



Caribbean YOUTH

Highlighting the projects and programmes of the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre



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About us

The Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre is located in Georgetown, Guyana and is one of four Centres established to serve the member countries of the Commonwealth, spread across the globe. The Caribbean Centre serves the Commonwealth Caribbean and Canada. These 18 countries together have a total population of 33.6 million people and a youth population of approximately 5.4 million.

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Commonwealth contribution to Human Development applaudable - says Guyana's PM



CYPCC's Regional Director, Mr Henry Charles propose a toast to Guyana's Prime Minister, the Honourable Mr Samuel Hinds at the Commonwealth Day reception on March 12 at the Le Meridien Pegasus.

A formal reception to commemorate Commonwealth Day 2007 in Guyana was held on Monday March 12 at the Le Meridien Pegasus in Georgetown.

In a toast on behalf of the Government and people of Guyana, Prime Minister, the Honourable Mr. Samuel Hinds highlighted the significant contribution of the Commonwealth to human development, noting particularly the significant role it has played in preserving the democratic process in Guyana.

Prime Minister Hinds commended the work of the

Commonwealth Observer Mission during Guyana's recent elections and also expressed appreciation for the Commonwealth Secretariat's contribution to Guyana's sustainable development. Reaffirming his country's commitment to the Commonwealth values, the Prime Minister recommended the Commonwealth as a model multi-lateral institution for the promotion of peace and understanding.

During his remarks Regional Director of the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre, Mr. Henry Charles took the opportunity to highlight the Commonwealth's

humanitarian efforts at restoring peace and stability in Northern Uganda as tangible evidence of its commitment to "respecting difference and promoting understanding".

Mr. Charles also urged those present to become better informed of the plight of millions of young people in the Commonwealth, many of whom are forced to live in very violent and volatile circumstances. He highlighted the positive impact of the Commonwealth in addressing many of these youth development challenges and invited the gathering to become advocates for youth empowerment and sustainable development.

The Regional Director concluded by expressing gratitude to the Government and people of Guyana for their commitment to Commonwealth values and principles.

The reception was attended by members of the Diplomatic Corps, the CARICOM Secretariat, Co-Chairperson of the recently established CARICOM Youth Development Commission, CYPCC graduates, Commonwealth Youth for Positive Living (CYPLs), CARICOM Youth Ambassadors, youth representatives of various international, regional and national organizations.

See photo highlights of Commonwealth Day 2007 on page 6

Editorial

Celebrating Caribbean Youth Day

by Henry Charles, CYPCC, RD

A few years ago, a decision was taken to commemorate September 30th each year as Caribbean Youth Day. Due to the low keyed nature of celebrations in the period following this decision, some felt the idea should be shelved.

However, the 2005 Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre Regional Advisory Board meeting held in Saint Kitts and Nevis concluded that the annual commemoration of Caribbean Youth Day on September 30 should continue and that every effort must be made to enhance public awareness of and participation in the celebrations.

To date only the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre and a few Ministries and Departments of Youth organize activities to commemorate Caribbean Youth Day.

As we prepare to commemorate another Caribbean Youth Day on September 30, 2007 it is necessary to remind Ministries and other Government Youth Development agencies of

their responsibility to forge strategic partnerships with national youth networks and other youth development stakeholders to plan and execute relevant commemorative activities.

It is also appropriate for all youth development stakeholders to recognize the significance of implementing an effective public awareness campaign to heighten the occasion's public appeal and to secure more broad based participation in the organized activities.

At the regional level the CYP Caribbean Centre has already made contact with the CARICOM Secretariat in an effort to forge a strategic partnership to increase public awareness of and participation in the commemoration of Caribbean Youth Day 2007 and beyond.

We therefore urge all youth leaders, youth networks and youth development agencies to contribute towards the successful commemoration of Caribbean Youth Day 2007 and beyond.

Long live Caribbean Youth Day!!!

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CYPCC takes Youth Work into a new direction



Mr. Jules Pascal,
Director of Youth of Dominica.

Following the completion of *National Consultations on Competency Standards for Youth Development Work*, held recently in Dominica, Director of Youth Affairs Mr. Jules Pascal has lauded the role the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre (CYPCC) in taking Youth Work to a new level.

Speaking at the end of the consultations which were facilitated by Programme Manager, Ms Glenyss James during February 7 to 8, 2007 Mr. Pascal further stated, "I am very pleased and satisfied with the outcome of the consultation. It was timely, revealing, relevant, forward looking and very rewarding. The response from the stakeholders was tremendous; their participation in the group work demonstrated a high level of commitment on the part of youth, youth workers and others who interface with young people on a regular basis.

If youth work is to be undertaken

efficiently and effectively there must be performance criteria and indicators to effectively measure the quality of service provided," he added.

Participants were made aware of critical areas of youth development work which had been taken for granted in the past, the need to give recognition to the specific levels and skills required to perform the related tasks and the need for specific levels of training to be an effective youth worker.

Mr. Pascal stated that the completion, approval and acceptance of the Standards will certainly make it easier for his Ministry when undertaking tasks which involve Job Assessment, Training and Programme Development.

The Director of Youth also noted that discussion on the competencies standards is necessary in order to sensitise in-school and out-of-school youth about youth work as a career choice in addition to the formation of a National Association Youth/Social Workers in Dominica.

Participants recommended that CYP ensures that all regional governments and agencies responsible for recruiting and appointing youth workers in the social services be familiar with and adopt the required standards.

It was also recommended that CYPCC holds a Regional forum for all Directors of Youth to review and finalise the document with the aim of presenting to the Regional Advisory Board Meeting in 2007.



A group of participants at the Consultations in Dominica.

CYPCC launches strategic partnership with school for physically challenged



Students of the David Rose School for the Handicapped in Guyana perform a dance at the Commonwealth Day Inter-faith Service.

Regional Director of the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre, Mr. Henry Charles recently handed over computer equipment to the David Rose School for the Handicapped based in Georgetown, Guyana.

The donation, made at the Commonwealth Day 2007 Interfaith Service at the National Cultural

The "Arrowhead" is the symbolic name of Guyana's Flag. **The Golden Arrowhead**, Guyana's National Flag has FIVE symbolic colors -- GREEN represents the agricultural and forested nature of Guyana, WHITE symbolizes the rivers and water potential of the country, a GOLDEN arrow represents Guyana's mineral wealth, BLACK portrays the



A cross section of the gathering at the Inter-faith Service held on March 12.

Centre on Monday March 12, was the first phase of a strategic partnership between CYPCC and the institution to provide technical and capacity building support.

During the Interfaith Service, a group of hearing impaired students from the David Rose School also performed a dance entitled "Arrowhead".

endurance that will sustain the forward thrust of the Guyanese people and RED represents the zeal and dynamic nature of nation-building which lies before the young and independent Guyana.

The David Rose school for the Handicapped provides learning opportunities for physically challenged students.

Hundreds attend Commonwealth Day exhibition in Guyana



Regional Director, Mr. Henry Charles interacts with students visiting the CYPCC's booth.

Hundreds of primary and secondary school students from over twenty five schools in Georgetown, Guyana participated in a grand exhibition held under the Commonwealth Day theme 'Respecting Difference Promoting Understanding' on the lawns of the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre on Wednesday March 14, 2007.

A number of agencies including, the Canadian High Commission, the Indian High Commission, the CARICOM Secretariat, the Ministries of Culture, Youth and Sports, Education and Health, the Iwokrama Centre for Rainforest Conservation, Youth Challenge Guyana, the Rights of the Child Commission and the United Nations Children's Fund

(UNICEF) participated in the exhibition

The purpose of the exhibition was to sensitise students on the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat and to provide information on a range of social and developmental issues including youth empowerment, HIV and AIDS, sustainable development, the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, and the rights of the child.

The exhibition, which is now a regular feature to celebrate Commonwealth Day, was organized by the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre in conjunction with the Commonwealth Day Planning Committee.

The Ivan Chapman Pan Groves Steel Orchestra provided steel band music throughout the day.

Students of the St. Margaret's Primary School in Georgetown, Guyana listen intently as they receive their Commonwealth Day packages at the CYP Caribbean Centre exhibition booth on March 14 to mark Commonwealth Day in Guyana.



Turks and Caicos holds National Youth Forum

The first in a series of National Youth Fora aimed at addressing youth participation and leadership among the youth in Turks and Caicos kicked off in the island of North Caicos on 2nd and 3rd and in South Caicos on 16 and 17 February, 2007.

The forum, which was hosted by the Department of Youth Affairs, provided an opportunity for young people to collectively articulate issues and concerns facing them. It also served as a means of allowing the Ministry to gain relevant feedback from the youth.

Common concerns and issues which arose during the lively discussions included the need to be more active in the community, the problem of drug use and alcoholism, teenage pregnancy and the need for more positive activities and



Participants engage in group sessions at the National Youth Forum in TCI.



programmes for young people to reduce the likelihood of them forming gangs.

National Youth Director, Ms Angela Forbes during the exercise said: "Through the hosting of these National Youth Fora we hope to ignite a spark in our youth so that they may

realise the urgency with which they must begin seeing themselves as social actors, joining and participating in activities of chosen groups through which they can advocate for and advance needs of importance to them."

"While we understand and

appreciate the fact that youth must be given a voice, the youth must mobilise themselves to become more active citizens in the society where they are imminent leaders. They must use their talents, strength, enthusiasm, open mind and the power that lies within them to take independent action," she added.

At the end of the first forum each group made a presentation on the theme 'Finding our voice, making a difference' using different art forms such as drama, song, poetry and poster making.

Participants were put into groups to stage role plays on possible scenarios which could occur in their communities such as tearing down of public sports facilities to build for-profit organisations in their place.

Rotarians urged to become advocates for Youth Development Strategy

Regional Director of the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre (CYPCC), Mr. Henry Charles, addressed local and visiting Rotarians along with special invitees at a midday function, hosted by the Rotary Club of Central Georgetown, to mark the occasion of **World Day of Understanding and Peace**, on February 22, 2007, at the Le Meridien Pegasus Hotel, Georgetown.

Calling on Rotarians to advocate for more sustainable youth development strategies in the Caribbean, Mr. Charles said "There is an urgent need for Governments and development agencies to adopt and implement youth development strategies which are transformational in nature...such an approach will enhance the capacity of countries to more effectively achieve their sustainable development goals."

During his presentation entitled *'Redefining the Youth Development Agenda: Empowerment for Sustainable Development'*, the Regional Director identified these goals as global peace, social cohesion, economic empowerment,

good governance and sustainable use of natural resources. He further informed Rotarians that many of the factors which hinder attainment of our sustainable development objectives were having a profound and disproportionate impact on the young, and that the situation was further compounded by adherence to a social welfare approach to youth development. He postulated the development of approaches that are evidenced-based, asset-based and rights-based.

Mr. Charles advised the gathering that the social welfare-type response to youth development challenges can be a major contributing factor in maintaining gross inequities in the social system; thereby perpetuating crime and violence, social and political instability and declining productivity and intolerance. In this way, social disenfranchisement and economic marginalization of young persons were fruits of the same tree.

The Regional Director urged the Rotarians, whom he identified as persons who occupy positions of relative influence in the society, to be real advocates for a more effective

and sustainable approach to youth development.

He also took the opportunity to extend congratulations, on behalf of the Secretary General and Director of Youth Affairs of the Commonwealth,

to the Rotary Club of Guyana and to Rotary International for the sterling contribution they have made to human development and global peace throughout their many years of existence.

Cayman Islands to offer Certificate Course

Programme Manager responsible for Youth Work Education and Training, Ms Glenyss James recently met with officials of the Department of Youth and the Cayman Islands Community College to discuss the offering of the Certificate Course in Youth Development Work.

The Community College has indicated its willingness to offer the programme with technical support from Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre

(CYPCC).

Meanwhile, the Department of Youth, CYPCC and the college will continue discussions on the delivery framework and modules to be used.

At the last Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (CYMM) in The Bahamas, in May 2006, the Cayman Islands had indicated that it wanted to expose coaches, church leaders and other youth workers to more structured youth development training.

Anguillian Youth Leaders elect NYC Executive



L-R, Sherrienne Roberts, Keria Hughes, Olufunmike Banks-Devonish, Patriese Richards. Back Eduardo Samuels.

An Executive Committee comprising youth leaders has been elected to manage the Anguilla National Youth Council for the next six months, following a meeting of youth leaders organised by the National Youth Council Steering Committee on March 20, 2007 at the Teachers Resource Centre.

The committee consists of Ms. Sherianne Roberts - President, Ms. Keria Hughes - Vice President, Ms. Olufunmike Banks-Devonish - General Secretary, Ms. Patriese Richards - Treasurer and Mr. Eduardo Samuels - Assistant Secretary Treasurer.

The forum was attended by 27 young people representing 10 youth groups on the Island. Ms. Georgia Mathew, Chairperson of the now dissolved Steering Committee

stressed during the meeting that, "in order for issues addressing youth to be addressed, young people must take the lead."

In addition to electing an executive committee, the meeting also allowed participants to network, share their views on issues affecting young people in Anguilla and learn about the history of the Anguilla National Youth Council.

The meeting was chaired by Ms. Anthea Roach a member of the Steering Committee and the election process was managed by Mr. Damien Hughes, Executive Director of the Anguilla National Trust. It included presentations from Ms. Sherianne Roberts, a member of the Steering Committee and Ms. Sonia Skellekie, former Youth Officer at the Department of Youth and Culture.

The Government of Anguilla and the Department of Youth and Culture in the Ministry of Social Development - Education, Sports, Youth and Culture, has congratulated the new executive of the National Youth Council and expressed thanks to members of the National Youth Council Steering Committee and previous steering committees for bringing the process to this point.

The new executive committee will begin work immediately by meeting with representatives of the Caribbean Federation of Youth.

CYPCC launches Creative Writing Competition in Guyana

The Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre (CYPCC) launched a local creative writing and art competition depicting Commonwealth Day theme 'Respecting Difference, Promoting Understanding' for school age children on March 12, 2007 in Georgetown, Guyana.

The creative writing and arts competition which is a collaborative venture with the Ministry of Education, The Canadian High Commission and Iwokrama Rainforest International, is intended for primary and secondary school

students between ages 10 to 16 years.

The first phase will produce eleven first place winners, one each from the eleven educational districts in Guyana. These winners will then be judged at the national level to select first to third places.

All entries are expected to be submitted by April 30 and will be judged by a panel of judges from the Ministry of Education and Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre.

Primary and secondary entries will be judged in separate categories.

CARICOM Commission on Youth Development launched



Regional Director, Mr Henry Charles at the launching of the Commission on Youth Development in Suriname.

The much anticipated Caribbean Youth Development Commission was launched by the CARICOM Secretariat on March 5 at the Hotel Krasnapolsky in Paramaribo, Suriname at an elaborate ceremony attended by the President of Suriname, His Excellency Ronald Venetiaan and other youth development stakeholders.

The launch was immediately followed by the Commission's first Plenary Session which focused on the structure and scope of the Commission's work and examined the way forward by developing a work plan. Among issues looked at were youth and sustainable livelihood, youth governance and poverty.

A small committee was established to fine tune a strategy to move forward and to determine the role of youth organizations including the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre (CYPCC).

It was agreed that the Commission should not be duplicating efforts but look at what youth development work has already been done by others; a number of broad thematic areas were agreed on and will be further explored at a follow up meeting.

CYPCC Regional Director, Mr. Henry Charles in some remarks said: "The various youth development stakeholders must be invited to provide the necessary expertise and technical support to ensure the Commission is effective; its processes are inclusive, integrated and accommodating and its recommendations comprehensive in

nature. Above all this Commission must be fully seized of its historical significance and pivotal role it must play in transforming the regional youth development landscape."

The launch was also addressed by a number of other persons including, Professor Barry Chevannes, Co-Chair of the Commission and Co-Chair of the Commission, Ms Yldiz Beigle among others.

The commission was a decision of the Heads of Government of CARICOM at their 27th Regular Meeting in St Kitts and Nevis last July to address challenges facing young people within the region.



The Commission in session.

T&T looking to host RAB 2007

"The Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago has agreed to take the hosting of the Regional Advisory Board (RAB) Meeting in July 2007 to Cabinet as a priority issue.

This position was a direct follow-up to that country's 2005 offer to host the RAB. The commitment was made during a recent visit by the Regional Director Mr Henry Charles and Programme Manager, Ms Dwynette D. Eversley to Trinidad.

The visit also followed-up on a request by the Ministry of Youth Affairs to develop a rationale of support for the implementation of a National Youth Policy for Trinidad and Tobago.

Highlights of Commonwealth Day 2007



Young Guyanese form Media Group

Six young Guyanese, full with enthusiasm after attending the Backlot International Documentary Film and Kids and Docs Festival in Paramaribo, Suriname in December, 2006, have pooled their skills to form a group called *Youth Media Guyana*. Shabbir. Z. Ali and Dustin Mounter from the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports; Andrea Bryan and Vidya Bijlall of the National Communications Network (NCN); Lomeharshansham Lall of Varqua Foundation and Joel Joseph of President's College, attended the Suriname forum with support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The Suriname festival coincided with the Global Launch of UNICEF's Day of Broadcasting (ICDB) 2006 under the five-year theme, '*Unite for Children, Unite against Aids*'. The festival was held at the Venezuela Institute in Paramaribo and included a series of television, radio, print and rap workshops. These sessions allowed youth from within CARICOM to actively access resources geared at assisting them in developing similar programmes within their respective countries.

Participants also viewed documentaries about children at the Backlot Film Festival and were encouraged to produce their own *One Minute Films* facilitated by Digital Playground, a Dutch company that provides children-friendly software. On the final day, samples of video productions created during the workshops were shown and members of the Guyana delegation were actively involved in showcasing what they had learnt during the workshops. Youth Media Guyana will target young people between the ages of 10 and 25 and will be officially launched shortly with help from UNICEF.

The group is working on the production of an eleven-minute newscast for children featuring stories from a child's perspective; producing a series of public service announcements using popular Guyanese personalities to highlight issues affecting youth; community outreaches aimed at capturing expressions, talents and challenges of youth in the remote regions of Guyana; conducting AIDS awareness campaigns among children and reinforcing the importance of contributing to the community.

Dominica celebrates Commonwealth Day



The gathering hold hands as they sing 'Lean on Me' at a Church Service held on Commonwealth Day.

On Monday 12th March, 2007 students from a number of Primary and Secondary schools, youth and community groups, teachers and education officials in Dominica gathered at the Portsmouth Catholic Church Hall in observance of Commonwealth Day 2007.

This event, which was organised by Youth Development Officer of the Northern District, Ms Caesarina Paul in collaboration with the Education Office of the Ministry of Education and other institutions, began with a prayer by Father Christopher Nukunu Deh of Ghana, Parish Priest of St. John and St. Lewis. The prayer was followed by the singing of the National Anthem by Dania Thomas of the Roosevelt Douglas Primary School.

Ms Paul, who chaired the function, welcomed everyone and highlighted this year's theme "Respecting Difference, Promoting Understanding" after which the Commonwealth Day Message by Queen Elizabeth II was read by Town Councilor, Ms. Valina Hill.

Education Officer Dr. Jeffery Blaize made some brief remarks and encouraged the students to embrace the opportunity to make a positive difference in their schools and communities.

One of the key highlights of the day was the feature speech by Mr. Henie Parillon who was granted a Commonwealth Scholarship to study in Malaysia. He also shared, with the students, his experience of studying and living abroad. Parillon recently returned home to serve his country.

A number of participants for various educational institutions performed dances and cultural displays and sang songs.

The day concluded with a prayer for the Commonwealth, followed by a song entitled 'Lean on Me' led by Ms Paul which was sang with much vigor. The event created a greater appreciation and awareness of the Commonwealth among the country's youth population.

Interactive Youth Camp held at Diamond Centre



Students perform a dance while another student presents a paper on the Commonwealth Day theme 'Respecting Difference Promoting Understanding'.

The Commonwealth Day celebrations in Guyana culminated with a grand Interactive Youth Camp for primary and secondary school students on Friday March 16 at the Diamond Community Centre.

The event was organized by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports

of Guyana in collaboration with the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre (CYPCC). Special prizes were awarded by CYPCC to four outstanding schools.

Director of Youth, Mr. Carl Brandon welcomed the students and encouraged them to take time off to

understand and respect each other's beliefs and to appreciate and respect the diversity which exists in Guyana.

Addressing the students, CYPCC's Regional Director Mr. Henry Charles stressed the need to recognise that young people are different from other members of society. He pointed out that one of the factors making them different is their willingness to take risks.

Each school was given an opportunity to present to their peers the problems that affect them and suggest strategies that government ministries and youth agencies should adopt to address these concerns. Among some of the issues highlighted by way of dramatic presentations, poetry, songs and other art forms were unemployment, teenage pregnancy, need for skills training facilities, racism and garbage disposal among others.

Grove Primary was awarded the first prize for the best presentation in

the Primary School category. In the Secondary School category Methodus Secondary School was awarded the first prize. Runners up for the primary and secondary school were also awarded.

CYPCC also pledged support in hosting a number of leadership development activities for the participating schools. The Regional Director encouraged winning schools to use the monetary prizes to implement programmes that will contribute to the students' personal development. He also engaged a number of unattached youth who were "listening to the discussions" to advise how CYPCC can help to address their needs.

Also present at the Interactive Youth Camp were staff of CYPCC, the Ministry of Culture Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Education and the President's Youth Award Republic of Guyana and other members of the community.

P o e t r y C o r n e r

Ghetto Youth

by Kin-Z K. Francis

Turks and Caicos

This world just aint the same,
Life has just become more than a
game, which means with every choice,
comes a contradictin voice,

Around every corner you urn there
are friends pressurin and teachers
misjudging

Your parents think they been through
it all,

It's a news tine and things have
changed,

The dancers on every street have
doubled

The rate of people dying has tripled,

Back then your heroes were people
Who spoke out against the system,
Ours are those who lived and Covered
the trials
and convictions of ghetto living.

We are the Youth of Tomorrow

Turks & Caicos National Youth Forum

We stand firm
With strong minds
Bodies and souls
The future is what we hold!

Together we can work
Together we can achieve,
At the end of the day
We can all succeed.

Guard your thoughts; your thoughts can
become actions.

Positive thinking can guarantee
satisfaction.

Be a leader

Take a stand; you can be that one lucky
man.

Yes, we are the youths

Young and bold

We hold a future that

We know we can control.

And to the youths out there
Who have fallen and won't get up

Finding your voice

Can make a difference

Just get on up and take your skills to

The highest position.

Any poems or short stories?

Publish them here!

E-mail them to

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Give us the Vibes!

Let us know about youth
activities and developments
in your country.