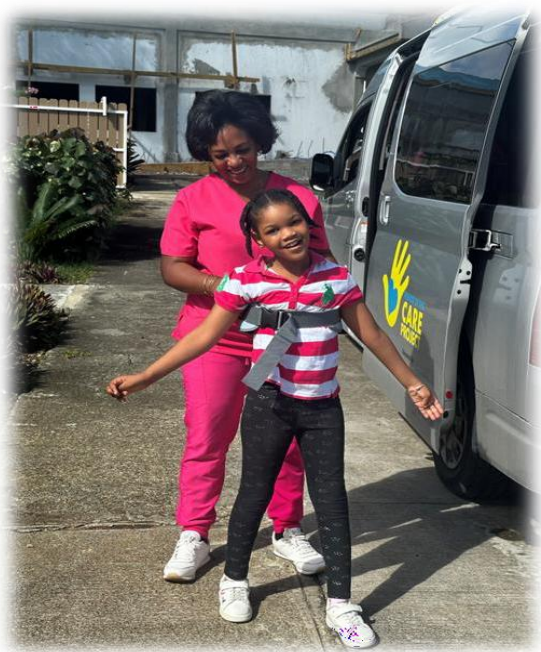




FRIENDS OF THE CARE PROJECT

2026

APPLICATION FOR FUNDING

An application for funding, to support the construction of an extension and covered walkway, aimed at increasing our capacity to educate children aged. 10–16 with special needs at the Friends Developmental Center.

Janine Darling

Friends of the Care Project is a unique charity in Antigua that provides support to both children and adults and is one of its kind across the Caribbean. Thanks to the generous philanthropy of individuals, we can run programs that benefit people in the early years of learning and adulthood.

The charity offers three types of support:

- **Early Years Education** – Children attend the Centre Monday to Friday and receive an individual education plan tailored to their needs.
- **Community Outreach** – Children can access individual therapy sessions at the base, such as physiotherapy and autism-specific programs, where the focus is on teaching new skills or modifying behaviors.
- **Adult Outreach** – Sessions are designed around individual interests, abilities, and the level of support required. We also incorporate elements of learning, guided by our Adult Outreach Coordinator, who brings experience as a teacher and principal.

Early years education: The Friends Developmental Centre (FDC) provides essential education to children with severe developmental needs and learning disabilities—children who, without our support, would have little to no access to education or meaningful social experiences. At the FDC, Eight children currently receive need-directed education through a variety of teaching methods tailored to their individual strengths. Learning is delivered through sensory experiences and social interactions, helping children engage with the world around them while receiving support in the areas they find most challenging.

Our specialized education program supports children aged 18 months to 10 years who live with a range of developmental disabilities, including:

- Cerebral Palsy
- Spina Bifida
- Hydrocephalus
- Autism

- Receptive and Expressive Communication Difficulties

Principal Mr. Robertson, Centre Manager Mrs. Kate James, and Deputy Mrs. Michelle Simpson lead the Centre. Together with our resolute team of teachers and assistants, we develop Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) tailored to each child's unique learning and developmental needs.

To support children requiring physical development assistance, we also employ a physiotherapist and a physiotherapy assistant. They work closely with many of our students too:

- Support mobility and learning to walk.
- Assist with muscle development and limb usage.
- Provide hydrotherapy sessions.

In addition, we have a qualified nurse on staff who offers expert advice, health support, and plans for both children and adults to address a range of medical and care needs.

Our goal is to create a nurturing, inclusive environment where every child can thrive and reach their full potential.

Each child has progressed since their time at the center, and every achievement is a celebration of the dedication of both the team and the child. Children who initially came to us unable to walk or talk have now made remarkable progress and can both walk and communicate. It is truly inspiring to witness, and without the commitment of our team and their determination to support learning, some of these children might never have acquired these vital skills.

In addition, individuals with physical disabilities who can learn language and numeracy skills have been given the opportunity to develop these skills. These achievements will stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives.

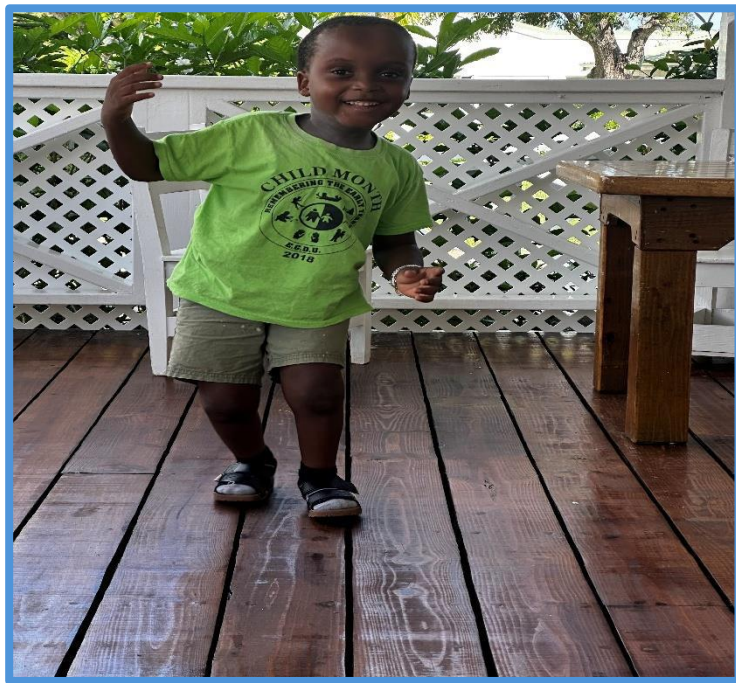
Community Outreach

Our Community Outreach Program extends our services to the wider community across Antigua. We support children of all ages who are referred to by pediatricians and community nurses. These referrals typically involve children with developmental and physical needs, particularly those requiring physiotherapy services.

Many of the children we see through this program have conditions such as Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifida, and Autism.

This child joined the Centre for outreach in January 2025 at the age of four, having been diagnosed with Spina Bifida. At the time, he was unable to walk independently and required significant support.

Now, just nine months later, it is wonderful to see the progress he has made — he is now walking independently and feels incredibly proud of himself. His journey is a testament to his determination and the consistent support provided by our team. He also attends the development center five days a week now.



We are presently receiving an increasing number of referrals from concerned parents seeking support for children who are not yet speaking or

delayed speech and showing behaviors that may be associated with autism. These children may have speech and language delays, autism, or other developmental conditions.

While we do not currently employ a speech and language therapist, our experienced team draws on their collective knowledge and expertise to develop support plans. We work closely with families to encourage and improve their child's communication skills through tailored strategies and parent collaboration.

Our outreach efforts aim to ensure that every child has access to early intervention and support, regardless of where they live on the island.

Each child that is referred to FOTCP is assessed, and we offer set sessions to work to the goal set. We have had many successes that promote independence.

Our Centre Manager is actively involved in community clinics, where she delivers talks on important topics such as the importance of play, positive approaches to parenting, and how to effectively interact with young children.

These sessions are held in collaboration with the Early Years Department, with whom we share strong professional relationships and ongoing partnerships. Together, we work to support families across the community by promoting early childhood development and positive parenting practices.

Adult outreach program

The Adult Outreach Program supports young people aged sixteen and above, many of whom live with Autism or mental health diagnoses. Our goal is to provide life skills training and opportunities for meaningful engagement and participation, empowering everyone to live with dignity, independence, and purpose.

The Outreach Coordinator has also been teaching these individuals numeracy and language skills, and it is so rewarding to see the progress in abilities that had never been nurtured before. Previously, these individuals might not have been seen as capable learners, but with the right support,

They are now demonstrating their potential and their desire to learn. This is so empowering and for these individuals to learn skills that have been dormant but now awakening.

The aim of our Outreach Team is to help individuals develop practical life skills while providing a supportive, social environment where they can form friendships and experience a true sense of belonging.

We offer a variety of engaging activities such as:

- Gardening
- Arts and Crafts
- Animal Care
- Sailing ability (including sailing opportunities)

Many individuals in this group have formed lasting friendships and feel empowered by participating in meaningful roles around the Centre. Their confidence has grown significantly, especially through involvement in a new and exciting initiative.



Thanks to a generous donation, we have received two shipping containers which we are transforming into a dedicated space for our Outreach clients. — a major upgrade from the temporary gazebo they have used for the past few years.

Under the direction of our project manager and Centre Director, who is personally managing the project, the containers will be converted into a purpose-built space featuring:

- A decked outdoor area
- Shaded indoor space.
- Accessible bathrooms
- A training kitchen for cooking and independence skills

To complete this transformation, we need to purchase essential materials and fittings, including:

- Wood for decking and interior construction
- Toilets and plumbing fixtures
- Kitchen units and appliances
- Electrical fittings and lighting
- Basic furnishings and equipment

Our future to progress and expand.

Our policy has traditionally been that when a child reaches the age of ten, they transition from the Friends Developmental Centre (FDC) to our Adult Outreach Program. This approach was necessary due to space and resource limitations, as well as the need to provide younger children with focused support. The Adult Outreach Program currently serves ten adults. Notably, one of these young men was one of our earliest participants at the FDC, highlighting the continuity of care and support that our charity provides over a lifetime.

Recently, we realized that some of the children we have known since they were babies are now approaching the age to leave the FDC. Our initial plan was to liaise with the Education Department and the Adelle School so that the children could continue their education and build upon the skills we have helped them develop over the years. If that path proved unsuitable, the alternative was to transition them into our Adult Outreach Program.

However, we have concerns about both options. Given the children's developmental and physical challenges, despite the remarkable progress they have made, schools in Antigua are unlikely to meet their needs. Similarly, moving them directly into the Adult Outreach Program is not appropriate, as they are only 10 years old, while all current participants are over eighteen. It simply does not feel right.

As a solution, we have developed the concept of a Middle-Level Support Program within the FDC. Designed for children aged 10–16, this program bridges the gap between early childhood education and adulthood. It ensures that children continue to develop essential life skills, build confidence, and receive tailored support in a safe and accessible environment. The program will provide opportunities for learning, social interaction, and personal growth during a critical stage of development, preparing them to successfully transition into the Adult Outreach Program and beyond.

As a charity, we are proud of the immense progress that has been made—not only through our work, but through the determination of these children and adults themselves. We believe charity has much more to offer them, and this new initiative will allow us to continue supporting their growth and potential.

Two of the children that need to move next year, both have had immense success, and we want to continue their journey with them.



The Question: How Will We Do This?

Your support is vital in turning this vision into reality.

To successfully establish our Middle-Level Support Programme for children aged 10–16, and to build a permanent, purpose-built base for the Programme, we urgently require financial assistance. The proposed building extension and covered walkway will provide a safe, accessible, and respectful environment where children with developmental and physical disabilities can learn, develop, and flourish.

A donation to **Friends of the Care Project** will directly contribute to:

- The construction of a fully accessible extension tailored for sensory learning and therapeutic support
- A covered walkway that ensures safe, dry, and dignified access from transport to both facilities
- Specialist resources, including physiotherapy equipment, adaptive seating, and communication aids
- Ongoing staff training and additional personnel to meet the complex needs of this age group
- Expanded transport services to ensure all individuals can attend, regardless of mobility or distance

Every contribution, regardless of size, will make a meaningful and lasting difference. Your generosity will help children continue their educational journey beyond the age of 10, support teenagers as they develop independence, and provide them with opportunities to build skills, confidence, and social connections.

Together, we can ensure that no child is left behind. By partnering with us, you help create a future where every life is valued, every ability is nurtured, and every individual has a true sense of belonging.

**Budget Details –project quantified in US\$ Dollars and timeframe.
Extension costs and covered walkway**

We have had detailed plans professionally drawn up by a certified architect and have received an approximate cost estimate for constructing the building extension.

The estimated cost for the **extension** alone is **\$555,000 USD**.

Please note that this figure does **not** include the installation of essential facilities such as the kitchen, bathroom, and fire alarm systems. These additional installations are expected to cost approximately **\$100,000 USD**.

Total cost of the extension will be **\$655,000 US dollars**.

We are preparing to submit the finalized architectural plans to the relevant authorities imminently for approval.

If we are successful in raising the necessary funds, we plan to commence construction early 2026. The builder who provided the estimate has advised that the project should take **6 to 9 months** to complete.

The covered walkway materials and labor costs are

Item	Amount (USD)
Materials	\$9,083.43
Labor	\$8,629.63

Estimated Total Project Cost: ≈ \$17,713 USD.

The builder who provided the estimate has advised that the project should. take **1 to 2 months** to complete.

Work Plan for the extension

The construction and setup of the new extension to the Friends Developmental Centre would be expected to take 6 to 9 months in total. The project would be broken into five key stages, with work potentially beginning in early 2026, and progressing through to September, depending on weather and contractor availability.

Stage 1: Site Preparation and Foundations

Timeline: March 2026

Key Activities:

- Clear the site and mark out building area.
- Excavate trenches for foundations and utilities.
- Pour concrete into column footings and foundation base.
- Lay plumbing and electrical trenches
- Cast the floor slab.

Stage 2: Building the Structure

Timeline: March – April

Key Activities:

- Lay concrete blocks for external and internal walls.
- Erect columns and beams
- Form and pour the roof structure (if concrete), or frame for sheet roofing.

Stage 3: Roofing and Windows

Timeline: April – June

Key Activities:

- Install the roof structure (timber/metal or concrete)
- Place and secure roofing materials.
- Fit all windows and external doors.

Stage 4: Internal Finishes

Timeline: June – August

Key Activities:

- Render and plaster all interior and exterior walls.
- Installation of internal partitions if needed.
- Begin internal electrical wiring and plumbing fixtures.
- Begin tiling or flooring installation

Stage 5: Final Installations and Furnishing

Timeline: August – September

Key Activities:

- Complete electrical and plumbing installations
- Painting interior and exterior walls
- Install bathroom/kitchen fixtures.
- Final floor finishes (tiles, vinyl, etc.)

- Furnish the space (desks, therapy equipment, seating)
- Final site clean-up and handover

Completion Target: September 2026

- The goal is to have the facility fully completed, inspected, and furnished by **early September**, in time to begin programming before the end of the year.

Additional Notes:

- **Architectural plans** have already been completed.
- Work will be conducted by **licensed local contractors** with oversight from our project team.
- Weather conditions may affect some timelines, particularly during the rainy season.
- All health and safety standards will be adhered to throughout the project.

Work plan for the covered walkway

Phase	Task Description	Estimated Duration	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost (USD)
1. Site Preparation	Clear and clean site, mark layout, ensure accessibility for work area	1–2 days	Site Supervisor + Laborers	\$800
	Excavate post holes, pour concrete footings, install anchors for frame	2–3 days	Mason / Construction Crew	\$2,500
2. Foundation & Structural Base				

Phase	Task Description	Estimated Duration	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost (USD)
3. Framework Installation	Assemble and erect steel/aluminum structure for ramp covering.	3–4 days	Fabricator + Laborers	\$4,200
4. Roofing Installation	Install covering material (e.g., polycarbonate or metal sheets), apply sealant.	2–3 days	Roofing Team	\$3,700
5. Finishing & Drainage	Install gutters, trim, paint/treat metal, seal joints.	2 days	Finishing Crew	\$2,100
6. Quality Check & Cleanup	Inspect structure, ensure alignment and waterproofing, remove debris.	1 day	Project Supervisor	\$600
7. Contingency & Miscellaneous	Unexpected materials, minor repairs, or adjustments	—	—	\$1,813

||| **Total Estimated Cost: | \$17,713 |**

Photographs to highlight the area of where the extension would be built, and the covered walkway on our existing building.

The building in this picture is the Friends developmental Center, and the extension will be attached to this back area.



