



Gonzales Community Wants To Revamp Homework Centre
ComTrust Foundation continues to support the late Chair's wish

Maraval, Trinidad, August 27, 2024 – Despite the challenges since his appointment to the St Martin de Porres RC Church in Gonzales in April, Parish Priest Father Matthew D'Hereaux is determined to make a difference in the community.

Gonzales is a high-risk community in East Port of Spain, which has garnered the reputation as a hot spot for gun-related violence.

"I am taking care of my mental health," Fr Matthew said. "I am keeping hope alive."

One way of keeping the community moving is the reopening of the homework centre, which is part of Community Intervention for Transformation and Empowerment (CIT+E), a pastoral response of the Roman Catholic Church. When the homework centre was opened in 2019, CIT+E worked towards the transformation of the young people in the Gonzales community.

Covid put activities on hold, but the residents are again calling again for that safe space.

"Three weeks ago I walked through the community and asked if they would contribute to its revamping, and it was a general consensus. Also in the data collection, they asked what assurance would be given to security, proper supervision, and tutors with experience to help with homework," Fr Matthew related. "So, we are also getting support from ALTA (Adult Literacy Tutors Association), the Ministry of Youth Development as well as the East Port of Spain Development."

In addition to these entities, the ComTrust Foundation of CIBC Caribbean has contributed to its refurbishment. At a recent cheque handover, which was presented by Anthony Seeraj, managing director of CIBC Caribbean's Trinidad Operating Company, Fr Matthew said proceeds would assist with the revamping of the homework centre for the young people in the area.

Before its closure, the homework centre also housed the digital literacy centre named after Michael Mansoor, the bank's former executive chairman who passed away in 2014. Six years later, without the proper upkeep, the centre has fallen to disrepair.

"We are providing support for initial repair work and security fencing," said Seeraj. "Mr Mansoor always had it in his heart to support education and communities in need, so we are ensuring that his legacy continues by keeping the donation going."

Fr Matthew added that once the homework centre is up and running, there are plans to expand it to an all-purpose centre.

“Ultimately, we want to instil pride in the residents. We have to give them hope. It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness,” he said.

End



Anthony Seeraj, managing director of CIBC Caribbean, Trinidad Operating Company, left, presents the donation to Father Matthew D'Hereaux, parish priest, St Martin de Porres RC Church.

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Media contact:

Anthony Seeraj, Managing Director – Trinidad Operating Company, Long Circular Road, telephone+1(868) 628-4685 email: Anthony.seeraj@cibcfib.com

Debra King, Director of Corporate Communications, CIBC Caribbean, Barbados Head Office Telephone: 246 367 2248; Fax: 246 421 7148 and Email: debra.king@cibcfib.com