

Village664



BACK IN ACTION AND STRONGER THAN EVER!

Village664 is thrilled to announce that over the past few months, we've been working quietly behind the scenes to build a firm foundation, bring new energy into our work, and confirm how we can better serve our community.

The new additions to our team bring fresh ideas, skills, and passion to our mission. With their support, and the unwavering commitment of our returning members, we are ready to roll out new initiatives, strengthen partnerships, and make an even greater impact in Montserrat and beyond.

Stay tuned for updates on upcoming projects, volunteer opportunities, and ways you can get involved as we continue building a stronger, more connected community. This is just the beginning — and we're so glad you're here with us for the journey ahead!

VILLAGE664 WELCOMES NEW TEAM MEMBER



NIANNA ST.CLAIRE
OUTREACH AND
ENGAGEMENT
COORDINATOR,
VILLAGE664

We are excited to welcome Nianna St. Claire as the new Outreach and Engagement Coordinator for Village664!

Nianna focuses on engaging with stakeholders, coordinating outreach efforts, and promoting the goals and mission of Village664. With a strong passion for community development and collaboration, she is dedicated to helping us strengthen our impact and build lasting connections.

Newsletter Highlights

Back in Action and Stronger than Ever

Village664 Welcomes New Team Member

Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Montserrat: A Conversation with Dr. Silvia Paz

Chairman's Message

Together With Red Cross: Helping Those In Need

Want To Be Part Of the Village?

Chairman Attends Global Sustainable Islands Summit 2025



SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN MONTSERRAT: A CONVERSATION WITH DR. SILVIA PAZ



DR. SILVIA PAZ
PAEDIATRICIAN,
MINISTRY OF HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES,
MONTSERRAT

1. Tell us about yourself.

I am a paediatrician with over 25 years of experience in diverse multicultural settings, I was initially trained in Cuba and later refined my expertise in rural South Africa. I have worked in various UK overseas territories, including Ascension Island, Tristan da Cunha, and I've been working in Montserrat from since 2022.

2. What kinds of developmental challenges are common among children in Montserrat?

We see a high prevalence of neurodiversity among children here, including ADHD, autism, and learning disabilities like dyslexia. While we don't have a large number of children with visible disabilities, these developmental conditions impact many students in the classroom and beyond.

3. How widespread is the issue?

In 2019, a study by an educational psychologist found that about 22% of children in Montserrat had some form of developmental challenge. My own data from 2024 suggests the number is even higher—closer to 25%. That means in a classroom of 20 students, around five will have difficulties requiring intervention.

4. What resources do these children need to thrive?

Sustainability is key. We need sensory rooms in every school and daycare, sensory boards in clinics and churches, and designated play areas where children can engage in movement-based activities. These spaces allow children to regulate their sensory experiences in a healthy way.

5. Beyond sensory spaces, what else is needed?

More trained professionals. Right now, we don't have permanent speech or occupational therapists in Montserrat. I bring specialists to the island once a year for a week, but that's not enough. We need full-time professionals to provide continuous support.



6. Early intervention seems to be a major focus for you. Why is it so critical?

Waiting until secondary school to address developmental challenges is too late. Children need support as early as possible—even beginning in infancy. Parents play a key role in this. For example, simple actions like maintaining eye contact with their babies instead of looking at their phones can impact brain development.

7. What does research say about early intervention?

There's a global initiative called "1000 Days," which emphasizes the importance of a child's first thousand days—starting at conception. Proper nutrition, stimulation, and early interaction shape brain development and determine long-term success.

8. What are the next steps for improving support in Montserrat?

We need sustainable funding and policy changes. Right now, I'm also connecting with professionals across the Caribbean, including in St. Lucia, to build a regional network. This issue is widespread, and collaboration will help ensure no child is left behind.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

Village664 was born out of a deep love for Montserrat—an island that, despite its challenges, continues to shine with untapped potential, vibrant culture, and unbreakable community spirit.

Village664 has a simple yet powerful mission: to mobilise the intellectual and financial resources overseas to support local non-profit entities making a positive difference on Montserrat. We aim to become an outcome- focused and trusted resource matching those who have with those who need.

As you read this newsletter, please ask yourself the following two questions:

- What causes on Montserrat am I passionate about?
- What skills, knowledge, or resources do I have to support these causes?

Please visit our website www.village664.com and click "Volunteer" then click "Find Out More" to see how you can get involved. Of course you can also email us at info@village664.com.

We believe in supporting those that wish to support others. As highlighted throughout this newsletter, Montserrat has many needs that most of us may not be aware of. Montserrat also has many people who are giving their all to make a difference. Village664 is here to support them.

I invite you to join us on this journey and offer your expertise. Together, we can contribute meaningfully to the sustainable development of Montserrat and to help position it as a choice destination to live, work, and visit.

With warm regards,



Derek Osborne
Chairman, Village664

TOGETHER WITH RED CROSS: HELPING THOSE IN NEED



AKEISHA BENJAMIN
DIRECTOR, MONTSERRAT
RED CROSS

1. Tell us about yourself.

I am originally from Trinidad and have been involved in Red Cross all my life from since a young child. I eventually became a member of staff in Trinidad on December 1st 2003. I was the Program Officer of the Montserrat Red Cross for two and a half years and became the Director in October 2024. I have over two decades of experience in public health, youth empowerment, volunteer engagement and psychosocial support.

2. Your organization is always looking for ways to support the most vulnerable. What are some ideas you're considering?

We've been exploring a few projects that could make a big impact. One idea is a period poverty initiative to provide free menstrual products to those who need them. Another is a food security program that will allow us to provide food to those in need.



3. How can people help with the period poverty initiative?

People can donate menstrual products, help us set up distribution locations, or assist in spreading awareness. We're looking to place supplies in community spaces like libraries and churches to ensure accessibility.

4. What kind of support is needed to make the food security initiative successful?

Regular donations are key, and we're hoping for support not just locally but from the diaspora as well. If individuals or groups abroad could commit to sending food items once a month or every three months, it would help keep the program running in a sustainable way.

5. I know another way Red Cross helps the community is by providing white goods. How is that going?

We've seen an increasing number of requests for essential household appliances like refrigerators and stoves. To keep this effort manageable, we would greatly appreciate donations of three fridges or stoves per year. This would allow us to continue supporting those most in need without creating unrealistic expectations.

6. What are some other ways people in the diaspora can assist?

A thrift shop in the UK wants to donate clothing to us, but they are unable to cover the shipping costs. We need individuals or groups who can help fund the shipping or coordinate transportation so that we can receive and distribute these donations to those in need.

7. If someone wants to contribute to any of these initiatives, what's the best way to get involved?

Support can come in many forms—donating products, helping with logistics, providing financial contributions, or simply spreading the word. Every bit of support makes a difference.

WANT TO BE PART OF THE VILLAGE?

You've read, 'Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Montserrat: A Conversation with Dr. Silvia Paz' — and maybe it sparked something in you. Do you or someone you know have experience with special needs children, or simply a heart for making a difference? Whether you're a trained professional or a passionate volunteer, we'd love to hear from you!

The Red Cross is working to strengthen support for vulnerable communities, What role can you and other individuals play in making meaningful change? By donating non-perishable goods, white goods, menstrual products, or assisting with logistics for clothing shipments, you can help provide vital support!

Start a conversation with us!

Want to know more about Village664, how you can get involved, or any of the NGOs we support? Email us at info@village664.com or call 664 396 4071

It takes a village — and the 664 is calling. Let's create something powerful, together.



CHAIRMAN ATTENDS GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE ISLANDS SUMMIT 2025



DEREK OSBORNE WITH
BIANCA PETERS

Derek Osborne recently represented Village664 at the 1st Forum on Climate Financing for Sub-National Island Jurisdictions (SNIJs) & Overseas Territories at the Malcome Guishard Recreational Park in Nevis. This Forum was part of the Global Sustainable Islands Summit from May 26 to 30, 2025 held in St. Kitts & Nevis. 'Diaspora' was one of the four ways of financing projects in SNIJs discussed at the Forum and Derek was one of two Knowledge Experts for that group's discussion. Hon. Crenston Buffonge, Parliamentary Secretary within the Office of the Premier, was also present at the event. Shown with Derek in the adjacent picture is Bianca Peters, Liaison Cabinet Special Envoy for Bonaire, Saba and Sint Eustatius to the EU. In 2021 Bianca led a diaspora workshop focus group for the Government of Montserrat and subsequently provided valuable guidance during the formation stage of Village664.



DO YOU WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF MONTSERRAT?

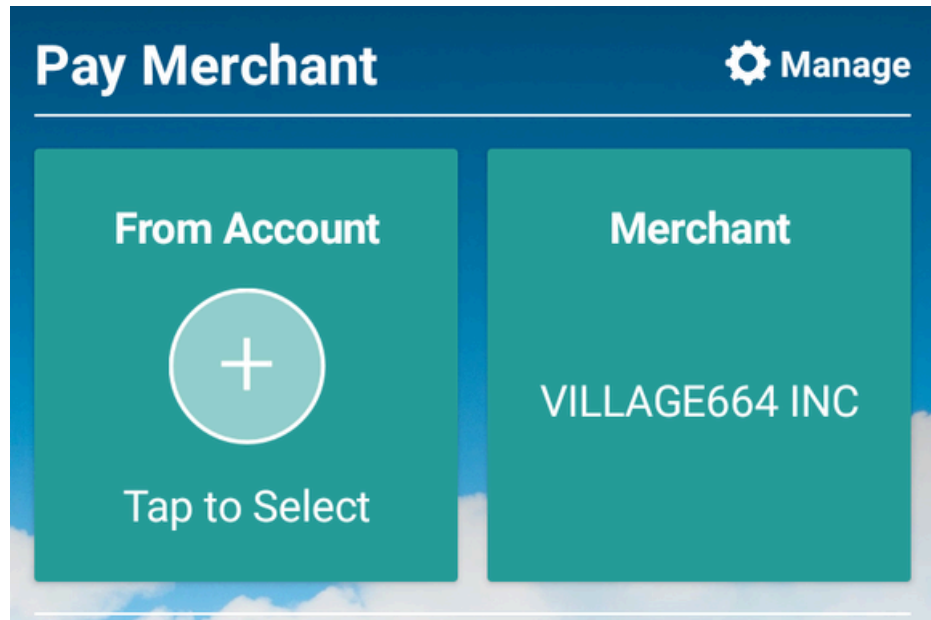
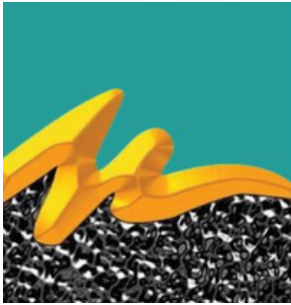
Join Village664 in supporting our Community!

Help with:

- **Volunteering & Mentorship**
- **Assisting with Community Projects**
- **Donating Supplies &/or Equipment**
- **Making Periodic Financial Contributions**

READY TO GET INVOLVED?

DONATIONS NOW ACCEPTED VIA BANK OF MONTSERRAT AND JAD CASH APP!



JAD is a digital wallet that allows users to pay or get paid using their smartphone. It offers a level of security and affordability, similar to Apple Pay, Samsung Pay, and PayPal. Once you have created your FREE account, download the JAD app on your iPhone or Android device and use to easily donate. It does not matter where (or if) you bank, and it works with any mobile carrier. You may scan the QR Code on the app or use the link below to make donations.

<https://jad.cash/pay/101337176747>

**YOU CAN MAKE ONE-TIME OR MONTHLY CONTRIBUTIONS
DONATE TODAY!**