

Educating Students with Special Needs in Antigua

Adele School for Special Children



Meet Our Presenters

Andrea Richards-Tonge

**Principal of the Adele School
for Special Children in
Antigua.**

**Educator of 28 years in
general and special
education.**

Dianne Joseph

**Special needs educator at the
Beginners Class at the Adele
School.**

**Educator of 25 years, specializing
in early childhood development and
special education.**

History

- Drs Adele and Bernard Savoury began special education services in Antigua in 1970 when they, out of concern decided to educate a child with Down Syndrome who was not receiving any services. This began in their home and soon more students were added and volunteers began to assist.
- Shortly after Mrs. Savoury died in 1977, the school was named the Adele School for Special Children in her honour.
- In 1978 the government took over the school and it became a public school but without a permanent home. After moving from place to place, in 1989 it was permanently located to its present location on Friars Hill Road.



Services

Current Population Being Served

On average, we support to 60 students annually

- Downs Syndrome
- Autism
- ADHD/ADD
- Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia)
- Developmental Delays
- Emotional Behavioural Disorders
- Physical disabilities (Cerebral Palsy)

Some Services Offered

- Provide a safe and friendly environment that is free from the stresses of peer competition and unrealistic expectations.
- Nurture students abilities and strengths and building on them as opposed to focusing on their disabilities.
- Developing work plans which enable students working at their own pace.
- Teach functional literacy and numeracy.
- Teach life skills that will enable independent living as much as possible.
- Create opportunities for students to participate in social events with support.





Challenges

- **Lack of Space – The school has outgrown its current location. With only 5 classrooms and little physical space for expansion but a growing population of students, it is difficult to engage in activities which are critical to student development. Such as early intervention and transition services.**
- **Not enough access to technology such as reliable internet and student devices.**
- **Ongoing training of staff in new and best practices in special education.**
- **Insufficient parental/family support and engagement.**



Hope

Lehigh /Antigua Partnership

Every spring for the past 12 years a cohort of students headed by Dr. Bill Hunter of Lehigh University visit Antigua and the Adele School to offer service. Adele benefits from these visits not only when the students spend a day performing whatever services are needed, but by making lasting connections with organizations and persons who partner with us in providing ongoing training and resources.

This year Lehigh has afforded the opportunity for 2 staff from the Adele School to visit Lehigh University and to observe several special education programmes in Pennsylvania. It is hoped that this will become an annual event.

Rotary Club of Antigua – Sundown

- Provided an autism specialist to facilitate training of teachers and parents in Antigua.
- Annually provides sponsorship for a teacher from the Adele School to attend an online autism conference held in the UK.



The Foundation Class (Beginners): A Closer Look







Classroom Setup

- The beginner's class caters to students aged 5 to 10, with a current roll of 12 students.
- All students at this level have special educational needs.
- The classroom is managed by myself and by two assistant teachers. I encourage discovery
- Learning and provide real life experiences for my
- students.
- Students receive one on one contact time with the teacher at least once a week



Challenges and Classroom needs that are barriers to teaching

- Speech disorders.
- Limited space
- Limited educational resources
- Agriculture program needs more security



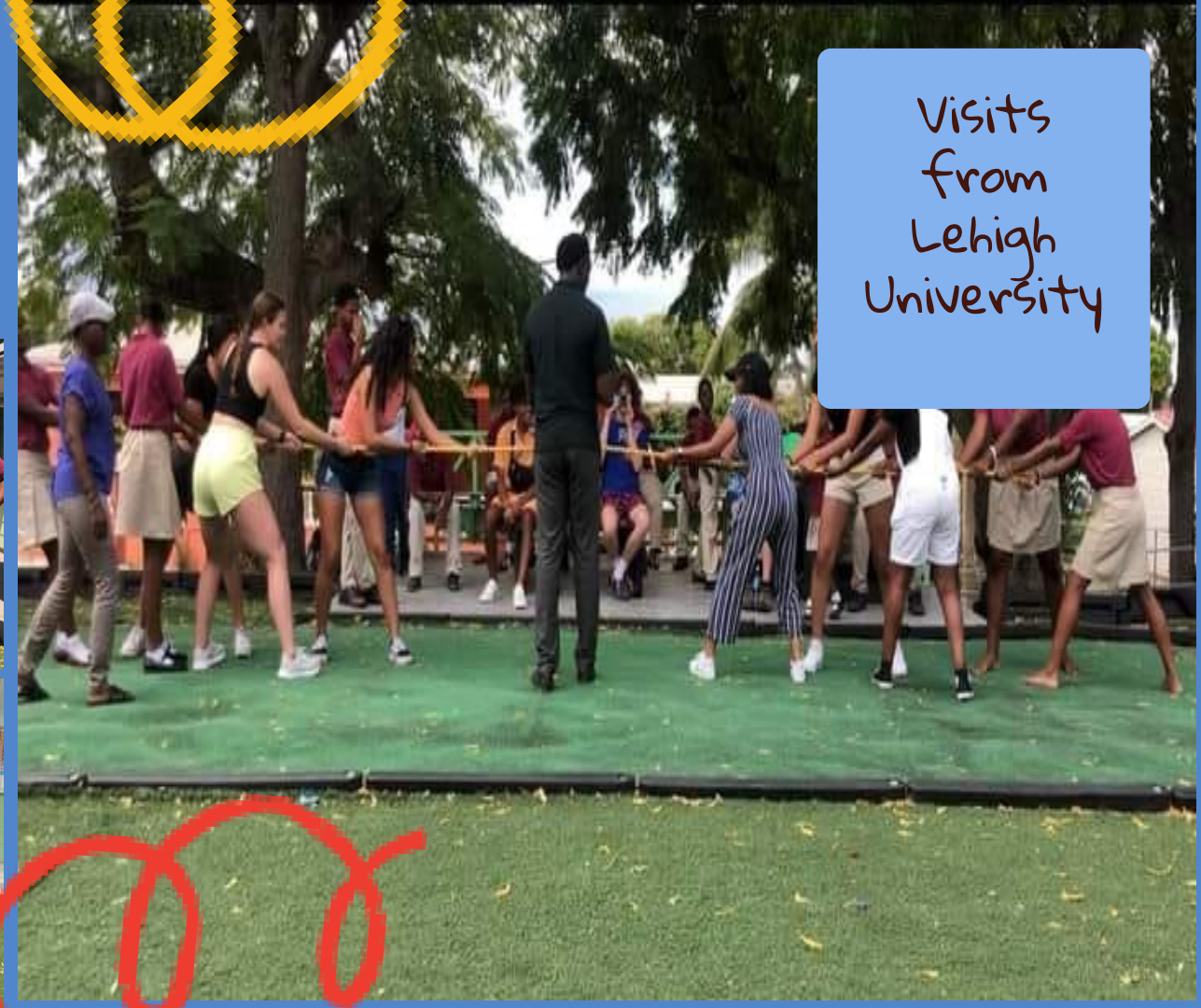
Recommendations and Hopes for the future

- Opportunity for further studies in speech therapy or occupational therapy.
- Storage space such as mobile cupboards.
- Variety of resources to improve the teaching/learning experience.
- **Agriculture tools and seeds.**





Visits
from
Lehigh
University



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**HOORAY WE
THANK YOU
FOR HAVING
US**