



**SPECIAL EDITION**

# NCPD Connection

December 2018

## *Message from the Chief Executive Officer*



As the year “2018” comes to an end, I am indeed thankful to the Almighty who has continued to bless us in achieving increased excellence, productivity and success. I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to the voluntary Board of Directors, all our kind and generous benefactors, members of staff, trainees, apprentices, volunteers, parents and others who have contributed significantly in taking NCPD forward. Also, I take this opportunity to express congratulations to the entire NCPD family as this year marked the beginning of

our 55th Anniversary. (5th December)

Earlier in the year, we witnessed twenty-four brilliant, young men and women crossing the graduation stage. And to this end, two groups of students are preparing to write the CSEC English and Maths in the coming year, 2019. I strongly believe that they will achieve success in this endeavour. Furthermore, I wish to commend the hard work and efforts shown by our suitable and qualified training staff who are dedicated to molding and shaping their learning abilities.

As we plan for the future, NCPD will continue its mandate to provide high quality skills training that will meet industry requirements and produce responsible, respectful and well-rounded Citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. I wish to extend Season’s Greetings and best wishes to everyone for the New Year, 2019. I encourage

everyone to continue along this journey of excellence in keeping with our mission to improve the quality of life of all Persons with Disabilities.

In closing, let us all be reminded that disability is not inability. It has been my honour and privilege to yet again serve you as Chief Executive Officer. Once again, I say “Thank you” to everyone who played a major role in contributing to the overall success of our great Organisation, NCPD.

**Beverly Beckles, PhD**  
Chief Executive Officer



## *Editor's Note*

In this “Special Edition- volume 10” of our Newsletter, we present to you a unique fusion of prevalent topics , significant events, activities and special moments that were dear to our hearts within the period of July- December, 2018. Included in the mix, you will see upcoming events for the year, 2019.

On December 5th, NCPD completed 54 years of continuous service, catering to the needs of persons with disabilities. Since inception, the Organisation has supported the lives of persons with various disabilities by facilitating quality services, vocational rehabilitative training and skills training. As NCPD commemorates this wonderful milestone, we take great pleasure in extending a heartfelt “Congratulations” to our NCPD family who has devoted time and effort towards its progress over the years.

We do hope you enjoy your read. On behalf of the Editor and team we wish you a Merry Christmas and a bright and prosperous New Year, 2019. Happy Holidays!

# “Confessions of A Secret Mind”

In today’s society, mental illness has been distressing the lives of too many people in our blessed land we call “Sweet Trinbago”. It becomes even more disturbing when our society pays attention to stories on mental illness only when someone is seriously injured or harmed. Recently, we heard of an incident involving a man who stole a PTSC bus which sparked chaos and controversy in the daily news headlines. This man had been suffering with mental illness of some sort. Sometime later, it was

reported that a woman was severely wounded from this ordeal. The man had eventually lost control of the bus, causing a major crash into her home, which resulted badly. She became brutally helpless and physically injured from the accident. Consequently, there remains a burning question in our minds which we fail to solve as a nation, “How do we deal or treat with mental illness?”

While the issue remains controversial, a couple weeks prior to this incident, news relating to a young, University student, Nishal Sankat, circulated on social media. Nishal, who attempted to steal a plane at an International Airport outside of Trinidad, struggled with depression for a while. To date, there is no real explanation or answers as to what overcame him or his mind to commit such an illegal act. What is very sad and more so, shocking about our nation is that we somehow possess this sudden urge to attach meanings and perpetuate a culture of stigmatisation to these very sensitive issues. We have failed as a nation in dealing with mental illness and we cannot provide solutions if we continue to be part of the problem. Mental illness is

not easy to comprehend if we lack understanding of how it affects one’s life. We often label people committing acts of violence or even crime, but do we really know what goes on in their minds mentally?

From a devastating experience with mental trauma and illness which controlled a young girl’s life for a long while, a feeling of empathy arises. For these two individuals mentioned earlier, it is utterly sad what transpired as a result of their mental battles. However, it is believed to be a monster of destruction that converts one’s regular thinking into illogical, irrational and unconstructive thinking. There is no real understanding of the outside world but only what goes on inside the mind at that point in time for someone affected by mental illness. Hallucination occurs as a result and the person with some form of mental illness eventually allows the “voices” in their head to control their activities.

Their external reality becomes clouded under the hallucination phase and this is replaced with a new reality. There are thousands

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of racing, negative thoughts taking place inside the mind which no one can see or experience externally. This leads to a complete change in personality, thoughts, behaviours, attitudes and personal judgement. A fearful, dreadful, horrific alteration of the mind overpowers the person affected by mental illness. Therefore, stealing a bus or plane would have been a preconceived thought that occurred by a “voice in the head” and not necessarily a blatant act of crime. Society ought to quit all notions of stigmatisation, discrimination, labelling and name-calling. People should refrain from using language that is derogatory, degrading and insulting to one’s character. Mental illness is real, it is happening and it will continue to infiltrate the lives of people as long as life exists.

Our country’s economy is a major factor which is known to have an effect on most people. Currently, there are people who struggle with financial constraints and face extremely challenging circumstances in obtaining jobs and employment in the country. There was the recent retrenchment of employees by the thousands who worked for companies that decided to terminate their employment. These massive job-cuts have emotionally and psychologically devastated people of all ages and backgrounds.

Culturally, our society pays little to no attention especially to persons with disabilities who are denied and refused job offers on a regular. Now with the scope of the economy and the economic hardship facing the nation, life becomes extra challenging, stressful and hopeless for many citizens.

Additionally, mental health is not given much thought or consideration. This causes our people to suffer tremendously. These economic factors contribute significantly to the decline of one’s mental health and by extension, his or her life. Thousands of people in Trinidad today endure poverty and lack of resources to enjoy a basic standard of living in addition to their personal and emotional problems. There is a lack of understanding for the struggles that people face simply because no one can live the life of someone else. It has been statistically proven according to the World Health Organisation that anyone (one in four persons) can be diagnosed with mental illness at some point in his or her life and these factors place a ripple effect on one’s mental health.

There is no doubt that mental illness transforms the lives of people and controls every single aspect of it. Our duty remains as a people to promote a culture

of acceptance, peace and love. Should we do more as a nation to end discrimination against mentally ill persons today? The answer ought to be -YES!

# Let's Talk Mental Health

These are some useful tips for taking care of your Mental Health:

## **Do fun things to broaden your horizons**

Do daily crossword puzzles, plant a garden, take dance lessons, learn to play an instrument or become fluent in another language.

## **Take care of your body**

Taking care of yourself can improve your mental health. Be sure to:

- Eat nutritious meals
- Avoid cigarettes
- Drink enough water
- Exercise, which helps decrease depression and anxiety and improve moods

## **Value yourself**

Get enough sleep. Researchers believe that lack of sleep contributes to a high rate of depression in college students.

Treat yourself with kindness and respect. Avoid self-criticism. Make time for your hobbies and favourite projects.

## **Surround yourself with good people**

People with strong family or social connections are generally healthier than those who lack a support network. Make plans with supportive family members and volunteer your time and energy to help someone else. You'll feel good about doing something tangible to help someone in need — and it's a great way to meet new people.

## **Learn how to deal with stress**

Like it or not, stress is a part of life. Practice good coping skills: Try friends, or seek out activities where you can meet new people, such as a club, class or support group. Practice Tai Chi, exercise,

take a nature walk, play with your pet or try journal writing as a stress reducer. Also, remember to smile and see the humour in life. Research shows that laughter can boost your immune system, ease pain, relax your body and reduce stress.

## **Quiet your mind**

Try meditating and/or prayer. Relaxation exercises and prayer can improve your state of mind and outlook on life. In fact, research shows that meditation may help you feel calm and enhance the effects of therapy.

## **Set realistic goals**

Decide what you want to achieve academically, professionally and personally and write down the steps you need to realize your goals. Aim high, but be realistic and don't over-schedule. You'll enjoy a tremendous sense of accomplishment and self-worth as you progress toward your goal.

## **Break up the monotony**

Although our routines make us more efficient and enhance our feelings of security and safety, a little change of pace can perk up a tedious schedule. Alter your jogging route, plan a road-trip, take a walk in a different park, hang some new pictures or try a new restaurant.

## **Avoid alcohol and other drugs**

Keep alcohol use to a minimum and avoid other drugs. Sometimes people use alcohol and other drugs to "self-medicate" but in reality, alcohol and other drugs only aggravate problems.

## **Get help when you need it**

Seeking help is a sign of strength — not a weakness. And it is important to remember that treatment is effective. People who get appropriate care can recover from mental illness and addiction and lead full, rewarding lives.



## Deaf Awareness

Deaf Awareness Week also called International Week of the Deaf (IWD) is celebrated annually on the last week of September. It ends with International Day of the Deaf on the last Sunday of September.

This year's theme for Deaf Awareness was: **‘With Sign Language, Everyone is included’**.

In Trinidad and Tobago, there are over 5000 Deaf persons. At NCPD, we have both staff and trainees who are Deaf in various skill areas. We pay tribute to some of our Deaf trainees and staff.



# Meet NCPD's Board of Directors

Mr. GERARD BAPTISTE  
Clinical Psychologist

CHAIRMAN

Mrs. SHEREEN BAKSH  
Retired Manager

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Mrs. FRANCES M. L. GUIDE-ATHERLY  
Manager – Administration & Finance

SECRETARY

Mr. HAYDEN LOVELL  
Accountant

TREASURER

Mrs. JANICE KOYLASS ABRAHAM  
Retired Attorney-at-Law

DIRECTOR

Dr. NATALIE DICK  
Specialist Paediatrician & Specialist  
Developmental-Behavioural Paediatrician

DIRECTOR

Mr. SUBERT GILBERT  
Consultant

DIRECTOR

Ms. JOY CREESE  
Retired Public Officer

DIRECTOR

Dr. BEVERLY BECKLES  
Chief Executive Officer

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

# *New Faces at NCPD*



## **Jeffrey Foster**

NCPD warmly welcomes Mr. Jeffrey Foster who joined the Organisation on November 26th, 2018. Mr. Foster is a new On the Job Trainee at NCPD and he holds the position of “IT Assistant”. He has completed his Bachelor’s Degree in the field of Computing and Information Systems. One of his goals is to become involved in Networking field. Currently, he assists in the IT Unit, lending support to the maintenance and updating of computer systems. He would also assist with the updating of NCPD’s Website. Mr. Foster has a passion for photography and enjoys doing this in his spare time. He hopes to use his skills and qualification in the IT field to further enhance and upkeep the efficiency of computer systems at NCPD.



## **Verina Cherisse Mayers**

NCPD extends a warm welcome to Ms. Verina Cherisse Mayers. She grew up amongst three sisters and two brothers, of which she is the eldest. Growing up in a big family has taught her to be caring, kind and thoughtful to others. Through her years of studying, she has gathered a sturdy background in Business Principles and Information Technology. She achieved an Associate of Science Degree in Information Systems Management (HONS). Ms. Mayers furthered her Bachelors of Science Degree in the field of Information Technology at CTS College of Business and Computer Science. Employed as a Teacher’s Aide at National Centre for Persons with Disabilities, her interest includes using various technologies to assist persons with disabilities as she believes this will aid them in developing their skills.

She enjoys reading suspense, thrillers and horror novels. Her favourite author is Stephen King. She also enjoys the lively outdoors; hiking, photography and assisting others to develop their strengths. Her biggest interest is to travel to various countries, to experience the various cultures and explore their natural habitat.

# Trainee of the Year 2018

## Abdel Rampersad



From Monday to Friday, he makes the journey from Maracas Valley to the National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) and back, at the end of each training day. He does it with ease and the minute he walks through the doors, which is normally before 7am, he is wearing a huge smile that warms one's heart.

Abdel Rampersad began his training at NCPD in 2016. Looking at him, one can never tell that this is a young man with a disability. Despite this, he has not allowed his disability to dampen or take away the essence of who he is. He is a committed, dedicated,

determined, focused, hardworking, friendly and helpful young man.

He is not only a lover of sports but since his enrolment at NCPD, he has represented the Centre at various sporting events in the disciplines of Track and Field, Swimming and Cricket. He is also a member of the Trinidad and Tobago, National Special Olympics Swimming team and is expected to represent our country at the upcoming international games in Abu Dhabi.

Since becoming a trainee at NCPD, Abdel has maintained his title as Lip Sync Champion at the annual Carnival Lip Sync and Parade of the Bands competition. He is known as NCPD's "Kes" as he always performs his song and has a great love for the artiste and his music. Abdel is also a member of the NCPD Ensemble where he plays the steelpan.

One can see that this young man is a true champion and an exemplary trainee. It is definitely clear why he became 2018 "Trainee of the Year".

We say to Abdel, Congratulations and 'Let your memories take you back and your dreams take you forward'. You have shown that disability is not inability as you have successfully graduated from the Bookbinding skill area, moving on from a Trainee to the Apprentice level. the area as an apprentice.



# NCPD's Activities July - December 2018

## Graduation 2018

'Our memories takes us back, our dreams takes us forward', this was the theme for the 2018 graduation ceremony of the National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), held on July 13th at the San Fernando City Hall Auditorium.

This year, Abdel Rampersad, an exemplary trainee from the Bookbinding skill area received the Trainee of the Year Award.

For the first time, there was a Chief Executive Officer Award which was awarded to Isaiah St. John, a Food Preparation trainee who has demonstrated what it is to 'triumph over trials', a true champion.

Christy DeSouza, self advocate and member of the Down Syndrome Family Network was the featured speaker at the graduation ceremony. Ms. DeSouza who has Down Syndrome empowered the graduates, urging them to never allow fear to discourage them from achieving their goals. She used her life story to encourage them to be the best that they can be and that they can achieve anything in this world.

This memorable day was shared with Honouree Member/Former First lady Mrs. Zalayhar Hassanali, NCPD Board of Directors, parents, staff and specially invited guests.



# U-Report Trinidad and Tobago

UNICEF's U-Report Trinidad and Tobago was officially launched on July 6th 2018 at Courtyard Marriot, Port-of-Spain.

U-Report is a global social messaging platform through which the youth population, between the ages of 13 – 29 years can speak out on issues they care about and have positive change in their communities anywhere in the world.

The platform allows for youths to amplify their voices through local and national media and sends alerts to key stakeholders about the issues their communities are facing.

Trinidad and Tobago became the second Caribbean country followed by Jamaica to become part of this initiative.

Information Technology Instructor, Ms. Candice B. John attended the event who is one of the faces in a U-Report video highlighting issues affecting persons with disabilities.



# NEC Exams

Every year National Centre for Persons with Disabilities allow trainees to take the NEC exam in various vocational skill areas and this year was no different as they took exams in Agriculture, Beauty Culture, Bookbinding, Food Preparation, Office Administration, Wood Work and Welding. The exams took place on July 7th 2018 on the Centre's Compound. Examiners were very impressed as trainees demonstrated their competencies in their respective skill area.



# 5K Glow Run/Walk and Rave

On July 7th 2018, Skinners Park in San Fernando came alive with the Illuminate 5K Glow Run/Walk and Rave.

The event commenced with a Health Fair which provided patrons the opportunity to obtain various types of tests free of charge. These include: blood pressure, sugar testing, height/weight measurements. Patrons also received free advice on maintaining healthy lifestyles.

NCPD also hosted a booth and participants got the opportunity to learn about the Centre and were sensitised on disability.

At the end of the Health Fair around 7pm, the whistle went off and patrons took to the streets to participate in the 5K. For some persons, it was serious business and for others it was simply fun. At the end of the 5K, patrons enjoyed a Rave which featured DJ music. Both trainees and staff from NCPD attended the event as it paid recognition to the Organisation.



# Visit

On July 2018, a group of campers from the Atlantic Leadership Development Camp 2018 visited the Centre to gain a full understanding of what NCPD offers and to be sensitised on disability. Programme Manager, Ms. Kahaya Sooklalsingh and Job Placement Officer, Mr. Ricardo Rampaul gave the group a full tour of the facilities.

The visitors were very impressed and the tour was very interactive as they not only asked questions but also participated in various activities.



# Digital Citizenship Programme

On August 27th, 2018, NCPD received seven (7) computer systems from “Restore a Sense of I Can’ (RSC) Digital Citizenship Programme in partnership with Digicel Foundation.

These computer systems will be used to assist in building trainees’ skills in Mathematics and also towards the start of a TECH Club where participants would learn how to repair computers amongst other things.



# Staff Retreat

August 30th, 2018 was a day of fun, rejuvenation and relaxation as staff members along with members of the NCPD board retreated to Point Coco.

Staff members got an opportunity to be updated on the new Strategic Plan (2018-2021) of the Organisation. The rest of the day was spent enjoying the beach and scenery.



# Adaptive Equipment

In an intimate ceremony held at the Centre on September 14th 2018, the Henry Viscardi School of Albertson, New York in collaboration with Jet Blue Airlines donated twelve (12) pieces of adaptive equipment. The equipment will benefit the lives of many.



# Parent Workshop

On September 15th 2018, the Down Syndrome Family Network held its annual Parent Workshop which took place at the University of Trinidad and Tobago, Valsayn Campus. This year's focus was to encourage parents not to give up on their children.

NCPD was invited to make a presentation which was done by Programme Manager, Ms Kahaya Sooklalsingh and Instructor Ms. Candice John. The Information was well received.

During the opening of the workshop, Founder of the NGO, Mr. Glen Niles was presented with the Point of Light Award from the Queen of England, presented by the British High Commissioner on behalf of the Queen. We at NCPD extend Congratulations to Mr. Niles and the Down Syndrome Family Network on receiving such a distinguished award.



# Aquaponics Workshop

National Centre for Persons with Disabilities and other beneficiaries of the Digicel Foundation Aquaponics Programme attended a workshop entitled: “Aquaponics Networking and Sensitisation”. The event was held on September 19th 2018 at the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries Aquaponics Demonstration in Valsayn.

Supervisor of Horticulture/Agriculture department, Mr. Felix Ford represented NCPD at this event.



# Appreciation Day 2018

On September 19th 2018 at the Southern Academy for Performance Arts (SAPA), TATIL held its Staff Appreciation ceremony to show appreciation to employees. The NCPD Ensemble headed by Mr. Malomo Joseph, Music Instructor performed at the event. The band's performance was well received.

## Scholarship Recipient

The Automatic Technology College (ATC) held its annual City and Guilds Gold Medals and Scholarships Award Ceremony on October 10th, 2018 at their San Fernando campus. Anthony Hernandez, apprentice in the Welding skills area was the proud recipient of a scholarship to obtain a Diploma in Electrical Installation at the institution for one year. Anthony was accompanied by his parents, Job Placement Officer, Mr. Ricardo Rampaul and Social Worker, Ms. Giselle Ramose.

The CEO, Dr. Beckles and training staff is proud of this opportunity and wishes him the best in this new academic journey. Dr. Beckles also expresses her heartfelt gratitude for this opportunity as it will open further doors and foster a stronger partnership between NCPD and ATC.



# Tea By the Sea 2018

NCPD compound came alive on November 3rd, 2018 with its Tea by the Sea, Tea Party. The event is held annually and is one of the Organisation's major fundraisers. The event was well attended and supported by many including honorary member and former first lady, Mrs. Zalayhar Hassanali.

The Board, CEO and staff wishes to thank everyone who attended and supported this event.



# Floor Hockey National Games 2018

Trinidad and Tobago Special Olympics Committee held its annual National Floor Hockey games on November 17th, 2018 at the Pleasantville Indoor Sporting Facility. NCPD had a contingent of 20 players who were accompanied by Mr. Ron Wiltshire, Mrs. Princess Lewis, Ms. Betty Ann Julien and Mr. Ricardo Rampaul. NCPD team won the games and were the overall champions of the day.

Here are the Results:

18 Gold Medals

3 Bronze Medals,

1 sixth place Ribbon

1 Silver Medal,

2 fifth place Ribbon

Congratulations Team.



# International Men's Day

The Trinidad and Tobago Bankers Association held a recognition ceremony to pay tribute to men and the contributions they are making in society. National Centre for Persons with Disabilities was recognised for the work they are doing with men with disabilities in the country.

The event was held on November 20th, 2018 at the HYATT Regency, Port of Spain. Graphics Artist, Mr. Kyle Young Lai and Job Placement Officer, Mr. Ricardo Rampaul attended the event



# Accessible Americas V

The Accessible Americas annual Conference which began in 2012 held its 5th Conference, Accessible Americas V in Montego Bay, Jamaica from November 28th-30th 2018. The Conference is an initiative of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations specialised agent for Information Communication and Technology—ICT. The Conference attracted 222 participants from 23 countries across the Caribbean and Latin America. Accessible Americas VI will be held in the city of Ecuador in 2019.

National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) was able to participate for the first time in such a prestigious event. Programme Manager, Ms. Kahaya Sooklalsingh and IT Instructor, Ms. Candice John were able to travel to Jamaica and participate in the 3-day Conference. NCPD was categorised as an academic institution at the conference. It was the only institution to represent all disabilities while the others focused on one particular disability.

The Conference which focused on Information and Communication Technologies for all, highlighted and demonstrated the vital importance of ICTs in empowering the lives of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) or Specific Persons, Aged Disabled Persons, Women and Girls, Unattached Youth (classified by Jamaica) and Indigenous Persons. As a result of ICT accessibility, the various group mentioned are able to live fulfilling lives by obtaining education, employment, keeping informed, communicate and make valuable contributions to their communities and society at large.

NCPD was indeed happy for this opportunity.



# International Day for Persons with Disabilities

The annual observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons was proclaimed in 1992. It aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development, and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

This year's theme focused on: ***“Empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”***.

Dr. Beverly Beckles sat with a panel at the University of the West Indies which was organised by SALISES and engaged the participants in discussion. This event was held on December 3rd, 2018.

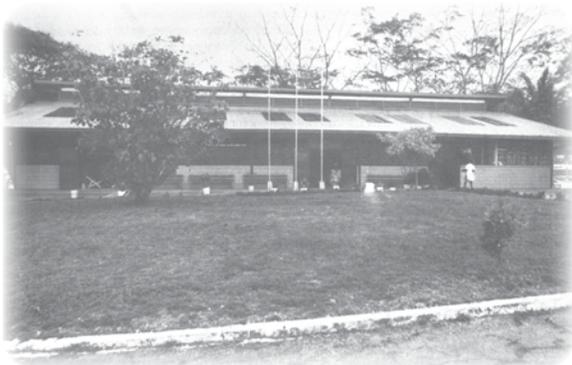


# Happy Anniversary

## *Towards a Society for All*

On December 5th, 2018, NCPD completed 54 years of operational service as a Non-governmental Organisation promoting the equalisation of Persons with Disabilities through training, information, research and consultative services.

## NCPD over the Years...



# NCPD's Christmas Treat

On December 13th, 2018, members of the Scotiabank-Business Service Centre of the Operation and Shared Services Co. Ltd. surprised trainees, apprentices and NCPD's staff with lots of Christmas treats. They gave away hampers, snacks and gifts to all our trainees and apprentices. "SANTA" even visited on the day to distribute the gifts. Dr. Beverly Beckles, CEO of NCPD as well as Programme Manager, Mrs. Kahaya Sooklalsingh would like to specially thank the Scotiabank-Business Service Centre of the Operation and Shared Services Co. Ltd. for their kind and generous contribution.



# NCPD's Christmas Bazaar

National Centre For Persons with Disabilities hosted its first Christmas Bazaar on December 15th, 2018. The day was filled with fun and excitement. Patrons spent the day enjoying lots of fun games and activities. There were various booths with food items, hand-made jewelry, soft toys, agricultural plants, soaps etc.

Enthusiasm and joy filled the atmosphere when famous Soca artistes such as Dev and Lil Bits performed for the crowd. Trainees and apprentices danced to their favourite “jams” and there was even a popular question and answer segment of “what yuh know”, NCPD version. Everyone who attended had a great time.



# NCPD's Upcoming Activities

## Date

January 7th 2019

## Activities

Reopening of New School Term

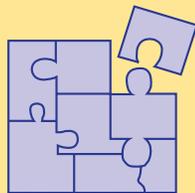


## Disability Etiquette

Meeting and Greeting Persons with Disabilities

(Do's)

- Shake the person's hand
- Offer assistance but wait till it is accepted
- Provide Help in the way the person requested
- Speak directly to the person with disability and not to their assistance
- If you will be speaking to someone using a wheelchair for some time, sit down so that you will be eye level with him/her so they won't have to strain their neck.



**NATIONAL CENTRE  
FOR PERSONS  
WITH DISABILITIES**

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Website: [www.ncpdt.org](http://www.ncpdt.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ncpdtrinidad](http://www.facebook.com/ncpdtrinidad)

YouTube: <https://bit.ly/20texm1>

## Our Vision

To be a World Class Social Enterprise promoting social inclusion for persons with disabilities.

## Our Mission

To enhance the quality of life of persons with disabilities, towards achieving an inclusive society.