

SPORT

VCB Foundation makes good on its promise

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VERONICA Campbell Brown wants to make a difference in the life of Jamaica's young girls.

That is the reason she established the Veronica Campbell Brown Foundation in 2011 and pledged to give a portion of one of her competitive race fees, each year, to the foundation's cause.



VCB (left) is all smiles as she shares a few success stories with the recipients of her Foundation at a Sunday brunch in Kingston recently. The girls (from second left) Pettrina James, Aneca Campbell, Terry Mathias and Elaine Ewers, happily give her their undivided attention.



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The Veronica Campbell Brown Foundation's scholarship programme is unique. At the moment it targets Jamaican high school girls and commits to financial assistance — covering school fees, transportation and lunch — from the eighth grade through to the end of high school. This approach gives the recipients a chance to complete high school while helping to reduce the financial burden parents often face in financing education at this level.

Since the 2011 announcement the foundation has given close to half-a-million dollars to the first cohort of four girls — Elaine Ewers from Vere Technical, Aneca Campbell of Troy High School, Pettrina James, who attends Irwin High, and Terry Mathias of St Andrew Technical High. These girls were selected based on academic performance and need.

"I know what it is like to have someone assist you in accomplishing your objectives. This is one of the reasons why I am very happy to reach out to these girls in a way I believe can make a real difference for them and their families," asserted Campbell Brown, the many-time Olympic and World Champion.

For her part Campbell Brown treated the girls and a member of their family, each, to a stop-over in the city, complete with tickets to the 2013 staging of the Jamaica International Invitational, Sunday brunch and some well-needed face time with the newest members of her circle.

The experience was a treat for the girls, most of whom were going to the National Stadium in Kingston for the first time. They witnessed Campbell Brown, their confessed hero, steal the 100m race in a strong come-from-behind win over a tough field featuring the darling of US Track and Field, Allyson Felix, Trinidadian standout Kelly-Ann Baptiste and the Ivorian hot contender Muriel Ahoure.

"Spending time with the girls was refreshing for me, as it allowed me to get to know them away from the school setting. It also provided a wonderful opportunity to mentor, as well as to impart some of the life lessons that have helped me to be successful, and have kept me grounded," explained the Trelawny native who, at the end of her race, went to the stands for a photo op with the girls.

Campbell Brown has assembled a group of like-minded people to her cause, including her husband Omar Brown, her brother Errol Campbell, a high school teacher, her manager and agent Claude Bryan, PR dame Ann Marie Grant, former CFO Fay MacIntosh, former West Indies captain Jimmy Adams,

Olympian Deon Hemmings-McCatty, veteran attorney-at-law George Soutar, QC, insurance executive Julette Parkes, and communications specialist Kalando Wilmoth, who are all helping to make her dream a reality.

"I feel very blessed to have a devoted team working with me, supporting a vision that is dear to my heart. These are very busy people whose sacrifices I truly appreciate and I thank God for them.

"We are off to a good start and the objective is to eventually expand the programme. Those wishing to join with us in giving can visit our website at www.vcbfoundation.com."

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