

Patron: His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales

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PRESS RELEASE

Iwokrama and partners continue environmental outreach at St Cuthbert's Mission and St Rose's High

Iwokrama along with colleagues this week continued environmental outreach activities to mainly secondary school students of St Rose's and St Cuthbert's Mission (Pakuri Village). These activities also are geared to educate students about career opportunities that are available in the exciting field of conservation and also moving Guyana towards green development.

The teams interacted with over 200 students and their teachers sharing information on Iwokrama's work in conservation, research and business development. The participants viewed videos and presentations on protected areas, climate change and the importance of taking care of the environment. Iwokrama staffer, Vanessa Benn emphasized the harmful effects of littering and the need to carefully manage resources including energy.

Also on board were partners including the Guyana Society for Biodiversity and Ecosystems (GSBE), a local non-governmental organization whose mission is to promote the conservation of Guyana's biological diversity, and the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB) which represents the interests of the 20 communities of the North Rupununi and implements projects for the benefit of its people.

Discussions also focused on how communities like St Cuthbert's can benefit from sustainable logging and eco-tourism using the examples of Iwokrama's logging and tourism businesses. Lakeram Haynes, Village leader of Kwamang Village and NRDDB representative also spoke about community development in North Rupununi including community tourism and showed them presentations on the Rewa and Surama eco-lodges in the North Rupununi.

At St Cuthbert's the team handed over posters, books and flyers which were received from the World Wildlife Fund-Guyana (protected species), Environmental Protection Agency (solid waste management and biodiversity), Forest Products Development and Marketing Council of Guyana (Timber Trade and Investment Magazine), Tourism and Hospitality Association of Guyana (Explore Guyana - Tourist Guide of Guyana 2017), Guiana Shield Facility/United Nations Development Programme (Biodiversity of the Guianas) and Conservation International Guyana and Iwokrama (Climate Change and The Role of Forests - A Community Manual).

Both outreach activities were due to collaborations, the St Rose's one being with Selwyn Collins of the Conversations with Selwyn (CWS) Programme and was part of the Give Back Tuesday of the CWS 5th anniversary celebration and the Commonwealth. The Centre manages the nearly one million acre (371,000 hectare) Iwokrama Forest in central Guyana to show how tropical forests can be conserved and sustainably used for ecological, social and economic benefits to local, national and international communities.

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St Cuthbert's outreach Activity was successful due to the collaboration with Toshao Lenox Shuman, Vice Chair Foster Simon and the Village Council, Head Mistress Ms Jeffers and other teachers of the St Cuthbert's Mission Secondary School, and other community members.

The Iwokrama International Centre is very grateful for all support, and the partnership of GSBE and Banks DIH Limited who made generous contributions. The Centre also expresses its deepest appreciation to all organizations which provided reading material for the Outreaches, and to the Government of Guyana, the Commonwealth Secretariat and all other partners for their continued support.

The Iwokrama team to St Cuthbert's Mission was lead by its Director Dr Raquel Thomas-Caesar and Vanessa Benn, and included Dionne Cush-Barnwell (Guyana Society for Biodiversity and Ecosystems), Lakeram Haynes (Toshao of Kwatamang Village and the North Rupununi District Development Board), Meshach Pierre (Wildlife Biologist), and Mr Terry Caesar (Tarantula EcoTours). The St Rose's outreach was conducted by Dr Raquel Thomas-Caesar and Angela Lewis –Franklin, both of whom are St Rose's Alumni.

Notes to the Editors:

About St Cuthbert's Mission (Pakuri Village)

Located 65 miles up the Mahaica River in Region 4, St Cuthbert's Mission suffered extensive losses to farms and personal property due to floods in 2011. The community of nearly 1,500 residents mainly of Arawak origin, is popularly known for the spectacular work of its Lokono artisans, the basketry of its women and of renowned artist and archeologist George Simon, Oswald Hussein and other artists.

About Iwokrama

The Iwokrama International Centre (IIC) was established in 1996 under a joint mandate from the Government of Guyana and the Commonwealth Secretariat to manage the Iwokrama forest, a unique reserve of 371,000 hectares of rainforest "in a manner that will lead to lasting ecological, economic and social benefits to the people of Guyana and to the world in general".

The Centre, guided by an international Board of Trustees is unique, providing a dedicated well managed and researched forest environment. The forest is zoned into a Sustainable Utilization Area (SUA) and a Wilderness Preserve (WP) in which to test the concept of a truly sustainable forest where conservation,

environmental balance and economic use can be mutually reinforcing. The IIC collaborates with the Government of Guyana, the Commonwealth and other international partners and donors to used for ecological, social and economic benefits to local, national and international communities.

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develop new approaches and forest management models to enable countries with rainforests to market their ecosystem services whilst carefully managing their resources through innovative and creative conservation practices.

Iwokrama brings together:

- 20 local communities (approximately 7,000 people) who are shareholders and participants in the IIC's sustainable timber, tourism, research operations and forest management activities through complex co-management and benefit sharing arrangements;
- Scientists and researchers engaged in ground breaking research into the impacts of climate change on the forest and measuring the scope and value of its ecosystem services; and
- A portfolio of sustainably managed and certified business models using innovative governance systems which include participation of the private and public sectors and the local communities, earning income from the forest and its natural assets whilst employing international social, environmental and economic best practice, whilst still keeping abreast of the ever changing thinking on funding for environmental projects in the face of climate change and the perennial scarcity of international finance.

This alliance and the Centre's work programmes are committed to showing how a rain forest can be used for real sustainability, real climate change protection and real community benefit.

For further details about the Iwokrama International Centre please visit www.iwokrama.org , www.iwokramariverlodge.com or contact Dane Gobin, Chief Executive Officer on dgobin@iwokrama.org