do not attend school
The NEF works for the inclusion, participation and empowerment of children with disabilities and special needs.

To this end we:

1. **TRAIN** policy-makers, teachers, parents, and administrators

2. **ADVOCATE** at the highest level of the society - government, media, civil society and private sector so as to broaden the base of support for children living with disabilities.

3. **PARTNER** with individuals, key local institutions such as the Ministry of Education, Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities and Child Development Agency (CDA), and international organisations such as Full Circle Systems Inc., Multi-Agency International Training and Support (MAITS UK), Rangoonwala Foundation (UK) Organization of American States (OAS)/Organization of Women of the Americas (OWA) to deliver developmental programmes to the children and families.

4. **CONDUCT RESEARCH** on key sector issues to inform policy makers and local practitioners.

5. **PROVIDE RESOURCE & SUPPORT** for the nation’s educational institutions and agencies creating and integrating study plans for children with disabilities.

To achieve these objectives the NEF works through:

- Centres of academic research
- A network of disability communities (local, regional, national and international)
- Local agencies involved in policy making and project implementation
- Key private sector organizations for sponsoring and promotion exercises.
If the proverb is true that it ‘takes a village to raise a child’, then this village carries even more weight. Children and families living with disabilities in Jamaica have virtually no support around them. They lack any sense of community - so we want to build one for them. All villages matter. This one more than most!

The village developmental centre pilot project seeks to establish a support framework for children with physical and neurological disabilities in Jamaica. With your help we want to establish a multi-purpose development centre, using a community-based model, to provide development services and support that includes art, music, physical, speech and language and occupational therapies.

When completed the centre should act as a beacon project - setting a benchmark for any similar projects that succeed it with best practices no support material readily available for the government and other key social players.
The Nathan Ebanks Foundation is trying to raise its international appeal. That's why we have reached out to voices that speak for us both on- and offline, down the road or on the other side of the world. These are our NEF ambassadors.

Our NEF Ambassadors aren’t just hanging out in chat rooms, posting and blogging. Our ambassadors are now the centre of one of our international fundraising campaigns – they are so good we have built a whole campaign around them. Our ambassadors carry online badges to show how we value them, are awarded appreciation certificates and briefed regularly on our progress because we cherish their involvement and recognise that in this day and age one voice can speak to and for millions.
Stories that Matter

Mrs Christine Staple-Ebanks acts as a beacon of hope and an inspiration to others here in Jamaica.

Mother

On behalf of the Ministry of Health’s team, I would like to thank the NEF for supporting the activities commemorating national child and adolescent mental health awareness day.

Director, Ministry of Health and Environment

I am the mother of a young daughter with Downs Syndrome. I used to think I was being punished for something. Now I realise that me and my daughter have a purpose on earth.

Mother

Your session was really an eye-opener! Very informative and stimulating! I can assure you that I will be utilizing the strategies learnt today.

Vocational Training Instructor

The Early Childhood Commission (ECC) congratulates the Nathan Ebanks Foundation on its continuous thrust in highlighting the importance of Special Education through various conferences, workshops and expositions.

Acting Executive Director, ECC
Actions That Count

2 is the number of training and professional development institutes that have been created by the NEF since 2007.

8 is also the number of annual Special Education Conferences that have been held so far of which an estimated 960 people attended or have been impacted.

With more than 20 parenting forums, we have trained more than 500 parents. More than 40 schools have been visited and offered a voice of inspiration, training or technical assistance.

The first Special Education Module entitled “Teaching Students with Exceptionalities in Mainstream Classroom” was rolled out to the Ministry of Education, training 30 master teachers who will train a subsequent 2,000 teachers over 3 years.

The NEF has sat on 6+ high-level committees to inform on policy and practice. These include the National Disability Advisory Board and the Ministry of Education Special Education Consultation, the Jamaican Council for Persons with Disabilities Stakeholders’ Group.
Thank you for downloading this media kit. You can find more information such as press releases, bios, and links to what other organisations are publishing about us on our website www.nefjamaica.org/press.