

# The Parker Avery Group Develops Entrepreneur Program in Jamaica

*Top consulting firm works with the Retail Orphan Initiative to lead and provide funding for the "JEDI Challenge" in Chapelton, Jamaica.*

ATLANTA, GEORGIA, UNITED STATES,  
December 15, 2021 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- The Parker Avery Group, a leading retail and consumer goods consulting firm, recently funded and led an innovative program to support young businesspeople in the town of Chapelton, Jamaica.



What started in early 2021 as a donation to support the [Retail Orphan Initiative's \(RetailROI\) SuperFriday fundraising event](#) eventually led to the firm's conception, development, and delivery of a six-week live, virtual class with a unique conclusion. Named the "JEDI Challenge" (an acronym for "Jamaican Entrepreneurs Delivering Innovation"), the class led six young entrepreneurs through the development of a comprehensive business plan.

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*Greg Buzek, RetailROI*

Complete with intensive homework assignments and required class attendance, a team of Parker Avery consultants met virtually with the JEDI participants twice a week beginning in early October 2021 to explain the specific steps required to build a business plan. The team worked through a myriad of technical and infrastructure issues inherent in a country where the average annual income hovers around \$7K USD. Class participants were

also attending school or jobs during the day.

The class culminated with each participant giving a 45-minute presentation of their business and plan. In a manner similar to the popular show "Shark Tank," a panel of judges watched the final

live presentations (conducted via Zoom), asked questions, and provided business advice. The judges included members of Parker Avery leadership, along with Greg Buzek from RetailROI and IHL Group. In addition to the final presentations, participants were judged on their business plans, class participation, professionalism, and homework completion.



“When we initially began discussing this project, we envisioned something much simpler,” says Buzek. “But The Parker Avery Group [elevated the entire concept to a level far beyond our expectations](#). Their work and investment will dramatically change not just the lives of the six JEDIs, but the entire parish of Clarendon, Jamaica.”

After the last presentation was complete, the judges gathered to assess the participants and select a winner. Unlike Shark Tank, where investments require an equity stake in the business, The Parker Avery Group provided funding in the form of tiered monetary awards for first through sixth place—with no equity requirement.

The first place JEDI Challenge winner is an 18-year-old who developed her own vegan skin care line using locally sourced materials. This formerly shy contestant won over the panel of judges with her bright personality, professionalism, passion, and acute attention to detail in her business plan.

“This experience was nothing short of phenomenal,” says Clay Parnell, Parker Avery’s President and Managing Partner, who also participated as an instructor. “We started out wanting to make a meaningful difference in this Jamaican community, but we had no idea how much an impact these young individuals would personally have on our firm.”

After receiving their awards, the JEDIs will have reporting requirements to the Fergus Simpson Foundation (FSF), who worked as ambassadors and liaisons during the project. FSF President, Janeth Simpson Brown stated, “Through the JEDI Challenge program, Parker Avery ignited one of FSF’s major goals: revenue creation. The sense of accomplishment and pride each participant exuded was overwhelming. We also want to recognize and thank Karlene Gayle, Business Department Head at Clarendon College for her strong support.”

The Parker Avery Group is planning regular touch-bases with the participants in 2022, including a potential trip to Chapelton, Jamaica. “[Our team of consultants](#) developed strong relationships with the JEDIs over the course of those six short weeks,” adds Parnell. “We want to continue to support these young businesses, as well as find ways to make the JEDI Challenge even more impactful.” The firm plans on conducting the JEDI Challenge annually.

About The Parker Avery Group. The Parker Avery Group is a retail and consumer goods consulting firm that helps clients transform through the infusion of deep industry experience with strategy development, business process design, change management, advanced analytics, and solution implementation. The company's roster of clients includes many of the world's most prominent retail and consumer brands. Learn more at <https://parkeravery.com>

About RetailROI. The Retail Orphan Initiative is a 501(c)(3) organization whose purpose is to raise awareness and provide real solutions for the more than 400 million vulnerable children worldwide. Through partnerships with retailers, vendors, and manufacturers, RetailROI helps to create internal programs for companies to provide assistance as well as participate in fundraisers throughout the year. Learn more at <https://www.retailroi.org/>

About the Fergus Simpson Foundation. The mission of the Fergus Simpson Foundation is to enrich Chapelton, Jamaica and its surrounding areas by equipping its residents with educational, entrepreneurial, emotional, and spiritual resources and tools to improve their quality of life. Learn more at <https://fergussimpsonfoundation.org/>

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