



SOCIALITE

APRIL & MAY 2024



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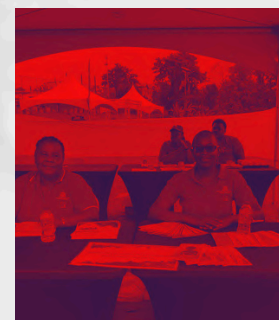
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TTBWA Board

MINISTER COX (CENTRE) ENGAGES WITH MR. FELIX CAZOR, PRESIDENT OF TTBWA. THE GOVERNMENT APPOINTEES TO THE TTBWA STAND ALONGSIDE THEM

Government Representatives Receive Instruments of Appointment to serve on TTBWA Board

April 19, 2024 - Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox appointed four members to serve as government representatives to the Board of the Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association (TTBWA). The presentations were made at the Ministry's Head Office on St. Vincent Street, Port-of-Spain. The appointments come following the expiration of the term for the last Council.

During her brief address, Minister Cox highlighted that the mandate of the Government representatives on the Council is to bolster the organization's strategic initiatives in fulfilling its service delivery to persons who are blind and visually impaired on a national level. The Minister also indicated that the Board is properly constituted and equipped with the diverse expertise to address matters concerning the community of persons who are blind and visually impaired.

Minister Cox expressed her expectation that the new tenure for these representatives will be defined by an even greater determination to expedite the delivery of social services to the community of blind and visually impaired persons in Trinidad and Tobago.

She encouraged the newly appointed members to serve with distinction and that their input can impact the lives of persons who are visually impaired and blind. Appointees to the Board will serve for a period of three years are:

- Mrs. Lenor Baptiste Simmons - Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Development and Family Services
- Mrs. Satie Jamraj-Marimuthu - Director, Research and Planning, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts
- Ms. Omalisa Baldeo - Director, Research and Planning (Ag.), Ministry of Labour
- Ms. Delisier Blackman - Legal Counsel I, Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs



MINISTER COX AND RECENTLY APPOINTED MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO BLIND WELFARE ASSOCIATION (TTBWA).



MINISTER COX AND MS HANNAH JANOURA GREET RECIPIENTS AT THE WHEELCHAIR DISTRIBUTION CEREMONY ON SUNDAY 14TH APRIL 2024.

MINISTER COX WARMLY GREETMS MS. NAGENA KHAN, ONE OF THE WHEELCHAIR RECIPIENTS AT THE DISTRIBUTION CEREMONY ORGANIZED BY JANOURAS CUSTOM DESIGN LTD.

Minister Cox lauds Janouras Custom Design Ltd for Act of Kindness at Wheelchair Distribution ceremony

Port of Spain – Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox has commended Hannah Janoura, the stalwart behind Janouras Custom Design Ltd, for her recent act of kindness in donating two hundred (200) wheelchairs to individuals with disabilities. Minister Cox expressed her appreciation during a Wheelchair Distribution ceremony held on, Sunday 14th April 2024, at the organization's Head Office on Sackville Street, Port of Spain. Janouras Custom Design Ltd has distributed approximately one thousand (1000) wheelchairs to deserving individuals, greatly enhancing their mobility and independence.

Delivering brief remarks, Minister Cox conveyed that the event not only exemplifies the spirit of generosity, but also highlights the importance of public-private partnerships in providing essential support to the vulnerable in Trinidad and Tobago. She also reaffirmed the Ministry's dedication to delivering effective social services for persons with disabilities. According to the Minister, "in keeping with the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the government has an obligation to ensure the active participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society."

Minister Cox also underscored the Ministry's progress with the draft legislation for Persons with Disabilities, noting that it is advancing steadily towards completion for submission to Parliament with the overall aim of enhancing the quality of life of persons with disabilities.

Minister of Rural Development and Local Government and Member of Parliament for San Fernando West, the Honourable Faris Al-Rawi also addressed the audience. Former Minister Joan Yuille-Williams, Epidemiologist Dr Avery Hinds, Miss Universe 1998 Wendy Fitzwilliam, designer Meiling and Jerome "Rome" Precilla were also in attendance.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services once again commends Janouras Custom Design Ltd on their benevolence, in an effort to ensure that the most vulnerable are supported in their most critical time of need.



Minister Cox receives courtesy call from versatile author, Dr. Sonia Noel

On Tuesday 30th April, 2024. Minister of Social Development and Family Services Senator the Honourable Donna Cox received a courtesy call from best-selling author Dr. Sonia Noel. During the meeting, Dr. Noel presented Minister Cox with a copy of her book *Living with Intention* which explores using determination, faith, focus, self-discipline and consistency to navigate life's challenges while also highlighting the significance of self-love.

Minister Cox commended Dr. Noel adding that her book emphasizes the importance of adopting and practicing positive values as essential elements of intentional living. The Minister further shared with Dr. Noel about the Ministry's ongoing efforts for transformation in the workplace via the Ministry's internal Values, Attitudes and Behaviours (VABs) Campaign, highlighting its goal of fostering a more client-centered approach among staff.

Courtesy Calls

Living with Intention

Dr. Sonia Noel



Awareness through Art ... Minister Cox meets with Trinity Dance Theatre Artistic Director for production on Human Trafficking

Courtesy Calls

Wednesday 3rd April, 2024 - Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, met with Mr. Allan Balfour, the Artistic Director of the Trinity Dance Theatre of Trinidad and Tobago. The meeting took place at the Ministry's Head Office on St. Vincent Street, Port of Spain.

During the meeting, Mr. Balfour conveyed to the Minister that the primary focus of his theatre company is to address the key social issues of Trinidad & Tobago and present stimulating and thought-provoking works, through a fusion of Caribbean-contemporary dance styles. Due to his close experiences with, and sincere support for victims of human trafficking, his theatre company will center its 2024 Dance Season "ALPHA", exploring the social issue "Human Trafficking as a Form of Gender-based Violence."

The event took place on June 8-9, 2024 at Queens Hall and included a Dance Presentation on Human Trafficking entitled "Silenced" and a Social Outreach Short Film on Human Trafficking. Recognizing the Ministry's critical role and support for victims of human trafficking, Mr. Balfour invited the Minister to support and serve as patron for the event; which she graciously accepted.

Minister Cox in turn commended Mr. Balfour for using his art to raise awareness and inspire action, and, for focusing his dance presentation on the highly sensitive issue of human trafficking. She also informed Mr. Balfour that plans are underway for the establishment of a transitional facility to accommodate women who are victims of trafficking.

Additionally, Minister Cox further pledged her support for the initiative emphasizing that the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services remains steadfast in its commitment to actively pursue opportunities aimed at raising awareness of significant social issues such as this one.





Far left, staff from the Ministry's Division of Ageing; Sophia Kennedy & Anderson Cyrus, both Inspector I, engage with Tomás Orozco, Rodrigo Porta, both UNDP International Consultants.

Rachael Russell- Project Associate, UNDP T&T, Director ICT- MSDFS, Aldwin Hylegar, Tomás Orozco- International Consultant, Rodrigo Porta - International Consultant, Permanent Secretary, MSDFS Ryan Ramcharan, Isele Robinson-Cooper- Programme Manager, Wyatt Achong -Project Coordinator

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Port of Spain - In alignment with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago's Digital Transformation Agenda, which mandates that all Ministries and Government Departments digitize their records; the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) has partnered with the Ministry of Digital Transformation (MDT) to achieve this objective. The aim of this project is to digitize client records across Service Delivery Units and Departments, in preparation for the full implementation of the Social Services Management Information System (SSMIS), which serves as the platform for the Integrated Social Enterprise Management System (ISEMS).

As part of this collaboration, MDT has engaged the United Nations Development Programme -Sustainable Development Goals Platform (UNDP-SIGOB) to advance the digitization of the Ministry's records. A delegation from the UNDP-SIGOB has commenced a series of visits to the Ministry's physical archives at Local Boards from April 8-12, 2024, with the objective of gathering information on the Ministry's client records. This data will be used to develop a work plan for designing the digitization policy for the MSDFS.

The primary objective of this mission is to engage with the Ministry's key stakeholders such as the executive and senior leadership, as well as key personnel at selected Local Boards and Service Delivery Units. The mission will also include assessments of archive digitization parameters and interviews with Officers responsible for physical files and records.

The MSDFS has been identified as a key Ministry whose client information will lay the groundwork for various digital initiatives, including the National e-Identity, a Social Benefits Wallet and the Interoperability Programme, among others, as part of the Government's broader Digital Agenda and e-Strategy. The SSMIS will streamline the client eligibility application process to facilitate an array of social benefits offered.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services views this partnership as a key strategy towards advancing its digitization agenda and enhancing the efficiency of social service delivery through the use of digital tools.





Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) Supports Outreach Initiatives



The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services' participated in several outreach initiatives across the country hosted by the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service (MYDNS), in Rio Claro, Malabar and Maraval.

At each event, hundreds of persons were in attendance, and eagerly engaged Officials from the Social Welfare Division, the National Family Services Division, the National Social Development Programme and the Social Empowerment through Entrepreneurial Development (SEED) Unit, the NGO Unit and the HIV/Aids Coordinating Unit, who were present to share information about the Ministry's grants, services and programmes available to the public.





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

HAPPY ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS DAY

The Minister, Executive and staff of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services extended warm greetings to all secretarial, clerical, and office professionals on the special occasion of Administrative Professionals Day 2024.

Minister Cox also said, “as we come together to celebrate Administrative Professionals Day, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for your unwavering dedication, hard work, and resilience.”

Senator the Honourable Donna Cox
Minister of Social Development and Family Services





REVISED GUIDELINES FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DISABILITY ASSISTANCE GRANT FOR MINORS (DAGM)

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) announces the implementation of the Revised Guidelines for the Administration of the Disability Assistance Grant for Minors (DAGM), effective May 1, 2024.

Revisions to the Guidelines are as follows:

- **New application form to be utilized from May 1, 2024**
- **The maximum combined income threshold for parents or guardians of child/ren with a disability must not exceed \$17,400.00 per month.**
- **A child who attains 16 years can no longer apply for the Disability Assistance Grant for themselves. (Applicants must be over 18 years of age AND a citizen/legal resident of Trinidad and Tobago as defined by the Immigration Act)**

The new criteria does not apply to existing beneficiaries. The new criteria are for new applications and applications that were not approved as at April 30, 2024.

New applicants are required to obtain a Medical Report and the new application form from a Social Welfare Local Board or online at www.social.gov.tt

Where a monthly sum exceeding \$1,500.00 is paid for a similar benefit on behalf of a child, such a child will not be entitled to receive the Disability Assistance Grant.

For further information, persons may contact the Call Centre at 800-1MSD (1673) or call the Local Board in their respective areas.

These numbers are available on the Ministry's website at <https://social.gov.tt/contact-us/>



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NATIONAL CENTENARIAN PROGRAMME

The National Centenarian Programme seeks to recognize older persons as worthy and resourceful members of society, and highlight their achievements.

The Ministry invites family members and loved ones, friends and neighbours to register information on persons who are 100 years (i.e. 99 years of age).

DHARMIE DEO



FANNY PARRIS

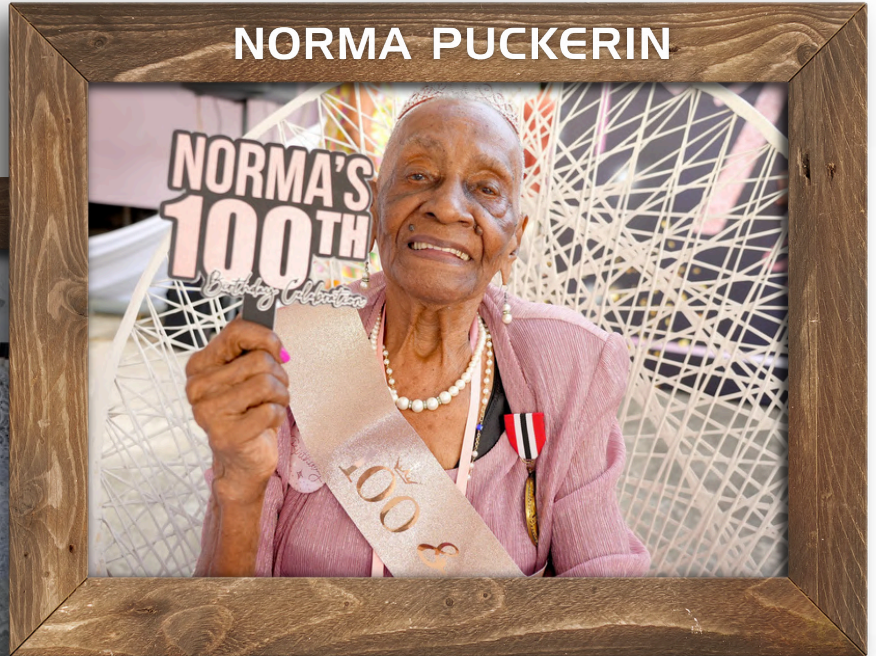


AMY AYERS



NATIONAL CENTENARIAN PROGRAMME

NORMA PUCKERIN



DRUCILLA BAPTISTE



SHYRA BAKSH



SEMINAR

SEMINAR

FOR WOMEN WITH
DISABILITIES ON
SEXUAL AND
REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH



Ministry of Social Development and Family Services hosts Seminar for women with disabilities on Sexual and Reproductive Health

“It is observed that some women with disabilities encounter numerous challenges, and limited access to essential information services, education, and preventive services, that are required for them to lead healthy sexual lives,” said Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox at the Seminar on Reproductive and Sexual Health for Women with Disabilities.

The event was held on Wednesday 22nd May 2024 at the Hyatt Regency Trinidad and hosted by the Disability Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services. During her feature remarks, Minister Cox conveyed to attendees that challenges faced by women with disabilities can heighten the risks of sexual exploitation, assault, or abuse throughout their lives, as highlighted by the National Policy on Persons with Disabilities, hence, the importance of seminars and sensitization sessions such as these.

Recognizing the need to promote a more inclusive society, the Minister shared that the Trinidad and Tobago Disabilities Bill is nearing completion. “The Draft Bill was shared with several organizations and invaluable comments and recommendations were received from eighteen (18) Government Ministries, the Equal Opportunity Commission, the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago, three (3) Statutory Bodies, ten (10) Non-Governmental Organisations, and persons with Disabilities. The Ministry is nearing completion of the final draft of the revised Bill. Noteworthy, provisions of the Draft Bill include but are not limited to. Protection from discrimination; access to Education; The Right to work and employment; Access to Healthcare, Housing, and Auxiliary social services and the right to an adequate standard of living.”

The Seminar featured presentations on the Cost of Having a Family and the Benefits of Strong Parent-Led Households, Common menstrual problems among women and difficulty becoming pregnant, Gynaecological cancer screening and surgery for women and the challenges, Sexually transmitted infection/diseases, prevention, diagnosis and treatment, Contraceptive Choices and HIV/Aids Prevention, Diagnosis, and Treatment.

Participants also had the opportunity to access various services including, Blood Glucose Testing, HIV Testing, Breast examinations, Mental Health Services, Vision Screening, Dietary/Nutrition Services, and HPV Immunization facilitated by the North West Regional Health Authority.



APRIL-MAY, 2024



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