

## Message from the Chief Executive Officer



*Dr. Beverly Beckles*

### SPORTS AND DISABILITY

There are more than a billion people with disabilities worldwide, many of whom face substantial barriers to participating in physical activity. Engaging in a healthy lifestyle with a disability can be a daunting task—physical activity generally requires elements of strength, endurance, balance, and coordination that are taken for granted. However for persons with disabilities, one or more physical attributes might be affected by the disability, which limits access to sport, fitness, and work or household-related physical activity.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) Article 29 states, “Participation in cultural life, recreation , leisure and

sports” speaks to the promotion and participation of persons with disabilities in recreational, leisure and sporting activities.

Personal and environmental barriers associated with disability restrict access to physical activity venues and services. Personal barriers include pain, lack of energy, self-consciousness about exercising in public and the perception that exercise is too difficult. Environmental barriers include lack of transportation, lack of access to physical activity centres, lack of accessible exercise equipment, programmes and equipment costs and discriminatory practices at fitness centres and other recreational venues.

Lack of exercise is a serious public health concern for all people, but persons with disabilities are at much greater risk of the serious health problems associated with physical inactivity.

The benefits of physical activity are universal for all children, including those with disabilities. The participation of children with disabilities in sports and recreational activities promotes inclusion, optimises physical functioning, and enhances overall well-being. Despite these benefits, children with disabilities are more restricted in their participation, have lower levels of fitness, and have higher levels of obesity than their peers without disabilities.

The UNCRPD also states that

society should ensure that children with disabilities have equal access to participation in play, recreation, leisure and sporting activities, including those activities in the school system.

In Trinidad and Tobago the participants in the Paralympic Games in 2017 received more medals than the Olympians. The Paralympians however, did not receive as much media coverage and accolades as other sport personalities. Paralympics and Special Olympics are two national and international events for the population of persons with disabilities and ought to be given the same respect and recognition like other well known sporting events.

**Beverly Beckles, PhD**  
Chief Executive Officer

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# No Fault In Our Stars

By Niala K.C. Deonarine

“He has his good days, and not so good days, but he’s the same person indeed, through my eyes, he’s just a joy and I love him with all my heart”, explained Somawatee Basdeo as she related what life is like for her son who is a paraplegic. “I admire his strength and courage, his determination to carry on with life as if nothing had happened, as a matter of fact, he’s been working so positively to complete his masters!” A heartfelt teardrop trickled and oozed gently down my face as I interviewed the mother of a man with a disability, who fell approximately twenty feet off a scaffolding while carrying out a job. Her son was always hard working from a very young age and disability came into his life as a result of an accident. With a dynamic spirit and an optimistic outlook, he was not deterred as he received with distinction, a Masters Degree from a well-established University.

In the Trinidad Guardian Newspaper, dated April 2nd, 2018, as we observed World’s Autism Day, another mother explains, “Like you would see it in the movies, you get married, you have a baby, and you have all these plans for your child”. (Through the Eyes of Autism, A Parent’s Sweetest Struggle).

Baby Zachary was diagnosed with autism at three-years old and later faced developmental challenges which included speech impediment. Halena Kong-Ting and her husband did not hesitate in accepting the sad reality about their child. Being caring, loving, nurturing individuals, their parental duty calls and they will carry him to all his doctors’ appointments, speech therapy sessions and give him the support he needs and so rightly deserves.

Looking back on these stories from these two mothers, there comes one word to mind – LOVE, a four letter word that extends beyond boundaries, limitless and unconditional for many who give and receive. It is a bond, although unknowing to some, that solidifies and multiplies as time persists. Parents possess a unique relationship with their children with special needs. This kinship is definitely not unfamiliar to many at NCPD, as it can be easily recognizable on a daily basis. I see the warm, affectionate look on parents’ faces as they drop off their children every morning. The marks imprinted on the ground from specially designed wheelchairs and walking aids as well as the cheerfulness of their humble and sweet “Good morning”, “Good-

day”, “Good evening” serve as fuel to us emotionally that we too are reminded of how positive they are and how comfortable they are within themselves which only make our jobs a truly easy and satisfying one.

It is the exemplary attitude and humility that has been passed on from parents to their children prior to entering the organization that is only commendable to say the least. I feel joy that there are hopeful smiles to accomplish greatness and that “disability” is only an expression which does not subscribe to its literal meaning here at NCPD. No, in fact, disability becomes non-existent with the level of optimism circulating the atmosphere.

It has been observed in recent Newspapers, the appreciation for persons, especially children with Down syndrome and the many efforts that parents put out to increase their level of joy, to make it truly colourful for them. It is exciting to see the many colourful socks being portrayed by school children, politicians and the general public. It is indeed, heart-warming to see the level of care that is demonstrated from parents to their children living with the disability. We ought to pay special attention and show appreciation

as a nation to the parents and guardians of these persons with DS, who support them every step of the way. Their efforts should be applauded as there may be many challenges and hurdles that they encounter on a daily basis.

It takes me back to a personal experience I had with the illness of Depression. Caroline Ravello, famous for her many articles in the Guardian Newspapers, gives us insights into the realm of Depression and focuses on the efforts to treat with the illness. She mentions that it does not only affect the individual but the people around them. I firmly agree with her many statements, particularly in stating that the illness infiltrates not just the life of the individual, but the parents who become the main support system. In my case,

my parents were my rock; my true angels in that they were strong, committed and devoted to taking special care of me, with cosy open arms and a perpetual jovial spirit that lighted up my world of darkness. I salute their bravery, their courage and their persistence which eventually sparked improvement to my condition.

As we reflect on our daily lives we must be reminded that there is the power of love in all of us which comes naturally on this planet. We live amongst a diversity of people who are faced with huge and insurmountable challenges, but yet still they keep the candle burning, just like bright stars their lights never go dim. The love of parents for their children with a special need is a shared bond that we may not fully comprehend, but

a view from the outside, looking in gives us hope that humanity and humility is part of all of us, even if we aren't parent's yet. There is a distinctive joy that comes from a parents' heart when seeing their special needs child prosper in life. I believe it is all because of their real experiences being with their children and seeing the struggles they encounter as the days and nights go by. Life is definitely not all oranges for anyone, it may sometimes throw in big lemons, however, it is what we choose to do when it is thrown our way, and for these dedicated parents, making a special cup of lemonade is the answer!

## Quote Corner

“Disability need not be an obstacle to success.”

-Stephen Hawking

# World Down Syndrome Day

By: Candice B. John

World Down Syndrome Day (WDSO), 21st March, is a global awareness day which has been officially observed by the United Nations since 2012.

Down Syndrome International (DSI) encourages people all over the world to choose their own activities and events on WDSO to help raise awareness of what Down syndrome is, what it means to have Down syndrome, and how people

with Down syndrome play a vital role in our lives and communities. This year marked the 13th anniversary of World Down Syndrome Day. For WDSO 2018, Down Syndrome International focuses on the theme: **#WhatIBringToMyCommunity** - how people with Down syndrome can and do make meaningful contributions throughout their lives, whether in schools, workplaces, living in the

community, public and political life, culture, media, recreation, leisure and sport.

National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), population includes trainees and apprentices with Down syndrome. Here are some pictures showing those trainees as they make meaningful contributions to the Centre and their life.



# New Faces at NCPD

*NCPD is pleased to introduce one new member of staff into the NCPD Family.*



**Ms. Niala K. C. Deonarine**

The NCPD family warmly welcomes Ms. Niala K. C. Deonarine as the Administrative Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer. Ms. Deonarine joined NCPD on February 8th 2018.

Prior to joining NCPD, She was previously employed by PETROTRIN and worked as an undergraduate Trainee in the Company's Exploration and Productions Department and also in Drilling and Workover.

She completed a Bsc. in the field of Sociology and Human Resource Management. Her mission is a simple one, as she intends to spread joy and happiness to those around her while fulfilling her responsibilities at NCPD. Ms. Deonarine strongly believes that anything is possible, with God! Put Him first and praise His name. It is her personal testimony that "Faith Conquers Fear".

## Did You Know?

UNCRPD stands for United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol (A/RES/61/106) was adopted on 13 December 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and was opened for signature on 30 March 2007. There were 82 signatories to the Convention, 44 signatories to the Optional Protocol, and 1 ratification of the Convention. This is the highest number of signatories in history to a UN Convention on its opening day. It is the first comprehensive human rights treaty of the 21st century and is the first human rights convention to be open for signature by regional integration organizations. The Convention entered into force on 3 May 2008.

The Convention follows decades of work by the United Nations to change attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. It takes to a new height the movement from viewing persons with disabilities as "objects" of charity, medical treatment and social protection towards viewing persons with disabilities as "subjects" with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free, and informed consent as well as being active members of society.

The Convention is intended as a human rights instrument with an explicit, social development dimension. It adopts a broad categorization of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Did you also know?

Trinidad and Tobago became a signatory to the Convention on 27 September 2007 and later ratified it on 25 June 2015.

# NCPD's Activities

## January - March 2018

### Powergen Art Competition 2018

On January 25th 2018, POWERGEN held an Award Ceremony at Queens Hall, Port-of-Spain for its 2017 Art Competition. The ceremony was attended by Program Manager, Ms. Kahaya Sooklalsingh and Bookbinding/Art student, Avinash Balkissoon who placed first in the competition. Avinash's artwork is featured on the POWERGEN Power Station Wall located on Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain with the other finalist of the competition.



# Visit by SERVOL

A group of students from the SERVOL Forres Park campus visited the Centre on January 26th 2018 to be sensitized, educated and raise their awareness on persons with disabilities, disability etiquette and information about our certified training and business enterprise.

The students had a very enlightening experience and asked many questions during their visit as they got an opportunity to interact with the trainees and staff as they toured the facilities.

Program Manager, Ms. Kahaya Sooklalsingh and Job Placement Officer, Mr. Ricardo Rampaul facilitated the visit.

## DIGICEL Carnival Pump 2k18

On January 29th 2018 all roads led to the Nelson Mandela Park, Port-of-Spain for the DIGICEL Annual Kiddies Carnival Pump which featured well-known DJs and Soca Artist where Machel Mantano was the featured performer for the event.

Patrons were treated to lots of food and drinks, face painting, magic show, photo booth and lots more. A group of students comprising of both Trainees and Apprentices were accompanied by 6 instructors.

The students enjoyed the event thoroughly and look forward to 2019 event.



# Career and CARE Fair Day

Bishop Anstey High School East held its annually Career and CARE Fair Day on February 2nd 2018 on the school's compound. National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) was invited for the 2nd time to host a booth so that staff and students can be sensitised on disabilities and also to highlight the organisation.

Mr. Kyle Young Lai, Graphic Artist and Ms. Kahaya Sooklalsingh, Program Manager manned the booth for the event and shared information.



# Special Olympics of Trinidad and Tobago -National Games

The local arm of Special Olympics held the Annual National Games on March 10th 2018. The Hasely Crawford Stadium was the main venue for the event with some of the games taking place at other venues; Trinidad and Tobago Police Training Ground, Trinidad and Tobago Mounted Branch Grounds, Deigo Martin Swimming Pool and at Long Circular Mall Gym.

The event commenced with an Opening Ceremony, Sports Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Daryl Smith addressed the gathering he also took some time to greet the athletes along with a small contingent that included Mr. Brian Lewis of the Olympics Committee of Trinidad and Tobago.

NCPD had a large delegation comprising of 123 athletes and 16 staff members. NCPD competed in Basketball, Football, Volleyball, Bocce, Swimming, Power Lifting and Track and Field.

NCPD took home 35 gold medals, 23 silver medals, 32 bronze medals and 229 ribbons. Athletes were very pleased with their performances and look forward to next year's event.

The event closed with the carrying of the Torch which was done by Basketball Player/Floor Hockey Player/Welding Trainee, Ms. Tameka Campbell who carried the Torch with pride.

The Closing Ceremony also featured Basket Player/Music

Band Member, Mr. Cydale Fletcher who played 'Hello' by Kes on the steelpan. There were guest performances by Blaxx, Dev, Eerphan Alves and many more local Soca Artists.

Special Olympics Trinidad and Tobago, National Games celebrated 30 years of National Games and to mark the event, there was a 'drive by' featuring the different vehicles in the various arms of security while the Trinidad and Tobago Police Band entertained the gathering with 'sweet trini music'.



## Wellness Tip

Whether or not we are using our computer, reading, watching television, playing video games, driving or glued to our smartphones or smart devices, our eyes take a lot of beating. Thus it is very easy for our eyes to become strained or tired.

Here are some ways to treat your tired eyes;

- Take some time away from electronic devices
- Use bluelight reduction mode on Laptop and mobile apps such as "Twilight".
- Increase the amount of light in the room especially when reading and writing
- Try listening audio materials instead of reading at times
- Get enough sleep
- Soothe your eyes by taking a walk outside your office or house and allow your eyes to get some natural light (be sure to wear your sunglasses if the sun is out)

If issues with your eyes get worse, please see an ophthalmologist immediately.

**National Centre for  
Persons with Disabilities**

**WE BOAT RIDE**  
**5**

**COOLER CRUISE**  
aboard the **SEA CHAMPION**  
King's Wharf, San Fernando.

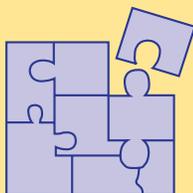
**SAT. 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2018**  
feat.: **DJ. BLACK GOLD & GOG**

Boarding: 3pm Sailing 4-7pm  
Proceeds go towards  
NCPD Training Programme

**Only: \$200**

For further information contact NCPD:  
652-4880, 657-3525

**NO GLASS BOTTLES**



**NATIONAL CENTRE  
FOR PERSONS  
WITH DISABILITIES**

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

## Our Vision

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

## Our Mission

To empower persons with disabilities through vocational rehabilitation, training, advocacy, research and consultative services in partnership with diverse stakeholders.