



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

Feature Remarks

Official Opening of
K-Marie Xquisite Touch

Friday February 12, 2021

59 Eastern Main Road, Curepe

10.00 a.m.

Salutations

- Pastor Stephen and Karen Alexis
- Kezia Marie Alexis
- Family and loved ones
- Other specially-invited guests
- Members of the Media

Pleasant morning and please accept my sincerest gratitude for the opportunity not only to witness but to be a part of the celebration to mark this significant accomplishment.

It is certainly an honour for me to address you today, as we celebrate this exciting new chapter in Kezia-Marie' life. Given all that our nation has endured for approximately one(1) year now, today's official opening of *K-Marie's Xquisite Touch Beauty Salon*, provides us with a much-needed breath of fresh air and a renewed sense of hope and purpose for the way forward.

Kezia's journey is indeed one of faith; and one characterised by an ideal set of principles which define her as a loving daughter, honour student, model citizen, talented, and of course, highly skilled individual.

All the good things that we as parents and guardians desire for those who are in our care. And in this current environment, provides as well, a stark contrast to the picture being painted of young people.

However, within the context of this morning's activities, there is one more characteristic that I would like to highlight and that is Kezia-Marie's *resilience*.

Like many others in Trinidad and Tobago, and across the world, Kezia-Marie became unemployed during the initial wave of COVID-19. However, this university graduate was not content to sit by idly and wallow in self-pity or even succumb to fear-mongering. Instead, as a woman of faith, she chose to dig deeper and find a way to cope with the curveball that life had thrown her way.

Kezia-Marie worked hard, found the courage to pursue an alternative path to self-sufficiency and re-invested in herself.

Today's event is the culmination of the many sacrifices she made during this journey of re-discovery, and so to you Kezia-Marie, I say well done!

Your successes today, mirrors the work of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, which has as one of its mandate, the reintegration into the workplace of a smany citizens as possible who, under the current circumstances, have been rendered unemployed.

Our work is not only with those who are referred to as poor, vulnerable or at risk, but also with those who may have become retrenched or experienced similar debilitating trauma that decreases their chances of realising their fullest potential.

Consequently, as we have done for so many others in similar circumstances, the executive and staff of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services are prepared to assist you in moving further ahead, so that you would be able to further transform your life, as an astute and successful entrepreneur and most certainly, a sterling example of what our young women can achieve when they remain consistent and disciplined about their future.

In this regard, a representative of the Division of the Ministry responsible for the *Sowing Empowerment through Entrepreneurial Development (SEED) Programme*, has been mandated to contact you following this morning's launch to provide information on the services available.

As a reminder to those present, the SEED programme targets micro-entrepreneurs within our communities who are not eligible for traditional loan facilities and provides grant funding up to a maximum of \$15,000.00 TTD for the purchase of goods and/or equipment, as well as a provision of up to \$7,500.00 TTD to facilitate skills training at a recognized/accredited institution.

In closing, Kezia-Marie, I extend congratulations once more on the start of this exciting chapter in your life, and I encourage you to continue putting God first in all future decisions and initiatives.

The author of Psalm 127:1 reminds us that “Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.”

I urge you to continue to put your trust in your God who neither abandons nor forsakes His people. Note, once He is the centre of your business you can only expect great success.

On this Friday morning when others are being asked to stay home in protest, we are here present to praise the LORD and join in your witness, that “though weeping may endure for the night, joy cometh with the morning.” You have turned the tragedy of unemployment to a testimony of resilience, and you deserve all the blessings that will undoubtedly come your way.

Thank you once more for the invitation to attend. May God bless you and your family, and May God bless our nation.

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