



## News Release

### For Immediate Release

#### CIBC FIRSTCARIBBEAN ASSISTS THE BARBADOS ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS

**Bridgetown, Barbados, 20 October 2022.** More people are turning up at the shelter for the Barbados Alliance to End Homelessness (BAEH) since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. And even though it looks as if the pandemic is coming to an end and as life returns to 'normal', the Alliance is seeing more people in need, as a result of the many issues, Barbados and the world have gone through in the last two years.

This perspective was shared by Kemar Saffrey, President and Project Manager at the Alliance as he met with CIBC FirstCaribbean's outgoing CEO Colette Delaney and CEO Designate Mark St. Hill at the bank recently. He was at the time accepting a cheque from the bank which supports the work being done to assist the island's homeless population and he was there to bid farewell to Colette Delaney, outgoing Chairman of the Comtrust Foundation which has supported the Alliance for the five years and has pledged another \$80 000 over four to the charity (\$20 000 per year).

When she queried how things were now, post pandemic, Saffrey said that it had gotten worse following the pandemic and the ash fall as they had found that they were 70% full most nights as more people became homeless due to these natural disasters. Furthermore, he added that they were seeing more women and children turning up at the shelter than before. On average one person per day used to become homeless and now they were seeing two sometimes three per day.

When asked by Mark St Hill about any success stories, Saffrey confirmed that the Alliance has been 100% successful with job placement because they seek to rehabilitate and reintegrate homeless persons. He said when they come there, they are expected to work. He explained that the Alliance does not take money from construction or security firms, rather they ask for five spots per year to place persons in need of a job. Those placements have proven very successful to date.

They have often been able to speak to the Welfare Department to get assistance for a place for them to live, give them a bank account to help them to save some of the money they work for and basically help them to get back on their feet, after what is usually a very trying time for them.

He explained that there are some people on the street, and despite the best efforts of all the agencies, prefer to stay there. Some are battling mental health issues, drug addiction and other underlying issues that have to be addressed first, and for some it can be a long journey to get back to where they were. This could include six to nine months at Verdun House if they are of a mind to go there for treatment.

Ms. Delaney praised Saffrey for the work that he was doing and asked how, as a young man, he got into this line of work. She thanked him for what he has been doing and Mark St. Hill assured him that the bank will continue to support the efforts of the Alliance, as long as they continue to help the homeless.

Saffrey also spoke of the clinic which had been started recently in collaboration with Ross University and Urgent Care Mobile. This, he said was largely because most of the clients have underlying issues and don't feel comfortable going to mainstream clinics or the hospital. The clinic offers a full-time service for them. Medical students are recognised for the work that they do and gained credits for the hours that they put into the clinic. He added that though there are many who look to feed the homeless, there is much more to be done.

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**Barbados Alliance to end Homelessness 1: Kemar Saffrey (right) explains the work of the shelter to from left Mark St. Hill and Colette Delaney**



Barbados Alliance to end Homelessness 2;; Mark St. Hill left presents the cheque to Kemar Saffrey while Colette Delaney looks on.



**Barbados Alliance to end Homelessness 3:** Kemar Saffrey (centre) explains why some people are on the streets to (from left) Mark St. Hill and Colette Delaney

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