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**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND
FAMILY SERVICES**

REMARKS
KB B.E.S.T. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
‘ELDERLY APPRECIATION GALA’

SUNDAY OCTOBER 16TH, 2022
BISHOP AMAZING HOME, CLAXTON BAY

3:00 PM

Good Afternoon,

It is indeed an honour to be here with you today at this Elderly Appreciation Gala. I bring greetings on behalf of the Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, who would have loved to be here and sends her regrets. I must say that since she assumed office, Minister Cox has consistently expressed her passion for the wellbeing of older persons and continues to support programmes and policies in this regard.

This initiative is indeed timely and welcome given the recent observance of the International Day of Older Persons which highlights the important contributions that older people make to society and raise awareness of the issues and challenges of the world's ageing population.

I must applaud the KB B.E.S.T. Educational Services for its commitment to fostering excellence and nurturing resilience in the overall academic, social and civic performance of students. This gesture of demonstrating appreciation to older persons as part of your strategy to instil values in your students aligns with the Ministry's mandate to ensuring that our

vulnerable populations are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.

In this regard, the Ministry has recognized that that there is need to return to the values of honouring and cherishing life and reinforcing spiritual and moral principles at the core of our families. Hence, the Ministry has commenced its Values, Attitudes and Behaviours(VABs) campaign which brings us back to the foundational principles of family life.

Ladies and gentleman, many may have heard the old proverb *‘how a nation treats its elderly and children is a reflection of not only its matured beliefs in human rights, but also its love for humanity’*. Therefore, this intergenerational activity between the KB B.E.S.T. Organization and the Bishop Amazing Home is commendable. In this year of the Diamond Jubilee, we take this opportunity to reflect on the contributions of our now senior citizens, who over the past sixty (60) years have added great cultural, socioeconomic and civic value to individuals, communities and this nation as a whole. These treasures possess a wealth of knowledge which many are willing to share with others. Hence, opportunities like these provide benefits for all involved, and build an appreciation for difference that make our

communities more welcoming places to live, filled with greater mutual respect and care.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) anticipates that by the year 2050, there will be two billion people in the world over the age of 60, and further adds that the number of people aged 80 and older will quadruple in the period 2000 to 2050. Therefore, it is important that we all work together to ensure that our older citizens are treated with the respect, dignity and honour that they deserve.

We at the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services recognizing the tremendous importance of older persons, and the essential role they still play in the development of families and communities continue to offer several services and programmes to help, empower and transform the lives of our elders.

The Division of Ageing continues to partner with the Ministry of Health, to set standards for and assist in the management of Homes for the Aged/Older Persons to ensure that a high quality standard of care for our older persons is maintained. Additionally, it is the Ministry's intention to complete work on

The Homes for Older Persons Act as well as the National Policy on Older Persons in the near future, so that there is a consistency in the treatment afforded to our elderly citizens across the board. Therefore, I must also applaud the Bishop Amazing Home for its dedication towards fostering the ‘optimum living experience’ for its residents.

Furthermore, I am pleased to inform of the Ministry’s **‘Seeds of Hope’** initiative. Seedlings of Hope seeks to promote a sense of social inclusion and esteem among centenarians and older persons, provide an opportunity for positive social interaction between caregivers and or family members and older persons, and be a motivational tool for members of the public to engage in sustainable food production, which in return would also encourage healthy eating practices and decrease foreign exchange expenditure through the reduction of imported food items.

Participants are required to take a photo of themselves and an older relative wearing white, grey, or purple planting a seed or seedling and tag us on Facebook @Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, Instagram @msdfstt and Twitter @msdfsttt and you can win. Of course, there are prizes to

be won and I look forward to participation of some of you students and your families.

In closing, on behalf of the Minister of Social Development and Family Service, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, the Executive and staff of the Ministry, be assured that you have the Ministry's support and in this and other similar endeavours as we work together to help, empower and transform lives.

I wish you an enjoyable and fruitful rest of the evening.

Thank you.