



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

SOCIALITE

December 2023



THROWBACK TO
Christmas
IN THE
CARPARK



Minister hosts 'Christmas in the Carpark' event for staff

Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services, hosted a festive Christmas Staff Appreciation function. Themed 'Christmas in the Carpark', the event was a gesture by the Minister to express her gratitude and appreciation to staff for the hard work, perseverance and dedication which contributed to helping, empowering and transforming lives of the vulnerable citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. Held on Wednesday 20th December, 2023 at Head Office, Minister Cox in her brief remarks thanked staff for their unwavering commitment to ensuring essential services and support, further extending best wishes to them and their families for a joyful Christmas season and a prosperous New Year. National Flour Mills, VEMCO, Pennywise, Langston Roach, Media 22 Limited, Angostura, D Ramperasad and Company, Encore Rental and Transport Services and Rent-a-Amp Sound and Lighting Company all contributed to the festive

atmosphere. Entertainment was provided by Los Angeles de San Miguel, Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service Steelband and DJ Richard Hackett of Signature Soundz.



Welcome

To the New Staff of the Ministry

Krystal Ramdass
Research Specialist

Cleona Lashley
Field Officer

Kelsie Nancoo
Policy Development Officer I

Patrice Ayoung-Chee
Legal Research Officer

Donnette Dubisette
ICT Technical Officer

Cherise Bacchus
Legal Research Officer

Hermia Tyson-Cuffie
Adviser to the Minister

Sommer Taylor-Duncan
Research Technician

Bharath Ramkisson
ICT Technical Officer

Aldwin Hylegar
ICT Director

Mary Bastien
Director of National Family Services

Philbert Alexander
Procurement Specialist

We are delighted to have you join our family, and we look forward to the positive contributions we know you'll bring to our mission of fostering a better tomorrow for individuals and families in need.





Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

Attention ALL

Senior Citizens' Pension Recipients *We have made it easier!*

In addition to the Social Welfare Office, you can now also complete your **Life Certificate Exercise** through our partner **ttconnect** government at your service. Visit any one of the ttconnect Service Centres and complete the Life and Residency Verification Process, via the Life and Residential Declaration Form.

How does it work?

- 1** You will receive a notice from the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services informing you that the Life Certificate update is due.
- 2** When you receive this notice, request an eAppointment through ttconnect by calling 800-8826 with your date, time and preferred ttconnect service centre.
- 3** ttconnect will then verify, confirm and provide you with your eAppointment reference code.
- 4** The day before the appointment, you will receive a reminder telephone call from ttconnect to confirm your appointment.
- 5** You are required to walk with the notice from the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services in addition to originals and copies of your:
 - National ID Card (both sides),
 - Computerised birth certificate
 - Bio data page of your passport to the appointment.

For more information, visit www.social.gov.tt or www.ttconnect.gov.tt to chat with a Live Agent or call toll free: 800-8826.



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Children of MSDFS' Staff treated to Christmas Storytelling

On Monday 18th December, the Ministry, as part of its internal Values, Attitudes and Behaviours (VABs) campaign hosted a storytelling session at the MSDFS' Library located at the ABMA Building on St Vincent Street, POS. Children of staff of the MSDFS were invited to the Storytelling event. The MSDFS' Library staff decked the Library's Hall with a Christmas theme to mark the occasion, to the delight of the children who were eager to partake of an event packed with fun-filled activities. Deputy Permanent Secretary (DPS) at the Ministry, Mrs Vera Deonanan-Balkaran read a Christmas story to the children entitled, 'How Santa Got His Job.' DPS Deonanan-Balkaran

gave a very animated delivery of the story, much to the delight of the young audience who were invited to engage with her during the story by answering the questions she posed throughout the recital. The children in attendance were also treated to festive goodies, face-painting, crafts and were also given a Christmas token.



MSDFS LATEST NEWS



Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, joined by His Excellency Fang Qui, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to T&T and Ms Karina Jardine-Scott, Chairperson of KIND (sixth from right) take a photo with recipients and attendees following a food hamper distribution, held on Wednesday December 13, 2023 in Laventille.

You are not alone, help is available.

If you or someone you know is a **victim of abuse, having thoughts of suicide, in need of emotional support, or struggling with anxiety after a disaster, we are here to help.**



Call Us for Help - It's Toll Free



Social Development Ministry hosts “Blessing of the Crèche” Event for Staff

To signal the start of the Christmas season, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services hosted its first “Blessing of Crèche” event dedicated to fostering a sense of unity and joy among staff members during this festive season. The event occurred on Friday 15th December 2023 at the Ministry’s Head Office in Port of Spain.

Briefly addressing the gathering, Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Hon-

ourable Donna Cox urged staff to remember the reason for the season. “Let us think about the life of Jesus Christ and what it means and who He is to us and the mere fact that we are supposed to share love, and also remember that this is what we are supposed to be doing at this time. We know that we are in a challenging Ministry, a people Ministry. Therefore, let us continue to serve our clients to the best ability. Let our resolve for 2024. To

serve people with our best, and of course, with God’s help” said the Minister.

Referencing Matthew 1:18-25, Mr. Selwyn Clarke, Director of the Citizens Engagement and Outreach Unit and Pastor, led staff into blessing the beautifully crafted Nativity Scene on display. Mr. Clarke also led scores of staff in attendance in singing some traditional Christmas classics which included “Joy to the World”,





Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Health

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TIPS TO DRINK MORE WATER!

- 1 TRACK HOW MANY CUPS YOU DRINK DAILY
- 2 CARRY A WATER BOTTLE WITH YOU EVERYWHERE
- 3 DRINK A FULL GLASS WITH EVERY MEAL AND SNACK
- 4 SET ALARMS ON YOUR PHONE TO ALERT YOU WHEN TO DRINK WATER
- 5 USE BOTTLES WITH TIME MARKINGS TO REMIND YOU WHEN TO DRINK YOUR WATER



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SOCIAL SERVICES EMPOWERMENT UNIT



MSDFS and iGovTT in Winners' Row at IDB President's Awards for Innovation and Service Excellence

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services together with National Information and Communication Technology Limited (iGovTT) were both recognised as a Finalist and Category Winner at the Annual IDB President's Awards for Innovation and Service Excellence in the Public Service (Pr.A.I.S.E.). The Pr.A.I.S.E. Awards 2023, held on December 12, 2023, was held under the patronage of Her Excellency Christine Kangaloo, ORTT, President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and recognises the great achievements of the public sector in fulfilling its mandate to the people of Trinidad and Tobago through innovative services and quality customer experience.

iGovTT in collaboration with the Ministry, won the People's Choice Award for Service Excellence. This year's entry, in the Category of Service Excellence, was an improved service geared at streamlining the Life Certificate process for all recipients of the Senior Citizens Pension from the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services. Through an MOU with igovTT the Ministry's services are now available at the tconnect service centres across Trinidad and Tobago. Applicants of the

senior citizen's pension, are now able to visit any of the tconnect service centres to complete their Life Certificate and Life and Residential Form. There is also curbside assistance for those unable to enter the centres, as staff was available to meet clients at their vehicles. This resulted in a reduction in the time it took for seniors to complete their forms. An appointment system was also introduced by tconnect where persons could have arranged an appointments based on their schedules. This new service resulted in a customer rating of 4.9 out of 5 following a feedback survey conducted.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services was pleased to collaborate with iGovtt and tconnect for this special achievement and is confident that this new service will provide an inclusive and exceptional customer experience, for those completing the Life Certificate Exercise (LCE) and Life and Residential Declaration (LRD) Form.



User Responsibilities

- Users are responsible for all activities performed with their credentials
- User credentials may not be utilized by anyone but the individuals to whom they have been issued
- Users must not allow others to perform any activity with their credentials



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Our Journey to Transformation

As we continue on the transformation journey, the Corporate Communications and Education Unit (CCEU) took the opportunity to get viewpoints from some of the members of the Model Office which housed various staff members of the service delivery arms of the Ministry.

National Family Services Division's Luke Sinnette (L.S) and Crystal Oliver (C.O) sat with CCEU to share their experiences as being 'Expert Users' in the simulated work environment.

A "Model Office" (MO) brings together the people, process and technology components of a new proposed solution. It iteratively tests it against real scenarios within a simulated work environment to evaluate the usefulness and effectiveness of that solution.

The MO engages the key people involved in the solution early in the development process – allowing for meaningful feedback as the solution is being developed.

1) What role did you play in the Model Office?

L.S - I was an expert user at the Model Office which brought together staff members from the National Family Services Division, Social Welfare Division and National Social Development Programme as these divisions are the main ones which would be using the new system.

2) List three (3) things you appreciated about the new way of Social Service Delivery.

C.O - (a) The process being implemented with the new technological system, ISEMS, gives first-hand experience/practicality to the integration the Ministry wants to achieve whether it is integration of staff or services.
(b) The Model Office gave a sense of what the format of the Ministry will look like.
(c) This new way would allow us to achieve our goal of doing what is best for the client.

3) Do you think that the change can be transferred Ministry-wide?

C.O - The Model Office gave foresight of how the Ministry can operate but of course there may be some challenges as with any change, but the system is definitely one that can be used and I know we at the Ministry can own this as we are building a foundation for a better future for clients.

4) Are there any changes you would like to see?

L.S - As we are approaching the Pilot Phase, we are working very hard to make it succinct so even if there are changes to come, they should be so minimal as the point of having us in the Model Office is for us to use the system to do the work that is expected. When we encounter a problem, we try to fix it. However, we do expect when we go into the Pilot Office, some things will still need tweaking. It is an agile process, things are going to come up and we will have to adjust.

5) What advice would you offer to your peers as they prepare for this change?

L.S - Change is always difficult but it is the only constant. When you use the system and see the functionality of it, it will revolutionize the way that we work and respond to our clients.

C.O - There is always fear of the unknown and it is ok to recognize this. You have control on how you react to change by embracing it. The Ministry is implementing procedures to help not just the staff but the clients. The future has great things in store and I have seen it at the Model Office, an office which also gave a sense of togetherness.

More Transformation Nuggets coming your way!



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MSDFS participates in outreaches nationwide

Continuing its quest to fulfil its mandate as the lead social sector agency for the government, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) partnered with key stakeholders to participate in outreaches across the country throughout 2023.

Stakeholders included, inter alia, the North West Regional Health Authority (NWRHA), the San Fernando East Constituency, the Land Settlement Agency (LSA), the Ministry of Labour, the St Augustine constituency, the South West Regional Health Authority (SWRHA) and the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service (MYDNS). At all outreach sessions, representatives from MSDFS were on hand to share information about the Ministry's grants, services and programmes. The Public Assistance Grant, as well as the Sowing Empowerment through Entrepreneurial Development (SEED) grant, garnered interest at the sessions, as well as, persons were

informed of counselling and psychosocial support which are available through the National Family Services Division. The Ministry has also been a main participant in the ongoing Youth Career and Education Caravan hosted by MYDNS and visitors are always eager to learn about the Ministry's Disability Grant for minors, information from the HIV/AIDS Coordinating Unit and the Sowing Empowerment through Entrepreneurial Development (SEED) grant, which offers entrepreneurs a grant with a maximum

of \$15,000 to start a business. The Outreach initiative is one in which the Ministry highlights its ongoing campaign to provide information on available social services to various communities and stakeholders, and as such the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services is pleased to take its services to the community level and looks forward to sharing information on its suite of social services, thereby empowering all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.





SAFEGUARD YOUR DRINK

- Never leave your drink unattended.
- Do not share drinks.
- Buy or pour your own drinks.
- Do not take drinks from strangers.
- If your drink tastes odd, stop drinking it immediately.



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Free WiFi or public computers may be alluring, but these are easy tickets for a hacker to gain access to your accounts and information



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MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS



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How to Cope with Separation Anxiety as a Parent

Create a Pros and Cons List.	Develop a Positive Mindset.	Never make your child feel guilty.	Exchange tokens with your child.	Stay busy.
Separation anxiety can also be tackled by thinking about the the positive consequences after being separated. For example, if you are leaving your home for educational purposes like attaining your degree and you are facing separation anxiety then you must think about the life achievement goal and your success after doing this.	Try changing your thinking pattern and avoiding negativity. You can focus on positive things and do some relaxing exercises.	It's very likely that your child will notice some of your nervousness, but try to maintain a positive attitude.	Give your child something that you made, or a small memento that has value.	Those two simple words are the key to surviving separation anxiety.

National Centenarian Programme continues



Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

Lincoln Braithwaite
AGE - 100



Rita Smyke
AGE - 110