



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

106 and counting. Ms. Rivas celebrates her 106th birthday!

She was born on July 16th, 1916 but her birth date was registered two years later on July 20th, 1918. Nonetheless, it was a beautiful Centenarian Celebration for Ms. Margarita Rivas who celebrated her 106th birthday today at The Chocolate Bar in Santa Cruz. A fitting venue for the celebration as Ms. Rivas “likes her coffee sweet.”

Joining the celebration was Minister of Social Development and Family Services Senator the Honourable Donna Cox who asked the centenarian the key to her longevity as she herself would also wish to live to such a prosperous age. "I work hard," Ms. Rivas told the Minister. "Hard, hard, hard," she continued. According to relatives, Ms. Rivas has never worked outside of the home but did farming, planting, and reared animals including pigs and cows. Ms. Rivas, a devout believer also attributed her longevity to faith in God stating that she is “married to Jesus.”

The event was filled with lots of laughter and cheers, as Mr. Edwin Mondezie, who Ms. Rivas currently lives with and jokingly refers to as her husband described the centenarian as “happy, demanding, prayerful, and laughs as loud as anybody else.” Mr. Mondezie stated that Ms. Rivas is very dear to him and recalled where Ms. Rivas pawned her bracelet to purchase his ticket to New York when he migrated at the age of twenty. He further stated that now that he has moved back to Trinidad, he ensures that she is well taken care of.

Minister Cox then commended Mr. Edwin Mondezie, his wife Lydia, and her nephew Edward for providing excellent care for the centenarian further stating that it would have significantly contributed to her vibrancy and longevity.

Also in attendance was Edwin “Crazy” Ayoung, who sang happy birthday and a series of local soca and parang music to Ms. Rivas. Crazy in a brief extempo, asked her what is her secret stating “Margaret you look so sweet, you have to tell me what you does eat. Cuz I want to live that long, I going seventy-nine years strong.” According to relatives, it is what she drinks rather than what she eats as Ms. Rivas, quite frequently enjoys her favourite drink of Hennessy Brandy.

Minister Cox then presented Ms. Rivas with her Certificate of Honour and Achievement, a hamper courtesy of the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO), and a birthday cake from the Kiss Baking Company.

Ms. Rivas was born and raised in Cantaro and moved to La Pastora at age thirty. She was married to Ignacio Rivas for sixty-eight years before he passed away more than twenty years ago. Though Ms. Rivas has no children of her own, she is referred to as a mother to many.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services is once again pleased to honour our latest centenarian and encourage family and loved ones, Members of Parliament, Local Government representatives, friends, and neighbours to salute our nation's centenarians by registering for the Programme. Persons may visit the Ministry's website at www.social.gov.tt and complete the online form or print a downloadable form for completion. Completed forms may be dropped off at the nearest Social Welfare Office or emailed to the Division of Ageing at opic@social.gov.tt. For more information, persons may contact the Division of Ageing at 623 – 2608; Ext 2001 to 2009 or 800-OPIC (6742).



Minister Cox receives the secret to longevity from Ms. Rivas who celebrates her 106th birthday today.



Edwin "Crazy" Ayong sings happy birthday to Ms Rivas.



Minister Cox presents Ms. Rivas with her Certificate of Honour and Achievement.