



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Priority: **HIGH**

Ministry of Social Development celebrates Human Diversity in commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Port of Spain--- In commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2022, which will be observed on December 3, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, through the Disability Affairs Unit, hosted a Performance Arts competition for persons with disabilities. This competition, which took place yesterday, November 30, at the Tunapuna Community Centre, provided an opportunity for persons with disabilities to display or demonstrate their ability to subscribe to the chosen theme: “*A Celebration of Human Diversity*”. Present at the ceremony were Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Sheila Seecharan; Disability Affairs Specialist, Tessa Pascall; the artistic creators, Lisa Soyer and Aaliyah Ross and their parents and supporters.

This theme aligns with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)’s principle of respect for differences and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity.

Delivering the feature address, Permanent Secretary, Sheila Seecharan stated that the Ministry continues to work diligently towards helping, transforming and empowering the lives of persons with disabilities throughout Trinidad and Tobago. She further noted that the Ministry continues to work collaboratively with international and local organizations towards increasing accessibility, removing barriers that hinder persons with disabilities from being included, amending existing legislation and creating new ones that will uphold and advance the rights and dignity of all persons with disabilities, and their ability to participate in the continued development of our country

According to the Permanent Secretary, “The Ministry in our commitment to efficiently meet the needs of persons with disabilities continues to review our grants, services to ensure that an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities and to provide income maintenance and social security for all persons with disabilities is provided.” She further emphasized that as a citizenry, we must prioritise building a more inclusive and accessible world that recognizes the contributions of all people, including those persons with disabilities.

In closing, Permanent Secretary Sheila Seecharan reassured the audience that the Ministry will continue to provide the requisite support towards all efforts made to provide quality social services towards the enhancement and celebration of diversity among all persons with disabilities

Following the competition, the judging panel gave the winning title to Lisa Soyer, who did a soulful and creative dance piece. Aaliyah Ross won the second place title with her thought provoking spoken word piece. The Ministry congratulates both winners, and looks forward to similar type engagements with the public in the future so that awareness, sensitization and solidarity could be promoted across Trinidad and Tobago.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services remains committed to the inclusion and promotion of the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.

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For more information:

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PS Sheila Seecharan delivers remarks at the Performance Arts competition



Lisa Soyer showcases her talent with a soulful and creative dance piece



PS Sheila Seecharan and the contestants of the competition- Lisa Soyer (left) and Aaliyah Ross (right)



(l-r) Gillian Layne-Joseph , Judge; Winner, Lisa Soyer; Disability Affairs Specialist, Tessa Pascall; PS Seecharan; Second place winner, Aaliyah Ross; Michael Cherrie, Judge



PS Sheila Secharan and the winner of the competition, Lisa Soyer