

REMARKS AT 2014 LAUNCH OF HON. JULIAN FRASER SAVE THE SEED NATIONAL BASKETBALL LEAGUE

By Julian Fraser June 30th 2014

I thank God for this awesome privilege to serve the territory in the area of sports from here at Save the Seeds Energy Center. I know the tremendous blessings this League brings to our young people as they are able to express themselves through basketball and gain the acceptance they deserve.

My participation I owe to the wonderful people of the Third District who I am sure had all these visions in their thoughts when they elected me to lead. **This I thank them for.**

At a time in our history when economic activities are being recorded at their **worst ever**, and incarceration of our youth at the prison in Balsam Gut is at its **highest ever**, no one needs to shine a light for you to see the predicament our young people are faced with.

From where I stand, many efforts are proffered in aid of the advancement of the youth, but I realize that one cent can't jingle, and that is why I am so pleased to have been successful in our mutual efforts in partnering with Bishop John Cline and his Save The Seed organization to form this league.

On Monday June 30th, just one week ago, I was across the bay in Hannah's Hill with the perfect vantage of Duff's Bottom, and it was only then that I realized the awesome blessing this development is to this District, and the territory. And I am glad that I had acknowledge early o'clock also, that Save The Seed must be a success, and that I was determined to see that happen. **Hence our partnership.**

This facility has no equal, it is privately owned, it serves the community in a unique way, and its funding source is private. **In other words, it receives no government funding.**

We as a community must assess the value facilities like Save The Seed Energy Center brings to our communities and rationally decide whether we are serious about the wellbeing of our youth, and decide to support efforts like this, or literally continue to do nothing and see them disappear.

Across the territory there are basketball courts, which are what I refer to as school yard type courts. They are outdoor asphaltic surfaced, and poorly maintained. And this is the 21st century, may I add. I need not say anymore on the subject of facilities because I have made my point.

If you didn't get it, it means you haven't been to Save the Seed Energy Center Basketball Gym. In that regard therefore, when you attend the games this season you will understand what I am talking about.

Let us make a conscious effort to support Save the Seed Energy Center for the sake of our youth, if nothing else.

Our sponsors have all been committed to the cause we promote. They don't only give money; they also give their time, as they are regular fans of the games each night. Even though I know some might be a bit uneasy being in the presence of dynamic personalities: *Cline and Fraser*, I can assure you that that is more perception than reality. We are just two ordinary guys. So come to the games and get to know us personally.

I encourage you to have your banners displayed in the Gymnasium in order to ensure maximum publicity.

Sports are a major business that forms an entire industry in the United States, because of sponsorships. For even though events are always well attended, those spectators don't come nearly close to financing the events, it's the sponsors which makes it possible.

But unlike you here in the BVI, they use the opportunity to advertise their products. Advertising moves products, moving products represents sales, sales generate revenue, and revenue represents growth. We want to be your partners. Give us a script so our announcers can announce your product to the fans throughout the games. Give us your banners so we can place them on the walls. It will help us grow together.

Management: The League is ably managed by a group of professionals who takes the aims of the League personal and is determined to be met with success. Unlike other Leagues, our teams play for our League, rather than playing for sponsors. This gives our managing team the leverage they deserve in order to exact the commitment necessary from each team to perform in accordance to rules.

The team meets regularly to plan and execute strategies for the League and they are allowed to function free of interference.

I know that as a new League there will be mistakes made, and expectations unmet, but I also know that lessons will be learned. Our first year which was last year, was a tremendous success and I know they have put in place measures to build on that. And those will be announced by the League hopefully today.

We are building a zero tolerance League, despite our desires to reach far beyond the call to bring our youth along. But we cannot, [and I repeat] cannot allow one bad apple to spoil the whole bunch.

That said, I regard these facilities to be on holy grounds, and therefore players must know that the use of profanity are not welcome; unsportsmanlike conduct is not welcome; and neither is tardiness. We have a reputation, both the Bishop and I, and we intend to keep it.

Families: Here at Save The Seed our League has been able to attract entire families to our games, and we are proud of that accomplishment, so we want to keep it that way.

So spread the word that we are particularly pleased when we see people of all ages at the games, especially families which include both spouses.

So if we are going to promote our games as family friendly, we must ensure that they are.

The Players: Players, these games are for you, this League is for you. There is neither fame nor fortune to be gained by either the Bishop or myself. There are no profits for The Energy Center, and all the members of Management are volunteers. The message to you here is, just show some appreciation.

We expect you to have fun and play to win. This is simple. All you have to do is dribble the ball from one end of the court to the other and put it in the basket, and I guarantee you that if you do that with more frequency than your opponent you will win the game.

We are determined to make a difference in our youth, and we are confident that by using a combination of this League and the youth we are going about it the right way. We want to teach you that good behavior has positive rewards, manners makes for good relations, and that positive energy yields positive results.

Let me close by saying that, The Caribbean Basketball Confederation (CBC) games that are currently in progress here on Tortola are a good example of what is expected of a basketball League. I urge all players to attend as many of those games as they can. Both Bishop Cline and I have been attending. And of course, as you would expect, the members of management also attend regularly.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Ms. Dawn Crabbe-Herbert of Play2win sports and her partners for their promotion of what is a very successful CBC tournament. Having the games played here in the Virgin Islands has been an inspiration to our players and a huge promotion for the sport. Economically I also saw dollars for our tourism industry as well, and that could only be described as good.

The BVI Basketball Federation is also to be commended for their role in making the tournament a success, because without their preparation of our players there would be no incentive to come to the Virgin Islands.