

News Release

CIBC FIRSTCARIBBEAN BANK STAFF RESTOCK FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK PANTRY

Tortola, British Virgin Islands, May 30, 2018 – Staff of CIBC FirstCaribbean teamed up to help restock the Family Support Network (FSN) Pantry this month.

The internal pantry drive is an initiative embraced by employees of the bank who have pledged to support the FSN in deed and in kind. This month's effort was a collection of non-perishable items and was presented at the end of May to Mrs. Judith Charles, President of the FSN by staff at the bank.

"We feel fortunate that we are in a position to support members of our community who struggle to make ends meet, especially after the category 5 hurricanes Irma and Maria," said Mrs. Juliet Fahie, Client Services Officer, Corporate Banking who assisted in the collection of goods. "We know that the domestic needs of individuals and families are pretty universal so identifying what to place in the pantry collection box is not difficult. While individually we might have been able to donate a bag of groceries each, by combining our efforts we were able to concentrate on specific goods and make significant contributions of high cost pantry items for families in need."

The collection focused primarily on children's needs and personal health and included items such as diapers, baby wipes, powdered milk, lunchbox snacks and drinks, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soaps and daily food staples.

In 2016 FSN's new clients totaled 244 and the food pantry alone fed 2,631 people. New clients in 2017 totaled 418 with the ages ranging from 18 to 97.

In the months after the 2017 hurricanes, the total number of persons in households fed from September to December was 1,064. For the year 2017 the total number of persons in households fed was 3,852. According to FSN reports, figures for 2018 are close to that number already.

"We assisted 55 people who had been made homeless by the storms and 65 were homeless but being sheltered by friends. We had two retirees who came regularly for services such as the monthly food distribution. Now we have over 50 retirees requesting help. We provided food, water, and clothing to all these people," said Mrs. Charles.

The work undertaken by the FSN goes beyond the provision of basic food and shelter. "After the hurricane we had to repatriate a young woman to the Philippines with the kind help of a local business. We helped a retired lady with her cataract surgery by getting another organization to help with the cost. We helped an elderly gentleman get to the hospital and get his house back so that he could be returned there after his hospital stay, with the assistance of two other local nonprofits. We've delivered food parcels to the elderly, shared with the local home for the elderly, found help for one homeless family that consisted of two small children," explained Mrs. Charles.

The scope of help required every day is wide and endless. "There have been several closures as a result of the hurricanes, so there are many people on island who are currently out of work," said Mrs. Charles. "Most of the hotels in and around Virgin Gorda that provided jobs for the people there are seriously damaged and therefore many people are out of work. I get email on our Facebook page daily from young ladies asking for help. Our clients come from Virgin Gorda, Jost Van Dyke and Anegada as well as Tortola. We need all the help we can get in order to respond to these requests and encourage everyone to continue to keep the FSN in mind when it comes to lending a hand, making a one-off donation or pledging longer term support."

Beneficiaries and donors can collect or drop off items at the FSN's current location in the O'Neal Building (below Harney's) on Main Street from 10:00am - 4:00pm, Mondays through Fridays. The FSN can be contacted on (284) 494-7622 or (284) 341-7693.

In October 2017 CIBC FirstCaribbean was able to secure funds from the bank's ComTrust Foundation to give the FSN a donation of \$8000 as well as pallets of hurricane relief items such as drinking water, health care and cleaning products and practical items including tarpaulin, plywood, 3x4 wood, nails, rope, and jerry jugs.

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