



# MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE

Quarterly Newsletter of The National Council on Substance Abuse

Minister of Home Affairs and Information,  
Wilfred Abrahams



## We Cater to Families of Victims of Substance Abuse

The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) not only caters to persons who experience problematic drug use, but also for their families.

This was recently reiterated by Minister of Home Affairs and Information, Hon. Wilfred Abrahams as he encouraged families of drug users to seek counselling through the NCSA to learn ways to help their loved ones break the habit.

He was at the time addressing a dedication ceremony of the Training Room and Life Skills Centre and the Ishmael and Margaret Counselling Rooms, in honour of the late Ishmael "Jim" Morris, and the late Margaret Durant, both former NCSA employees. The Minister while applauding the NCSA for its efforts in helping those who are abusing substances,

said "We often see the challenges with the persons who are suffering from substance abuse, and quite often the focus is on them. How do we deal with them; how do we treat them; if they are in prison, how do we rehabilitate them?" He said in many cases the society is not aware of the "living hell family members of the persons who are substance abusers go through. The children who might be abused; the spouses who are trying to hold a family and a marriage together; the parents who are watching their children spiral out of control and can't even manage to pull them back."

He encouraged the staff of the NCSA that as they go forward as an organization to not "hide your light under a bushel, but to utilize all available means to spread the word of their services. Highlight both the success stories as well as the negative outcomes, so that our people, especially the youth, are made painfully aware of the possible outcomes of ill-advised choices."



## NCSA Life Skills Centre Is Open

The National Council on Substance Abuse is intent on enhancing its role as the demand prevention authority in Barbados in the fight against all forms of substance abuse and mis-use.

To that end, NCSA's Directors, Management and Staff will continue relating to, learning from and collaborating with fellow substance abuse practitioners locally, regionally and internationally.

Chairman of the NCSA Mr. Hadford Howell says efforts at reducing the mental, physical and psychological damage caused by substance abuse will be pursued through NCSA's publication of results from evidence-based research, advocacy, training and interactions with stake holders, in educational facilities, workplaces and in communities.

Mr. Howell made these remarks as he spoke at the dedication ceremony of the Training Room and Life Skills Centre and the Ishmael and Margaret Counselling Rooms, in honour of the late Ishmael "Jim" Morris, and the late Margaret Durant. The Training Room he said is an asset and will be available for use by public and private sector entities and other organizations who wish to partner with the NCSA particularly in pursuing drug prevention education initiatives.

## From Research to Action: Focused Approaches to Crime Prevention

Submitted By **Dr. Johnathan Yearwood - Research & Information Officer**



**Dr Johnathan Yearwood**  
Research and Information Officer

That was theme of a two-day symposium hosted by The Office of the Principal, The University of the West Indies (The UWI), Cave Hill Campus, and The UWI Centre for Criminal Justice and Security (CCJS), in collaboration with CarISECURE 2.0.

Dr Johnathan Yearwood, National Council on Substance Abuse Research and Information Officer joined local and international representatives and youth representatives drawn from UWI, the Barbados Police Service, the Barbados Prisons, The Probation Department, the Child Care Board, Youth Sports and Community Empowerment, the Barbados Bar Association, The Criminal Justice Research and Planning Unit, The United Nations Office for the Eastern Caribbean Area, UNDP, UNICEF and USAID for the sessions.

According to Dr. Yearwood the topics covered allowed for a better understanding of the workings of the criminal justice system and social work in the context of adolescent risk and protective factors for substance abuse and delinquency, and child resilience.

“As a selected discussant, I participated in two-panel discussions: Risk and Protective Factors of Adolescents Using Substances in Barbados with a focus on marijuana and Psychosocial interventions for the incarcerated and non-incarcerated. Findings from the NCSA surveys, studies, and evaluations from 2010 to 2023 informed the discussion. Some key points presented include:



### Risk factors for adolescents using marijuana

- ◇ Adolescents who use marijuana over the long term can experience marijuana dependence leading to chronic respiratory symptoms, mental health, and psychotic symptoms.
- ◇ Adolescents who frequently smoke marijuana are at risk for poor school performance, failure to complete school, impaired work performance or involvement in the criminal justice system.
- ◇ Adolescents who consume marijuana edibles may eliminate respiratory risks, but the delayed onset of psychoactive effect may result in larger than intended doses and acute adverse effects.



### Protective factors for adolescents to mitigate marijuana use

- ◇ Preventing use or delaying its onset from adolescence until young adulthood.
- ◇ Well-designed drug education programmes in schools with multiple aims to develop social competencies, improved decision-making, and correct normative misconceptions that drug use is common among peers.
- ◇ Increased efforts to explore the wider environmental issues that contribute to drug use including lower student attendance, skipping school frequently, and lower motivation to complete

secondary education.

### Psychosocial interventions for the incarcerated and non-incarcerated

- ◇ A need to strengthen the continuity of care for offenders in the community to reduce the number of offenders relapsing into drug use and recidivation.
- ◇ Interventions to address substance abuse issues must be resolved before inmates are introduced to skill-building initiatives in prison and the community.
- ◇ A need to focus on interventions that work to reduce reoffending and substance abuse and avoid interventions that are not effective.

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ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

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**DESIGN & LAYOUT: Ms. Deanzer Roberts**

## Taking Another Look At Tobacco

Submitted By Mrs. Wendy Greenidge: Substance Abuse Prevention Officer



Mrs. Wendy Greenidge  
Substance Abuse Prevention Officer

May 31st, World No Tobacco Day, is a reminder to us all to protect ourselves and our families from the effects of tobacco and tobacco products.

After many years of scientific research, public awareness campaigns and advocacy at various levels, there was a global acceptance that tobacco is a public health issue that is harmful not only to the user but also to those sharing the environmental space.

While tobacco is still a legal product, the push for “smoke free” air has resulted in the banning of smoking in public spaces and workplaces locally and in countries around the world. The display of no-smoking signs and warning labels on tobacco product packaging are now familiar and accepted features. Reports indicate that these efforts have resulted in a gradual decline in tobacco usage.

As these efforts to regulate use have been successful, and tobacco maintains its legal status, some may question if there is still a need to discuss tobacco. Unfortunately, we have learnt that legal does not always mean safe and the realities of the harms associated with tobacco use are still evident.

The World Health Organization reported that tobacco was responsible for 8.7 million deaths globally in 2019. Tobacco use has also been identified as a leading risk factor for non-communicable diseases (NCDs), mainly heart attacks, strokes, cancers and chronic respiratory diseases. Levels of NCDs in Barbados are uncomfortably high, therefore as a major contributor to preventable deaths and disabilities from NCDs, the discussion and actions to reduce tobacco use must continue.

Anecdotal reports and observations of the local situation indicate that the younger population are showing more of an interest in electronic cigarettes or vape, as opposed to traditional cigarettes.

Originally marketed by tobacco companies as a “healthier” alternative to tobacco cigarettes, vape liquids which contain nicotine have the same potential to cause harm. Electronic cigarettes are relatively recent products and scientists have not had the opportunity to fully conduct studies to determine the long-term effects.



However, the evidence is mounting that all forms of vape, including the flavoured liquids which may have low, or no amounts of nicotine can damage the body with increasing reports amongst users of acute lung injury, shortness of breath and abdominal pain.

This World No Tobacco Day, the National Council on Substance Abuse encourages everyone to take another look at tobacco. If you are considering quitting, there is help available. You can speak to your medical doctor or call us at 535-6272 for advice and counselling support.



- Secondhand smoke exposure occurs when people breathe in smoke breathed out by people who smoke or from burning tobacco products. People may be exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes, places of work and in public places.
- Did you know that a person under 18 years should not advertise a tobacco product or be used in the advertising of a tobacco product? It is also illegal for a person under 18 years to buy or sell Fanta (dried tobacco leaves).
- The nicotine and other poisonous chemicals in tobacco can cause lots of diseases like heart problems and some kinds of cancer. If you smoke, you damage your lungs and heart each time you light up. It also can make it more difficult for blood to move around in the body, so smokers may feel tired and cranky.

## Vaping Is Not Just Flavoured Air

Submitted By **Ms. Jennifer Baptiste: Substance Abuse Prevention Officer**



**Ms. Jennifer Baptiste**  
Substance Abuse Prevention Officer

**E**-cigarettes have grown in popularity among young people and Barbados is no exception. Findings from a study conducted by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revealed that, about 1 in 10 or more than 2.5 million U.S. middle (ages 11-13) and high school students (ages 14-18) used e-cigarettes within a 30-day period. In Barbados, anecdotal evidence suggests that young people have access to vapes through friends and family members and they believe that “vaping is just flavoured air”.

E-cigarettes are battery operated devices which are used to inhale nicotine - an addictive substance found in conventional cigarettes or tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) – the psycho-active substance found in marijuana. E-cigarettes are more popularly known as vapes, vape pens, mods and tanks. They usually come in a variety of shapes and sizes and may resemble items like flash drives, pens and everyday stationary supplies. The liquid used in vapes is called e-juice, e-liquid or vape juice and the aerosol that is produced when this liquid is heated contains several harmful substances including:

### Nicotine

A highly addictive substance found in conventional cigarettes. Using tobacco products containing nicotine especially during adolescence and young adulthood may cause addiction and harm to the developing brain.

### Propylene glycol

A clear, odourless liquid which is traditionally used as an antifreeze and a food additive. Propylene glycol is used as a base in e-liquids and turns into vapor when heated and produces propylene oxide, a known carcinogen (a substance or organism capable of causing cancer).

### Nickel, tin, lead and other heavy metals

Heavy metal toxicity may damage functioning of lungs, brain, liver, kidneys and other organs.

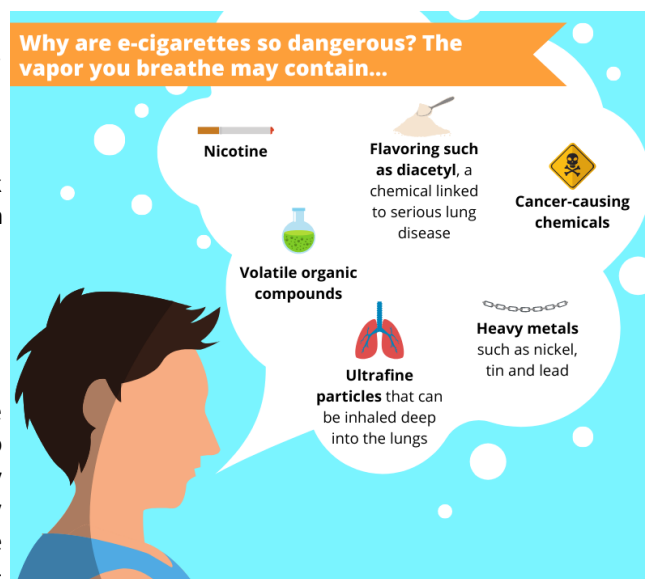
### Diacetyl

A chemical compound used to give food a buttery flavor. Studies link inhaling diacetyl to a lung condition commonly known as “popcorn lung.”

### Benzene

A volatile organic compound (VOC) usually found in car exhaust.

The use of harmful substances is particularly worrisome because brain development continues through the childhood years and up to about age twenty-five. Additionally, the use of vaping devices may place the user at risk for developing asthma and other respiratory illnesses, lung damage, dry mouth, shortness of breath and nicotine addiction. So now that you have been enlightened about the harmful substances used in vaping devices, you decide – Is it worth the risk? We give you the facts! You make the choice!



For more information visit  
[healthoregon.org/vapingillness](http://healthoregon.org/vapingillness)

**Oregon Health**  
Authority



## Taxing Vaping Products - NCSA View

Submitted By Mr. Troy Wickham - Deputy Manager



**Mr. Troy Wickham**  
Deputy Manager (NCSA)

The NCSA'S 2020 National Primary School Survey targeted primary school students ages 9-11 and sought to determine: the prevalence and frequency of drug use, common drug sources and locations of use, as well as the age of first use for various substances. It also assessed a number of factors typically associated with drug use, including perceived harm, curiosity, access to drugs, parental involvement, school experience, social media use, videogaming and bullying.

Just over half (56.2%) of all students reported the use of any drug during their lifetime, with alcohol being the most commonly used substance (lifetime prevalence = 51.7%) followed by energy drinks (lifetime prevalence = 39.7%) and inhalants (lifetime prevalence=20.9%). The use of tobacco cigarettes (lifetime prevalence = 4.8%), fanta (lifetime prevalence = 4.5%) and marijuana (lifetime prevalence = 4.3%) was much less common.

The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) as the authority in Barbados for drug demand reduction sup-

ports any effort to protect the citizens of Barbados. The NCSA recently chaired a committee led by CARICOM which focused on aligning the regional response to use, advertisement and handling of all tobacco products by minors.

The Health Services Act Cap.44 clearly states a electronic smoking device as, "an electronic nicotine-delivery system such as an electronic cigarette, cigar, cigarillo or pipe, which is used to simulate the act of smoking;". The act also seeks to protect minors from purchasing, using or handling any tobacco product. In the act a minor is defined as any person under the age of 18. This act is aligned with the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines for use, purchasing and handling of tobacco products by minors. Therefore, the NCSA continues to offer drug education to audiences such as primary and secondary schools, community-



based groups, churches and workplaces paying a special focus on the new phenomena of vaping.

Anecdotal information reaching the NCSA suggest that there has been an increase in the use of vaping devices across the island. This can be linked to the ease of access to obtaining vaping devices with the increase of vaping

shops and hookah lounges across the island. This anecdotal information includes reports received from our Substance Abuse Prevention Officers during their interventions with various populations. It is also note worthy that many young people are of the opinion that the liquids use in the vaping devices are just flavored air. However, it is important to note that many of the liquids used in the vaping devices contain the addictive substance of nicotine found in traditional cigarettes as well as tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) found in marijuana which poses a threat to the public health.

Of course, the NCSA is concerned with the statistics highlighted in the mentioned report. While taxing vaping products is an accepted method to combat the use of vaping devices and the use of tobacco products, it should not be seen as the only solution. Taxing vaping products must be coupled with the relevant legislation, enforcement of the legislation and education, most importantly drug education.

In conclusion, we remind the public that our research has consistently highlighted the fact that the home and the family are the main sources of access to substances by our minors. Therefore, it is important that parents and caregivers pay close attention to young persons because vaping devices can be easily concealed. It must be noted these devices can resemble regular pens, flash drives etc. In addition, many of the liquids use in these devices are design to attract the attention of the youth, while the flavors are designed to mask the scent of substances.



## There Are Healthy Alternatives To Substance Abuse

Submitted By Ms. Deazer Roberts - PR Consultant



**Ms. Chantelle Evelyn**  
NCSA Board Representative

Expectant women and their caregivers who attended the NCSA's Polyclinic Programme dubbed "Showcasing Healthy Alternatives To Substance Use" had an opportunity to learn how to prepare nutritious meals using local foods and the importance of maintaining healthy diets for different stages of their pregnancy.

The showcase was hailed by Ms. Chantelle Evelyn as one that is timely given the high cost of living and limited resources where finances are "stretched". Ms. Evelyn a member of the Board of Directors of the NCSA was speaking at the opening of the showcase which was held at The Fredrick Miller/Glebe Polyclinic.

Ms. Evelyn noted that the information and demonstrations presented outlined the benefits of eating healthy foods and the importance of investing in nutrition. "The Showcase is also in sync with the Barbados School Nutrition Policy currently being implemented by the Ministry of Health and Wellness and highlights how healthy living throughout the life cycle – from birth through childhood and into adulthood – is important to maintain normal function of the human brain and can enhance the quality of life and well-being," she noted.

She believes that Parents & Guardians of school-aged children also have the opportunity to learn how growing their food and practicing healthy eating habits at home can in turn benefit their children's development as well as their school performance.

She re-affirmed that the staff of the Council are pleased to collaborate with the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW) in the delivery of universal drug prevention, health and life-skills education, to a wide cross-section of polyclinic clients and members of the public.

"Gratitude is also expressed for the steadfast support and input of our public sector stakeholders: The Barbados Police Service, National Botanical Gardens, National Conservation Commission, National Nutrition Centre, National Sports Council. The showcase is a component of the ongoing NCSA Polyclinic Programme and aims to prevent substance use by maintaining healthy lifestyles throughout the life cycle.

### Facts About Meth

- Meth production involves chemicals that remain in the environment even after the lab has been shut down. These chemicals lead to serious health issues in people in the surrounding area and can occasionally cause fires and explosions.
- Methamphetamine users are at a higher risk of contracting serious infectious diseases such as Hepatitis B and C or HIV.
- Long-term meth abuse leads to cognitive impairment.
- Yes, there are methamphetamine overdoses resulting even in death.

Source: <https://synens.com/>



### 'DON'T METH IT UP'

Guidelines for Poster Contest

1. Create an image showing why people should not use METH.
2. Posters should be 11X17 inches in size, and landscape format.
3. Must be Original Work, No Photography.
4. Include your name, email address and telephone number.

### Guidelines for Writing Contest

1. Entries must not be more than 400 words.
2. Entries are judged on creativity, originality & relevance to the theme.
3. Include your name, email address and telephone number.

**\*Deadline Extended Until July 20th 2023\***

**Participants Must be 16 years and Older**

**Prizes include: Laptops and Tablets & Electronic Accessories**

Email entries to [nca.pr@barbados.gov.bb](mailto:nca.pr@barbados.gov.bb) or drop off at our office  
The Armair Building, Corner of 1st Avenue & Pine Road  
Call us at 535-6272/6277

NCSA Retains The Rights To All Entries

## The Roles & Responsibilities of The Admin Department

### Let's Meet The Team



From L - R:

Secretary Ms. Lisa Layne , Receptionist Ms. Cindy Bennett,  
Clerk Typist Mrs. Agnetha Roach Chase and Office Assistant Mrs. Cheryl Osbourne

For anyone looking to prove themselves in a challenging and fast-paced work environment, a career in the administrative department is perfect and can direct you to a spectrum of varied and exciting jobs.

The market for skilled business administrators has seen an expansion lately, inspiring more students to pursue a career in this field. Working in the administrative department can be very rewarding if you decide to step outside your comfort zone and are willing to take risks.



One of the best features of a career in the administration department is that you will probably never focus on just one department of an organization. In fact, a career in the administrative field means you will be overlooking various business operations ranging from marketing to finance.

### Read What The Admin Team Had To Say

In 2004, due to a need of an efficient filing system, the NCSA engaged the Office of Public Sector Reform to create a registry. This process, which involved intensive training took us a couple months to finalize. We learnt how to develop and maintain a filing key and system.

We efficiently maintained this system until the outbreak of COVID-19. In 2021, the Management of NCSA made the decision to digitize our registry.

After several meetings with various agencies, Filebound was chosen to store our data. Filebound is a data management system which stores records on our inhouse server. These records can be accessed by officers even when we had to work from home.

This training took several months. Officers from the Receptionist to Management were schooled in all the components of this online registry. The Admin department were the leaders in this task and steadfastly committed to the completion of our online registry. We adequately ensured that all NCSA's information stored in the registry was uploaded to Filebound.

Although it was challenging at times, we were able to overcome these trials in a short space of time. Even though this was a new system to us, we still managed to train volunteers in the back filing of our documents from 1995 to present. Along with our IT Technician we were able to keep our online registry current and up to date.

The Admin Department remains committed to this continued process.

We love what we do!





## An Opportunity Of A Lifetime For Shamari



**NCSA Chairman Hadford Howell greets Shamari. His Grandmother and Mother are all smiles**

It is long recognised that active involvement in sports is a major protective factor which can deter youth from illicit use of drugs.

In this regard, the NCSA is proud to support Shamari Addison in his quest to pursue a career in athletics. Shamari has been involved in track and field from his primary school days and as a graduate of our Project Safeguarding Our Future Today (Project SOFT), this opportunity is a perfect marriage between our drug prevention outreach and sports as a medium for such.

SHAMARI SUCCESS INCLUDE

- On the track St. Alban's Primary athlete Shamari Addison won the U13 Boys 200m and 400m. He was a convincing winner in the latter event winning by over two seconds in a time of 1:04.11 minutes **(2018 17th Annual Young Olympians Track Meet at the National Stadium).**
  - Shamari Addison took the U-13 Boys' title with 22 points **(Finals of the 2018 National Primary Schools' Athletics Championships)**
  - The 400m for Under-13 Boys went to Shamari Addison of Queen's College **(2019 Powerade-sponsored Barbados Secondary Schools Athletics Championship)**
  - He placed 3rd in the Under 18 200m **(2023 Olympian Classic)**
- He is also a fifth-form student of Queens's College, and we also encourage him as he continues on his academic path.



**NCSA Manager gets hug from Shamari's Mom**

It takes a village and so the NCSA Board of Directors and the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment, have partnered to ensure that Shamari can participate in a training opportunity with his team Rising Stars Track and Field Club as they head to Toronto, Canada during the period July 29th-August 10th, 2023. We also wish to acknowledge sterling support from the following individuals and companies:

- Ms. Chantelle Evelyn and Anudda Bajan
- Dallas Discounts Inc.
- S.Y. Adam & Son
- MAFF Variety
- Melwani's Store
- Ms. Lisa Layne

There are no barriers for those who believe in life. We wish you good luck and success in your endeavours.

## HAVE A SAFE TRIP!



**PIC 1**



**PIC 2**



**PIC 3**

- Pic 1:** Shamari receiving a hug from a representative of Dallas Discount Variety  
**Pic 2:** Shamari and his grandmother pose for a picture with the Manager of MAFF Variety  
**Pic 3:** Mr. Cleviston Hunte Director Youth Affairs also presenting Shamari with a Contribution.



## Project Safeguarding Our Future (S.O.F.T) All Boys Camp Was A Success Submitted by Mr. Mosiah Hoyte - Camp Coordinator

“How far we have to walk?” “Get up early! Every morning?” “Uncle Moe, I never had roast breadfruit yet!” “Uncle Akiel, are we still making the kites because I never made one?”

Yes, these were exclamations and questions that came from some of the boys. For you, these may seem like mere questions but on closer examination, it meant that dynamic, structured and educational experiences were had by the boys who attended the first all-male Project Safeguarding Our Future Today, Easter 2023.

“Young Boys, Future Men” was the theme of the first Massy Foundation sponsored Project Safeguarding Our Future Today. Massy Foundation partnered with the National Council on Substance Abuse to host a week-long residential camp at the Eastern Caribbean Bible Camp site, Ruby House, St. Phillip during the second week of the Easter break.



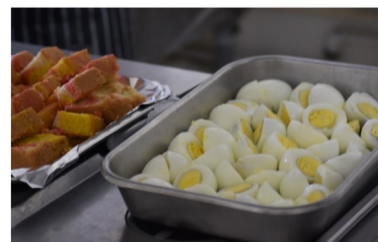
Parents, guardians and campers met in Queens Park on the 16th April, 2023. There were faces of excitement, some looks of apprehension and some tears from both parents and campers. After the luggage was loaded, farewells given and buses embarked, boys who did not know each other started to “break the ice” as they began chatting with each other.

Everyday offered something different. Whether it was roasting breadfruits, hiking with the officers from the Barbados Cadet Corps, drug education sessions, engaging in football, road tennis, cricket or exploring the creative arts through art, drama, urban dance or singing; thirty-five “future men” were given the opportunity, in the words of Minister Wilfred Abrahams “...to just be boys!”

At face value, it may have appeared to be just fun but this fun was underpinned by the overall goal of the project which was to increase the knowledge and protective factors of 11- 13 year old male students who just entered secondary school in September, 2022 to prevent or delay the onset of substance use or abuse. The journey of secondary school comes with its challenges and adolescents, especially our boys need support to navigate the tumultuous season.

The residential camp phase of the programme was just the start of the support offered to the boys and their families. The aftercare programmes: **Prevention First Boys and Prevention Firsts Parents**, will engage both groups separately and at times together.

These sessions, taking a blended approach of both virtual and in-person will reinforce concepts campers were exposed to during camp in addition to equipping parents with necessary skills needed to support their teenage son/ward. It’s all hands on deck as they go from young boys to future men.



*Thank You!*



# PROJECTS.O.F.T.

SAFEGUARDING OUR FUTURE - TODAY

Dear Parent /Guardian

The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) will be hosting its 21st Annual Residential Project Safeguarding Our Future Today (Project SOFT) for children who sat the Common Entrance Exam in June 2023.

The camp will be held at  
Eastern Caribbean Bible Camp,  
Ruby, St Philip,  
Sunday, 20th — Saturday, 26th August 2023

For more information contact the NCSA  
535-6272 or [ncsa.info@barbados.gov.bb](mailto:ncsa.info@barbados.gov.bb)



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