

# MEDIA RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## MBJ Charity Run/Walk Awards J\$30 million in Post Melissa Grants to over 180 Students and Institutions

**MONTEGO BAY, JAMAICA: MARCH 24, 2026:** Over 180 tertiary and secondary students from western Jamaica, and three institutions were recently awarded grants totalling J\$30 million during the MJB Foundation Charity Run/Walk Grant Awards Ceremony themed “Destiny Helpers” on March 17 at the Sangster International Airport Departures Terminal. The event was the culmination of the 2025 MJB Charity Run/Walk held last September.

While the hurricane postponed the award ceremony, it could not dampen the indomitable spirit that defined the afternoon’s ceremony as the MJB Foundation transformed the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa into seeds of hope, with the occasion marking a definitive turning point in the region’s post-hurricane recovery.



**Empowerment through action:** At the intersection of fitness and philanthropy, the MJB Foundation continues to champion the support of its ‘Destiny Helpers’. 134 tertiary students and 50 secondary students were among the beneficiaries of grants, collectively valued at J\$30 million, which were presented during the MJB Foundation’s ‘Destiny Helpers’ Charity Run/Walk Grant Award Ceremony at the Sangster International Airport on March 17. In the photo: Destiny Helpers join a group of student awardees and their parents for a photo op.

### Investing in the Future

Behind the numbers are the stories of students like Dane Eglar, a third-year Environmental Biology student at the University of the West Indies, for whom the \$100,000 grant will provide critical financial support.



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“Before the hurricane, I was facing challenges financially and I'm sure many awardees here were doing the same. The grant is coming now in the post-hurricane era to help students who are still in the recovery phase and want to carry on with their studies is good because a lot of students had to drop out. So, MBJ stepping in and helping students to continue their studies is phenomenal. Each and every one of us here as scholars, we have a goal, we have a destination we want to reach. And these MBJ grants are helping us to achieve that goal and to reach that destination,” Eglar shared.

Shane Munroe, Chief Executive Officer, MBJ Airports Limited, told the gathering of students, parents/guardians, MBJ staff and officials that the event was part of the airport’s long-term commitment, focused on education and sustainability.

“It's an investment in you because we believe that your education is the single most powerful engine of change in Jamaica...Challenges may arise, such as Hurricane Melissa, but here you are. You did not quit, you adapted, you kept going, and that resilience, that refusal to not be defined by challenges is the very quality that tells us that our investment is sound,” Munroe emphasized as he addressed the students.

“Some of our students here were recipients last year, so this is certainly not a one-off investment. We would like to ensure that we see you all the way through to graduation. So, take this grant, use it wisely, and let it fuel your next chapter,” he stated while acknowledging the support of the more than 110 sponsors.



*Investing in the future: Shane Munroe (right), CEO, MBJ Airports Limited, shares some inspiring words with a group of secondary school student awardees, following the MBJ Foundation’s Charity Run/Walk Grant Award Ceremony, at the Sangster International Airport on March 17.*

Beyond the student grants, the MBJ CEO also announced that a significant portion of the funds - J\$15 million - has been earmarked for the urgent rebuilding of schools damaged by Hurricane Melissa. This initiative is being supported by additional funds from MBJ’s shareholders, Grupo Aeroportuario del



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Pacífico (GAP) and Vantage Airport Group, which aim to support the recovery of schools impacted by Hurricane Melissa.

“We want to be a part of the recovery process and we must ensure that the private sector works with the Government, with the public sector. That’s what community looks like, when private enterprise, government [and] citizens come together for a shared purpose,” he noted.

## **A Community United**

The impact of the MBJ Foundation extended to specialized care with the Montego Bay Learning Centre receiving \$300,000 in cash and over \$500,000 in essential equipment and furniture to support students with special needs.

Roy Reid, Principal of the Montego Bay Learning Centre, outlined that the grant has come at an opportune time.

“There could not have been a better time to receive this grant because Hurricane Melissa did significant damage to our perimeter fence, resulted in us losing all our equipment, furniture and appliances in our technical vocational areas - the canteen, the library area and the office area. So basically, we need to restore the fence and get some urgently needed equipment for the canteen which will allow us to return to a full day operation,” he shared.

Guest Speaker Mr. Jermaine Johnson, CEO of Johnson Motivates and an I Believe Initiative (IBI) Ambassador, delivered a stirring charge to the applauding grant recipients. Highlighting his experience with “destiny helpers” during his own financial struggles while on his academic journey, Johnson had high praise for the MBJ shareholders and grant award sponsors.

“I am here today because somebody invested in my destiny and I am delighted to know that destiny helpers are still keeping in Jamaica,” Johnson stated before he challenged the recipients.

“Sow the seeds of hard work and determination. Keep your eyes open for all the opportunities that are there, especially when you get to the expensive tertiary level. You don't want to miss out when destiny helpers have things that can assist you in fulfilling your dreams.

“You might be struggling now, but it's not going to last forever, because this is just a preparation for your purpose. Today you have demonstrated that you are the real trend setter. We don't want to see you on TV being incarcerated, but on Profile being celebrated, so that when you have gone out there to establish your companies and careers, you can return and contribute to the MBJ Foundation,” he continued.



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**Seeds of hard work and determination:** Celebrating another MBJ Charity Run/Walk success. Shane Munroe (right), CEO, MBJ Airports Limited, shares a photo op with Jermaine Johnson (left), Guest Speaker and CEO, Johnson Motivates, and Sharon Hislop-Holt, Manager, Commercial Business Development & Marketing at MBJ Airports Limited, following the MBJ Foundation's Charity Run/Walk Grant Award Ceremony at the Sangster International Airport on March 17.

Also in attendance were Senator Charles Sinclair, representing the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, and His Worship the Mayor, Councillor Richard Vernon. Title sponsor, the Airports Authority of Jamaica (AAJ), was represented by Cheryl Blake, who brought greetings on behalf of the AAJ president, Audley Deidrick.

The Annual Charity Run/Walk is the flagship fundraiser for the MBJ Foundation. Since its inception, the Foundation has raised and donated \$71 million, directly impacting the lives of over 1700 students. The event has continued to garner widespread support, with the proceeds from the 2025 staging surpassing the \$ 22 million raised at the previous event.

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**Contact:**

Sharon Hislop-Holt  
Manager, Commercial Business Development and Marketing at MBJ Airports Limited  
1876-564-7713

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**About Sangster International Airport:**

Sangster International Airport (IATA: MBJ, ICAO: MKJS) is an international Airport located 3 mi (4.8 km) east of Montego Bay, Jamaica. Named after former Jamaican Prime Minister Sir Donald Sangster, the Airport is capable of handling nine million passengers per year and serves as the most popular airport for tourists visiting Jamaica. SIA has been named the Caribbean's Leading Airport by World Travel Awards for the 18<sup>th</sup> year.

**About MBJ Airports:**

MBJ Airports Limited, the operator of Sangster International Airport, connects Jamaica to more than 60 international destinations. A record 5.267m passengers used the Airport in 2024. MBJ operates SIA under a 30-year concession awarded in 2003 and the Airport provides employment to more than 7,500 persons.

