

NEWS RELEASE

CIBC FIRSTCARIBBEAN HELP MEN AND BOYS FOR IMD

Port of Spain, 2 December 2022 - A donation to an all-boys' primary school as well as dedicated quality time among male staff members were the ways which Trinidad Operations of CIBC FirstCaribbean recently celebrated International Men's Day (IMD).

The day, which is observed every November 19, celebrates worldwide the positive value men bring to the world, their families and communities. The theme for this year was "Helping Men and Boys."

"One of the six pillars of International Men's Day is to focus on men's health and wellbeing. Whether it is from a social, emotional, physical, or spiritual perspective, it is important that men - even from a young stage - learn more on how to help each other," said Anthony Seeraj, Managing Director of Trinidad Operating Market.

The bank hosted a special session with male staff to discuss health and life matters. They were ably guided by Dr. Oti Esimaje, medical director of Newtown Medical Centre; Sherma Mills-Serrette, clinic manager of the Trinidad and Tobago Cancer Society as well as Nigel Thomas, Coordinator, Employee Assistance and Workplace Support at Families In Action.

At this session, there was an urgent call for men to reduce their risk and have better, healthier lifestyles. Dr Esimaje said it was important for men to know their numbers - from BMI to blood sugar - to ensure they are in a safe zone as it relates to health issues, life style diseases, and depression.

"The leading cause of death in men is ischaemic heart disease. Not to sound like a bearer of bad news, but there are ways to manage," Dr Esimaje said.

Ischaemic heart disease is the term given to heart problems caused by narrowed heart arteries. When arteries are narrowed, less blood and oxygen reaches the heart muscle. This leads to heart attacks. However, knowing your risk score can make this more manageable, Dr Esimaje said. He advised that every co-worker should look out for each other to make sure they are okay.

Mills-Serrette echoed similar sentiments when she asked the men at the session to establish a brotherhood movement among themselves and encourage each other to get checked for prostate cancer.

"Be a creature of habit," she implored. "Early detection saves lives."

According to Dr Esimaje's statistics, prostate cancer ranks as the seventh leading cause of death among men. However, Mills-Serrette said it carries the highest number in male cancer mortality in Trinidad and Tobago. The mortality is concerning, she added, as healthy coping skills are needed to face the disease head on. But Mills-Serrette also pointed out that there is she noticed an influx in screenings, hoping that the message of brotherhood and looking out for each other would encourage more men to take time and care of themselves.

Thomas, however, took another perspective on the importance of self-care. "It is time for you," he said. "It is more than a spa day as some people may see it. It is about setting boundaries."

Thomas, who is also a registered and certified mediator, encouraged men to be comfortable to make time for their peace of mind and well-being.

The bank also supported Nelson Street Boys' RC School by providing funding for the installation of much needed air-conditioning units.

The school, which was established in 1899, is located just south of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. It was considered an academic giant back then. Alumni included the late Prime Minister George Chambers as well as the late founder and director of the Medical Research Foundation Dr Courtney Bartholomew.

Decades later the school continues to excel. The school boasts of its SanFest Championship title for drumology. It is at the top of the chart for football in the Port of Spain Zone of the primary school league. SEA results have seen some students move on to some of the top secondary schools such as QRC and St Mary's College.

The school received \$10,000 from the bank's ComTrust foundation for the sourcing and installation of AC units. The reading room used by the students of the infant department and the staff room are to benefit from this.

"Nelson Street Boys' carries history, from teaching prominent citizens to showing its best foot forward in academia, cultural, and sporting activities. But we must also remember the school also has its challenges. So, CIBC FirstCaribbean was happy to support the school in any way possible," Seeraj said.

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Principal of Nelson St Boys' RC School, Frances Gervais-Heath, receives a donation from Anthony Seeraj, Managing Director of Trinidad Operating Company, CIBC FirstCaribbean.

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