

Shaggy: Making a difference

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International music superstar Shaggy has been known for his philanthropic gestures in the past, most notably his donation of two ventilators to the Bustamante Hospital for Children. Those donations, along with others he's made have gone a far way to assist the hospital in giving the nation's children the medical care they need.

However, the hospital is still woefully lacking as it also still needs incubators, vital sign monitors and volumetric pumps. To this end, Shaggy has once again made his support of children known by pledging to raise US\$2 million dollars for the institution.

On Saturday January 3, 2009, "Mr. Boombastic" will once again echo the call for love of humanity by staging the concert, "Shaggy & Friends". It will be held on the lawns of Jamaica House as part of the fundraising drive of his newly established SHAGGY'S MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOUNDATION. All proceeds from the event will be in aid of the hospital.

Dr. Lambert Innis, head of the department of anaesthesia and intensive care at the Bustamante Children's Hospital, in an interview with the Jamaica Gleaner, said Shaggy's relationship with the hospital has been a blessing.

"He bought two of the ventilators and one came from a donor as a result of Shaggy's work," said Dr Innis.

"Ideally, we need eight ventilators and a minimum six," he further pointed out.

"The ventilators are vital life-saving machines used in the intensive care unit when babies are not able to breathe for themselves."

At the launch of the concert last Monday, corporate Jamaica was on hand to show their support in a big way. Wisynco donated \$1 million and cell phone powerhouse Digicel donated J\$500,000 to the hospital and pledged to buy another J\$500,000 worth of tickets to the event. The Bank of Nova Scotia gave J\$1 million and Jamaica National promised to make a J\$500,000 donation at a later date. Sagicor also gave J\$1 million and pledged to give the hospital J\$5 million over a period of time.

Shaggy was moved by the support of the sponsors but was also ecstatic about the number of artistes who were willing to perform at the concert for free. These include Macy Gray, J Holiday, Sean Kingston, Etana, Tarrus Riley and Buju Banton.

"Not one artiste weh mi call seh no," said Shaggy. He said even the artistes who have conflicting dates have pledged to help with the campaign or buy tickets. Others, he said, have been calling him to get a chance to perform.

Tickets are J\$5,000 and J\$10,000 with special VIP tickets available for J\$20,000 for persons who want to attend the celebrity auction and all-inclusive dinner.