



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Monday, 16 August 2021**

**Priority: HIGH**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Jenille Rodriguez receives HDC home following tragic fire**

“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” Three weeks after a fire destroyed her home and loved ones tragically, Jenille Rodriguez received these comforting words as well as the keys to her new home earlier today. Minister of Social Development and Family Services Senator the Honourable Donna Cox joined by Minister of Housing and Urban Development the Honourable Penelope Beckles, presented the keys of the three-bedroom unit to Ms Rodriguez at the Housing Development Corporation’s Vieux Fort Housing Development Complex.

Speaking briefly during the handover ceremony, Minister Cox stated that the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services through various collaborations was pleased to speedily provide assistance to the family. According to Minister Cox – “When the incident took place, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services joined by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development collaborated to provide relief to the family during this critical time. This collaborative response by both Ministries and other state agencies is indicative of developing a whole of government approach to rendering assistance to families in times of need.”

Minister Cox also stated that the MSDFS will continue to support Ms. Rodriguez and her family as they progress on this journey and a further commitment has been made to assist with the rental cost for the first three months. Additionally, the family will access the Ministry’s Furniture Grant to assist with furnishing the apartment and through the National Family Services Division, the family will receive counselling and psychosocial support.

Speaking also, Minister of Housing and Urban Development the Honourable Penelope Beckles indicated that the partnership between the two Ministries allowed for the analysis, data collection, assessment and assistance for Ms Rodriguez under the HDC’s Emergency Housing Programme. Minister Beckles indicated that her Ministry will cover the second three months’ rent for the family and the family has access to the rent-to-own option. Also in attendance was the Member of Parliament for Port of Spain South Keith Scotland who indicated that he will cover the cost of rental for an additional three months for the family.

The handover was witnessed by Ms. Rodriguez’s two surviving children who she claims contributed to her continued strength. In response, Ms. Rodriguez thanked both Ministers and the Member of Parliament for their assistance and lauded the general public for the outpouring of prayer, love and support.

The new house is outfitted with sprinkler systems, a fire hydrant and has 24-7 security arrangements. The location also provides a scenic view and Ms Rodriguez and her family have been specifically placed in a location where she would be near to her family and workplace.

**-End-**

**For more information:**

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Minister Cox makes brief remarks at the ceremony stating that the MSDFS will continue to support the Burke/Rodriguez family



Ms Rodriguez thanks both Ministers and Member of Parliament for their assistance



Minister Cox and Minister Beckles presents the keys to Ms. Rodriguez



(MP Keith Scotland, Minister Cox, Ms. Rodriguez, Minister Beckles and the two daughters.



Minister Cox assures Ms Rodriguez of the Ministry's commitment towards supporting her family.