



Special Edition Newsletter

MAY 2025

Celebrating 5 Years of the Freedom Skatepark

Issue #3

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate the 5-year anniversary of the Freedom Skatepark Foundation, we reflect on our mission to provide a high-quality, well-maintained, and safe space for youth to grow the sport of skateboarding in Jamaica.

The Freedom Skatepark was built in 2020 in memory of Andre 'Wildfiah' Thompson, honoring his vision to empower the youth through skateboarding.

Our hallmark program, the Edu-Skate program, designed by Concrete Jungle Foundation, teaches essential life skills through skateboarding, while our additional offerings, such as the homework programme, yoga, and conflict resolution classes, further empower our youth.

Over the past five years, we have witnessed incredible growth and transformation, positively impacting the youth in Bull Bay and beyond. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our supporters whose unwavering commitment has made this journey possible.

As we look to the future, we are excited to expand our programmes, enhance our outreach, and continue making a lasting difference in the lives of the youth we serve. Thank you for being a part of our journey!

Lisa D'Oyen
Chair, Freedom Skatepark Foundation



In this newsletter
you can expect:

Welcome from
the Chair

Our
Programmes

Voices of
Freedom

Meet our Staff

Donor Wall

Dedication

Get Involved!

Founding
Partners



Our Programmes

At Freedom Skatepark, we are dedicated to creating positive change in the community by empowering our youth through a variety of programs designed to foster skill development, teamwork, and personal growth. As we celebrate our 5-year anniversary, we are proud to share the impact numbers we've achieved over this time.



Edu-Skate Classes

Our hallmark programme, the Edu-Skate Program, designed by Concrete Jungle Foundation, focuses on teaching essential life skills through skateboarding. To date, we have successfully delivered **364 Edu-Skate classes with an attendance of 3,191**, positively impacting their development both on and off the board.

The Edu-Skate programme covers key skills such as self-confidence, respect, resilience, perseverance, courage, cooperative learning, positivity, awareness, and creativity. We have engaged with children from our local community, as well as from St. Thomas, RISE, Supm Fi Talk Bout, and Denham Town High School, empowering our youth to build character while enjoying a fulfilling and active lifestyle.



Homework Sessions

Our Homework Programme was initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic to support children in continuing their education while schools were closed. This essential program has flourished over the years, offering **244 homework sessions with a total attendance of 1,030**, facilitated by our dedicated teachers providing **after-school tutoring 3-4 days a week**.

The programme covers critical topics, including Language Arts—spelling, reading and comprehension, and writing short compositions—as well as Social Studies and Math, all aligned with the school curriculum. This comprehensive support ensures that students receive personalized assistance tailored to their individual learning needs. By fostering a positive and engaging learning environment, our Homework Programme helps improve academic performance while building confidence and motivation among our youth.

We are proud of the positive impact this programme has made in the lives of our participants and remain dedicated to its continued growth and success.

Our Enrichment Activities programme has successfully executed **83 activities, with a total attendance of 341**. This initiative provides additional skills beyond traditional education, offering hands-on experiences that foster creativity and personal growth.

Our youth have engaged in a variety of activities including: surfing, arts and crafts, coding, shoe design, photography, yoga, music, carpentry, concrete work, skateboard art, t-shirt printing, auto mechanics, conflict resolution, and environmental science.

These programmes are designed to not only enhance the skills of our youth but also to inspire passion and curiosity in their personal and academic lives. By integrating these enrichment opportunities, we strive to provide a holistic approach to youth development that supports their overall well-being and prepares them for future success.

Enrichment



Community Activities



Our Community Activities programme plays a vital role in fostering a sense of ownership and pride within the local community. To date, we have successfully executed **1,410 community jobs** that demonstrate our commitment to enhancing our environment and the well-being of residents.

These activities include planting trees and flowers, watering plants, beautification projects, garden clean-up, painting, repairs, garbage collection, building a water fountain, and organizing both the library and community center. We have also involved community members in caring for and maintaining the green spaces to promote ongoing stewardship.

Through these initiatives, we empower residents to actively participate in the care and development of their surroundings, creating a collaborative and supportive community atmosphere that benefits everyone involved.

The Get-On-Board programme was established to provide individuals with an opportunity to experience skateboarding, regardless of their access to equipment. Understanding the barriers within our community, we offer the rental of skateboards for \$300 JMD, and protection gear for only \$100 JMD, based on the socio-economic status of participants.

For those unable to afford this nominal fee, we provide an alternative option to access the program in exchange for participation in community activities, promoting engagement and support.

To date, the Get-On-Board programme has had **9,802 rentals and generated \$5,194 USD** in revenue, which is reinvested into the maintenance and improvement of the skatepark. This initiative not only empowers individuals to give skateboarding a try but also fosters community involvement and ensures the continued sustainability of our facility.

Get-on-Board



Voices of Freedom

As we celebrate five years of growth and community building at Freedom Skatepark, we want to share some of the voices that have helped shape our journey. *Voices of Freedom* features quotes from community members, partners, staff, and skaters—their thoughts on how the project has progressed and the positive impact it has had over the years. Their words highlight the collective effort and shared vision that continue to drive our success.

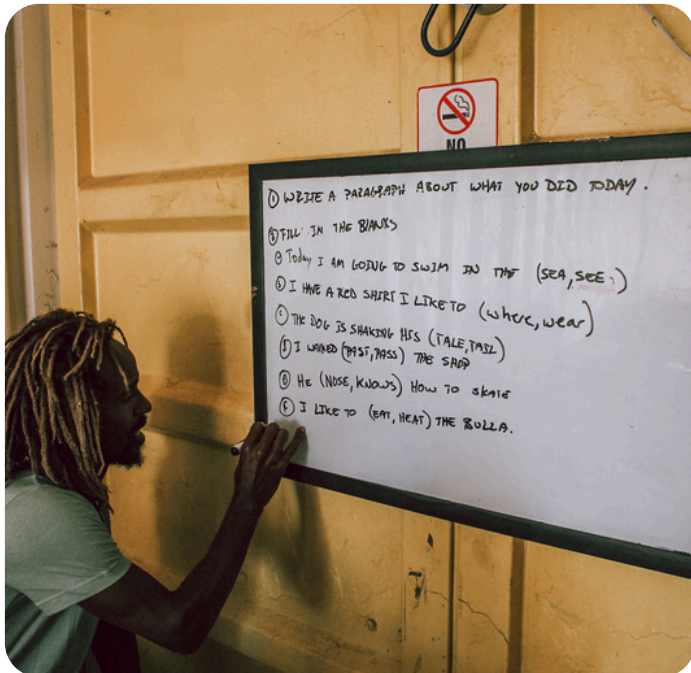
It has been such a pleasure to be part of these first five years in the life of Freedom Skatepark. What began as a wish, became a vision, and a mission to impact the lives of underserved young men and women who needed a safe space to socialize and hone their skills. Freedom Skatepark has been all that and more. It has brought together persons from all areas of the society who care about this country and its youth. The resources that they have been able to garner have exposed scores of young people to opportunities and possibilities that they would never have otherwise been able to access. Freedom Skatepark is more than a place – it is a movement.

- Lorraine Jones

Mother of Andre 'Wildfiyah' Thompson
Freedom Skatepark Committee Member

Skating saved my life.

-Joshua Mattis/Skatepark User



The Freedom Skatepark has had an immeasurable effect on the youth in the community. From its inception it has provided a safe space for youngsters to gather, learn, express themselves and build positive relationships. The programs run at the skate park provide well needed support for children struggling with challenges in school as well as providing positive role models and adult figures in the eyes of the youth and the community. I have seen youth who were heading in the wrong direction be able to turn their lives around through inspiration from the interactions and opportunities at the park and this is exactly what the park was intended to provide. With every new child that has walked through the gate, there is a chance to have a chain reaction that affects positive change in the lives of so many vulnerable youth in and around Bull Bay. Creating freedom from the cycle that has plagued the minds of the youth from the underprivileged Jamaican communities for decades.

-Iciah Wilmot/Homework Teacher

I can truly say that being a part of Freedom Skatepark has been the most gratifying experience in my professional life. Seeing what could have just been an athletic facility, manifest into a community center that has served so many youth and families, is inconceivable. I feel that the key to its success comes from the sense that we are all a family. From the top heads of the foundation, to the staff, and community members, the passion and love that is shared for the project is felt when you walk through the gate. I look forward to the future of Freedom Skatepark, as the possibilities are endless.

-Blake Burnett/Project Manager, Freedom Skatepark



Freedom Skatepark is a safe haven for people to come and express themselves through skateboarding. It bridges the gaps between social classes, age groups, gender biases, stereotypes etc. I am fortunate to be a part of this moment in Jamaican history.

-Damany Gayle/Freedom Skatepark Manager & Conflict Resolution Teacher



We are incredibly proud to be involved in this project. Not only has it created a space where young people can learn to skate but through its homework, reading, volunteer, and mentorship programmes, youngsters are being thoughtfully engaged to support their personal, academic, and civic development. Hats off to the incredible team on the ground whose passion and dedication is creating a positive transformation in so many lives.

- Heidi Clarke/Executive Director, Sandals Foundation



Bull Bay is known for its surf/skate culture and the Freedom Skatepark has been a great addition to the community. Over the past 20 years we've seen many skaters come and go but until the skatepark got built, we never really had a place to call our own outside of the bowl at Jamnesia and the DIY we built at the gully. Now they have their own stomping ground and it's been great to see them take advantage of that and raise the overall level of skating on the island, after only 5 years. Speaking from experience, there's a lot you can learn from skateboarding if you have the passion for it and the skatepark is helping to keep that spirit alive.

-Ivah Wilmot/SK876



The Freedom Skatepark brings a lot of pain and joy in my life. I've learnt a lot over the past couple years working there, also I've accomplished some personal goals with the help from the foundation. Before I started to work at the Freedom Skatepark, I would have problems with some ways co-workers and bosses deal with situations. I've been working with this foundation for about four years now, teaching kids/ adults how to skate and different ways of showing respect. I'm enjoying my time here so far and I hope it continues. Thank you for having me in your program, keep up the good work.

-Nicholas Thompson/Freedom Skatepark Manager

Freedom Skatepark is more than ramps—it's a sanctuary where Jamaica's youth find purpose and self-expression. Through mentorship and opportunity, it shapes future leaders, building resilience and community. Every trick landed is empowerment, every friendship strengthens our fabric. This isn't just skateboarding—it's rewriting the future for Jamaica's next generation.

-Kevin Bourke/Freedom Skatepark Foundation



The Freedom Skatepark is truly a unique project worldwide. After years of advocacy and hard work from the committed foundation of Jamaican stakeholders, who collaborated with Flipping Youth and CJF, I am unaware of any other philanthropic skatepark project that has received continued support over five years from this transnational network of organizations.

This has been a productive and impactful hue of differing skills, expertise, and resources that has created an environment of support and learning amongst the Freedom Skatepark Foundation that has underpinned successes on the ground in Bull Bay. Hundreds of Jamaican youth use the skatepark weekly and benefit from the community ethos that has created a welcoming, safe and inclusive space where young people can be themselves, learn new skills and support each other.

The Freedom Skatepark not only provides a roadmap for community projects in Jamaica, but lessons can be learnt around the world on how global problems require global answers, led by a team of passionate, caring and hardworking people that instill the same ethos in the day-to-day running of the project and the mostly young people who use the space.

-Tom Critchley/Concrete Jungle Foundation

I have watched with joy as local skateboarding has grown from a tiny group of frustrated surfers leisure skating into a wonderful organized community centered around the Freedom Skate Park. It provides a great platform from which to help shape young minds and teach them the importance of commitment and perseverance in order to achieve success. The camaraderie, competition, educational support, and coaching programs all contribute to the creation of strong, healthy, bright young Jamaicans.

-Billy Wilmot/Jamnesia Surf Camp





Its success is a very unique coming together of the energy, dedication and commitment of the community, donors, the Jamaican and global skating community, and some individuals who have just gone above and beyond to make sure this works.

It would be hard to replicate this in other community projects and I think there's a lot to learn from what has been achieved here to ensure other such projects are a success.

It's literally a joy and constant reward to see it growing and the care taken to preserve it.

-Melanie Subratie/Chairman, Seprod Foundation



The Freedom Skatepark truly sets the standard in so many ways of what a social skate project should be: from the ground up an engaged community of individuals that each contribute in their own way to make it serve as a positive community space for the youth, responsive to community needs that arise and resilient with the challenges and difficulties that are presented on the way. Additionally, the governing body Freedom Skatepark Foundation, made up of a group of incredibly skilled and engaged volunteers, has been able to attract and engage a network of funders and supporters that make the project's development possible. It has been an honour to be a part of this project's growth, I'm very proud to see what it has become.

-Tim van Asdonck/Concrete Jungle Foundation & Freedom Skatepark Foundation



The vision for Freedom Skatepark was to create a safe space for children and young adults to express themselves creatively and learn valuable life skills through overcoming the challenges associated with skatepark sports. It has been truly heartwarming to see this come to fruition and witness what is possible when like-minded passionate people come together with the same interest of bettering the lives of young people. The skatepark facility has become such a valuable asset to the Bull Bay and wider community and I am excited to see how this project will continue to grow and flourish in the years to come.

-William Willson/Flipping Youth & Freedom Skatepark Foundation

At THE SKATEROOM, we believe in concrete dreams that shape real-world impact. We're proud to have supported the construction of the Freedom Skatepark with our partner Concrete Jungle Foundation—creating a space where young people carve out confidence, community, and lasting change.

-Charles-Antoine Bodson, /Founder, THE SKATEROOM

This project is a powerful example of what's possible when communities are not just consulted, but truly centred in the design and delivery of solutions. It reflects the kind of locally rooted, participatory approach that leads to meaningful, sustainable change. We're proud to have supported a process grounded in lived experience, co-creation, and collective impact.

-Clement Taquet/Concrete Jungle Foundation



The Freedom Skatepark is a fantastic project with a super-caring and professional staff and many well needed workshops and offerings that are empowering the kids and youths on a daily basis with positive development and various life skills. It is so much more than just a skatepark, it's a safe space and a diamond in the community and surrounding areas. We are very proud to be a supporting partner and intend to help fund the excellent work also in the future.

-Hilmar Keding/Director & CEO, HELP Jamaica

Freedom Skatepark Community Center is a vital asset to the Bull Bay community. Through their programming and resources, this hub for the youth is able to provide an environment that encourages personal and communal growth.

When first visiting the skatepark, I saw a place where the youth can come together, learn new things, and find support through the shared values of many great community ambassadors. It was wonderful to see how this community center brought the kids together, creating a sense of belonging and fostering positive relationships.

We are grateful to be able to make a tangible impact with so many like minded partners and community leaders as we continue to empower the youth by instilling self pride and community betterment.

-Gregory Meletta/SWAP Foundation & Kasavana Family Foundation





Being part of the Freedom Skatepark family has taught me the incredible possibilities that arise when we come together with love and unity. The teamwork on this project is nothing short of inspiring, demonstrating how dedication can transcend borders and cultures. It's an honor to be a part of this journey, and I look forward to discovering more ways we can serve the community of Bull Bay and beyond.

-Tabetha Phillips/Freedom Skatepark Foundation



It is said that for one to lead a healthy life, they must have a 'third space' - separate from home and work, where they are able to meet people with similar interests, unwind and just be. FSP is certainly that for me. Whether it's doing some homework activity with the lads, or sitting back (with Sheila, our park dog) watching everyone zip around on their boards at sunset - I can always count on the skatepark to bring me some joy after a long day.

-Jeanelle Irvine/Homework Teacher



Since half a decade from its initial construction, the Freedom Skatepark has manifested into a place that is far more than just a skatepark. It brings us much joy to see the positive social benefits from the community activities, enrichment workshops, homework and Edu-Skate programmes - promoting liberty, education and freedom for the youth. Would be so incredible to see more community skatepark projects brought to Jamaica in the near future. Happy 5th anniversary Freedom Skatepark and all those who put their energy into making this community skatepark the shining light of positivity that it has become!

-Harry Gerrard/Concrete Jungle Foundation

Congratulations to CJF and the local Bull Bay community on celebrating 5 years of the Freedom Skatepark. This project is an amazing demonstration of commitment to building community and spreading the joy and positive impact of skateboarding with the youth and young at heart in Jamaica. We are very thankful and humbled to have been invited to be a small part of this project and look forward to seeing what the future will bring for the next generation of skateboarders that grow up skating the Freedom Skatepark!

-Kyle Dion, President & CEO of New Line Skateparks Inc.

Though I was not present for the build of the Freedom skatepark myself, I felt quite close to it as I was involved elsewhere in the foundation during the planning and execution phases and had a few good friends who were there. That said, it was so impressive to witness this massive communal effort to build this beautiful park during a once-in-a-lifetime crisis/world event. Since then, it's been amazing watching this grow into the community space it's become today, following the journeys and growth of young skaters and community leaders, as well as getting to witness some incredible skateboarding.

-Connor Kogler/Freedom Skatepark Foundation USA



Jamaica has given the world so much through reggae and dancehall, that it is very rewarding to contribute and help bring skateboarding culture to the island and watching the youth make it their own.

-Scott Seine/Freedom Skatepark Foundation USA

It is an absolute pleasure to work side by side with our valued partners at the Freedom Skatepark. I believe even more strongly in the power and impact that creating a safe space within a community can have and that change is sometimes delivered on a piece of board, four wheels, and a whole lot of sweat and imagination.

-Gina Mair/Freedom Skatepark Foundation



From the moment Will Willson called me about the skatepark, I knew we were onto something good that would benefit the community. The Bull Bay Football Club had absolutely no reservations and was glad to be the host.

-Paul Hibbert/ President, Bull Bay Football Club

8 years ago I read an article that inspired me to reach out with my son to see if we could help make a dream a reality. I'm proud of the work done at the park on and off the board, from conflict resolution classes to sending Kayla Wheeler to skate Exposure Skate event in California, the park is a daily reminder of the power of community.

-Mirko Mangum/Freedom Skatepark Foundation USA



Meet Our Staff

We want to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated staff whose commitment and hard work make everything we do possible. From teaching our Edu-Skate classes and facilitating homework sessions to delivering conflict resolution classes, their contributions are invaluable to the youth we serve.

Their efforts go into planning engaging field trips, managing the opening and closing of our facility, and ensuring its maintenance create a safe and welcoming space for our children. Together, they are helping to transform lives and foster a vibrant community at the Freedom Skatepark. Thank you for your unwavering dedication and passion for making a difference!



Blake Burnett
Project Manager



Nicholas Thompson
Skatepark Manager



Damany Gayle
Skatepark Manager & Conflict
Resolution Teacher



Kayla Wheeler
Social Media Manager &
Photographer



Icah Wilmot
Homework Teacher



Jeanelle Irvine
Homework Teacher

Looking Forward

As we look ahead, we are excited to continue our existing programs while expanding our impact through the introduction of new initiatives. Our **Food for Thought** nutritional program will support the youth in our homework program and their families, ensuring consistent access to essential food supplies. Additionally, we aspire to launch a **Gardening Program**, promoting sustainability and healthy living within the community.

We also plan to establish a **Back to School Scholarship** designed to assist families with essential supplies at the beginning of the school year, helping to alleviate financial burdens and ensure that every child is prepared for academic success.

Our **Peace, Love & Skate** outreach efforts will involve traveling to local high schools to conduct skate demonstrations, introducing more youth to the sport of skateboarding while combining it with conflict resolution classes. We aim to engage a new school or youth group every quarter, inviting them to the skatepark to participate in our Edu-Skate program and experience the joy of skating firsthand.

Moreover, we will introduce **Parenting Classes** to support families in nurturing their children's development and an **Entrepreneur Program** to help community members gain economic footing and achieve financial stability.

Together, these initiatives will further enrich our community and empower the youth we serve as we continue to foster a safe and supportive environment at the Freedom Skatepark. We are enthusiastic about the future and the opportunities it holds for growth and impact!

Donor Wall

A sincere thank you to the following organizations, groups, and individuals who have supported us in building and maintaining the park, as well as implementing our programs. Your partnerships have made a significant difference, allowing us to create a positive impact on the youth and the surrounding community.

Skatepark

Flipping Youth	New Line Skateparks
Seprod Foundation	Paris Skate Culture
Sandals Foundation	Hertz
Concrete Jungle Foundation	Securipro
Tmrw.Tday	MSR Design Studio
Bull Bay Football Club	Synergy Design Studio
Jamnesia Surf Camp	The Most Honourable Juliet Holness, MP
Sk876	Kingston and St. Andrew Municipal Corporation (KSAC)
THE SKATEROOM	Beunbros
Carib Cement	Forever Playground
Pre-Mix	Tankweld

Youth Center

Flipping Youth	Becca Dudley	Kasavana Family Foundation
Vans	Wray & Nephew	SWAP Foundation
Supreme	David Rodigan	Thank You Skateboards
NCB (TBC)	Valerie Laing	Pre-Mix
Aecom	Damien O'Donohoe	Tankweld
Sole DXB	David Thompson	Grayson Lauffenburger
Synergy Design Studio	Paris Skate Culture	EWA Projects
	Mat Bickley	MSR Engineers
		David Rodigan

Facility & Programmes

Seprod Foundation	HELP Jamaica	Kasavana Family Foundation
Sandals Foundation	Concrete Jungle Foundation	SWAP Foundation
The Skateroom	Enerbiz	Girls Skate Jamaica
Thank You Skate Co.	For the Fun	New Wave
Rasta Kitchen	Jamaica Surfing Association	Opus Footwear
Skateboard for Hope	Supreme	SK876
GoGo Skateboarding	Grayson Lauffenburger	Ride Nature
Jamaica Skate Culture	The Mair Family	SlowTide
James Samson	Tabetha Phillips & Friends	The Free Likkle Cupboard
US Embassy of Jamaica	Paint Jamaica	United Way of Jamaica

Dedication

Remembering Andre ‘Wildfiyah’ Thompson - The Inspiration Behind Freedom Skatepark



As we mark five years of Freedom Skatepark, it's important to reflect on the remarkable story behind this community space. Many know that the park was dedicated in memory of Andre ‘Wildfiyah’ Thompson, a talented young Jamaican skateboarder, artist, and community advocate who tragically lost his life in 2009.

What might not be as widely known is that Andre was the true inspiration for establishing this skatepark. His passion for skateboarding, his dream of creating a space for Jamaica's youth, and his unwavering belief in the power of creative expression and social development fueled the vision that became Freedom Skatepark.

The project was born out of tragedy—Andre was murdered in 2009 at the age of 20. Just a few days before his death, Andre was featured in the mini-documentary JA SKATE, produced by LargeUp, which depicted the skateboarding scene in Jamaica at that time. You can watch the documentary [here](#) to see Andre and learn more about the skate culture he loved so much.

His hope for Jamaica to have a dedicated skatepark was shared in his final days. Today, his vision lives on through this space and the programs run here, transforming his dream into reality and embodying his spirit of resilience, creativity, and hope.

As we celebrate this milestone, we honor Andre's legacy—a reminder of how one young person's passion can inspire a movement and create lasting change.

**In memory of Andre ‘Wildfiyah’ Thompson
(1989–2009)**

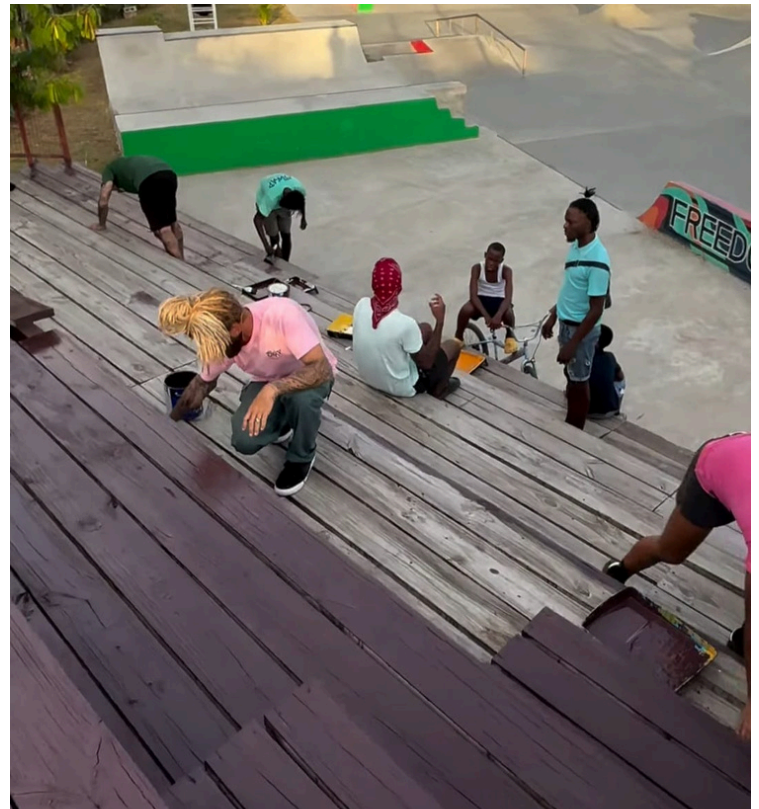


Get Involved!

You're never too young or too old to join the fun and make a difference! Whether you're a seasoned skater, an aspiring instructor, or simply someone who loves to enjoy a vibrant community atmosphere, we invite you to get involved.

- **Follow us on Instagram** for the latest updates and inspiring stories from our programs.
- **Visit our website** to learn more about our initiatives and upcoming events.
- **Interested in teaching a workshop?** We'd love to hear from you—get in touch and share your passion with our community!
- **Or simply come out and enjoy the vibes!** Join us for events, meet new friends, and support our young skaters.

Together, we can create lasting impact and inspire the next generation of skaters.



DONATE ❤️

Freedom Skatepark Foundation

freedomskateparkja.org

[Instagram](#)

freedomskateparkja@gmail.com

876-543-8587

Founding Partners



Board of Directors (Jamaica)

Lisa D'Oyen-Chair
William Willson-Secretary
Gina Mair
Kevin Bourke
Tabetha Phillips
Tim van Asdonck

Board of Directors (USA)

Gina Mair-Chair
Scott Seine-Secretary
Connor Koggler-Treasurer
Mirko Mangum
Tabetha Phillips



Skating to a brighter future!