Wednesday, 15 November 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Priority: HIGH

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services celebrates World Sight Day 2017

On Wednesday 1st November, 2017, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services joined The Volunteers for World Sight Day at the National Library and Information System Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (NALIS), Port of Spain, for this year’s observance of World Sight Day. With the theme “Make Vision Count,” The Volunteers for World Sight Day, under the guidance of its Chairperson Dr Desiree Murray, Lecturer in Ophthalmology at the Faculty of Medical Sciences, the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, collaborated with NALIS, for almost two weeks of eye health awareness activities. These activities included the launch of a commemorative eye care exhibition and Public Symposium on Eye Health and Blindness Prevention on Wednesday 1st November, 2017 at NALIS.

The areas of discussion at the Public Symposium were diverse and holistic in relation to eye care and ranged from tips on the prevention of blindness, the effective use of eye drops, eye injuries and diabetic retinopathy, to conjunctivitis or “Red Eye” and other eye health issues. Also, during the eye care exhibition, which ended on Friday 10th November, 2017, focus was placed on drawing attention to the causes of avoidable blindness in these groups, including uncorrected refracted error, cataract, glaucoma and diabetic eye disease. Emphasis was placed on those who are especially vulnerable, including the young, school children and the elderly.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services was pleased to have the opportunity to support this initiative and to showcase its programmes, grants and services for the launch of the eye care exhibition on Wednesday 1st November, 2017. Among the social programmes and services showcased were, the Ministry’s social assistance grants available through the Social Welfare Division including the Medical Equipment Grant for the assistance with the purchase of spectacles, the Disability and Public Assistance Grants as well as counselling, parental and psycho-social support from the National Family Services Division. Staff of the Ministry’s Disability Affairs Unit were also present to interact with those in attendance and address any questions or concerns the participants may have had during the exhibition.
The Volunteers for World Sight Day also used this opportunity to honour the first locally born Ophthalmic Surgeon in Trinidad and Tobago, the Honourable Arthur Hutton Mc Shine. The late Dr Mc Shine, who was a former Mayor of Port of Spain, was best remembered for his passion to make quality eye care available for all.

World Sight Day, which is internationally commemorated on October 10, seeks to raise awareness on eye care issues and is one of the most important advocacy and communications events on the eye health calendar.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, helping…empowering…(and) transforming lives.

Making vision count: Dr Desiree Murray Chairperson of The Volunteers for World Sight Day, Lecturer in Ophthalmology at the Faculty of Medical Sciences, the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine speaking during the launch of the commemorative eye care exhibition and Public Symposium on Eye Health and Blindness Prevention at NALIS, Port of Spain.
All smiles: Ms Asenath Mc Ewen of the Ministry’s Disability Affairs Unit presents Dr Desiree Murray with a Guide to Social Services Handbook and other reading material during the launch of the eye care exhibition at NALIS.
20-20: Representatives of the Caribbean Telecommunications Union were also on hand to showcase their services including their Caribbean Video Assistance Service which uses a technology platform to facilitate communication for persons with Disabilities.

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