



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### *Drink water, mind yuh business, pray says new centenarian Shyra Baksh to youths*

Cumuto celebrated a new centenarian when Chaguanas native, Ms. Shyra “Mamma” Baksh, marked her centenary on May 24, 2024. When asked about the secret to her remarkable longevity, Mamma attributed it to the purity of her heart and the generosity she extended to all. *“I believe that keeping a good, clean heart and being generous to all friends and neighbours. Simple fresh home-grown food, fresh cow’s milk and plenty fish with lots of vegetables,”* she said.

Despite not having the privilege of formal schooling, Ms. Baksh indicated that many of her valuable lessons and life skills were taught to her by the village elders. Coupled with the steadfast belief in prayer and integrity, her advice to the present generation is to *“drink water and mind yuh business. Pray to the Almighty and be honest in all that you do.”*

Commenting on how the world has changed, Ms. Baksh said the world transformed in ways both remarkable and disheartening. *“Growing up we never disrespect our elders but today is a different story. We used to go to sleep with our doors open and cannot enjoy that now because of the high crime. On a positive note, there are lots of cars and we can talk to our children overseas and even see them on the phone live,”* said Ms. Baksh.

When reflecting on her proudest accomplishments, Ms. Baksh expressed immense pride in witnessing four generations thrive and seeing *“babies blossom into productive citizens.”* Ms. Baksh also highlighted that among the many experiences witnessed, one of the most notable was her visit to Saudi Arabia. *“I was able to see man going to the moon and was amazed by the rockets. I was also happy to go and visit the holy land Mecca and making the Hajj. I even went to the 110<sup>th</sup> floor of the tallest building in the world.”*

The mother of seven, grandmother of sixteen, great-grandmother of fifteen, and great-great-grandmother of seven now delights in sleeping, watching television and enjoying visits from family and friends, relishing on her accomplishment as “*the oldest in the village.*”

Ms. Sophia Kennedy, Inspector I of the Division of Ageing joined the family at their Cumuto home for the celebration, presenting Ms. Baksh with her Certificate of Honour and Achievement and birthday cake from the Kiss Baking Company. Ms. Baksh also received food hampers courtesy Vemco and the National Flour Mills.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services was proud to honour Ms. Baksh and encourage persons to register for the National Centenarian Programme (NCP). The NCP honours persons 100 years and older for their contributions to the development of Trinidad and Tobago. To register, please visit the Ministry’s website at [www.social.gov.tt](http://www.social.gov.tt) to complete the online form. For more information, persons may contact the Division of Ageing at 623 – 2608; Ext 2001 to 2009, or 800-OPIC (6742).

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*New centenarian Ms. Shyra Baksh displays her Certificate of Honour and Achievement at her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration May 24, 2024.*





*Four generations gather to celebrate with new centenarian, Ms. Shyra “Mamma” Baksh.*



*Relatives display some items Ms. Baksh received which includes a birthday cake from the Kiss Baking Company and food hampers courtesy Vemco and the National Flour Mills.*





*Relatives and loved ones gather to honour and celebrate new centenarian Ms. Shyra Baksh, who marked the milestone on May 24, 2024.*