



The Bulletin

Issue No. 25

Our Monthly Achievement Report

May 2020

We Remember, We Take Action, We Live Beyond HIV... AIDS Virtual Candlelight Memorial

In commemoration of the International AIDS Candlelight Memorial, Millennium Sistahs T&T in collaboration with the National AIDS Coordinating Committee hosted a virtual session to remember those who have died of AIDS, as well as to demonstrate solidarity with people living with HIV and their caretakers.

The Memorial held on May 17, 2020 was commemorated with the theme ‘**We remember, we take action, we live beyond HIV.**’ In solidarity, activists lit their candles and flashlights and called the names of persons who died from HIV as well as, shared stories and testimonies and critical advice on ways to cope with HIV during this global pandemic.

For A World Confronted By AIDS

Loving God

As we hold before you a world
confronted by AIDS,
we pray in hope for your will to
prevail:

Where lives are short,
may they yet be full.

When a cure is far off,
may there yet be healing.
Where bodies are weak,
may spirits yet be strong.

When silence is destructive,
may there yet be courage to
speak out.

Where judgements are hasty,
may minds yet be open.

When reality is overwhelming,
may there yet be response.

When faith is tested,
may we yet find you there.
In the name of Jesus, Amen.

By Simeon Mitchell
Christian Aid



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The New Normal

Through strategic partnership and collaboration, the National AIDS Coordinating Committee provided masks for distribution through the NGO outreach project for persons affected by HIV and AIDS. Special thanks to Mr. Kirk Langton, Ms. Ladelin Garcia and Rapso Imaging Limited for their generous donation.

With the implementation of the new normal, the wearing of face masks is critical to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Here are some useful tips:

How to put on a face mask

- Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before touching the mask.
- Remove a mask from the box and make sure there are no obvious tears or holes in either side of the mask.
- Determine which side of the mask is the top. The side of the mask that has a stiff bendable edge is the top and is meant to mold to the shape of your nose.
- Determine which side of the mask is the front. The colored side of the mask is usually the front and should face away from you, while the white side touches your face.
- Follow the instructions below for the type of mask you are using.

Face Mask with Ear loops: Hold the mask by the ear loops. Place a loop around each ear.

Face Mask with Ties: Bring the mask to your nose level and place the ties over the crown of your head and secure with a bow.

Face Mask with Bands: Hold the mask in your hand with the nosepiece or top of the mask at fingertips, allowing the headbands to hang freely below hands. Bring the mask to your nose level and pull the top strap over your head so that it rests over the crown of your head. Pull the bottom strap over your head so that it rests at the nape of your neck.

- Mold or pinch the stiff edge to the shape of your nose.
- If using a face mask with ties: Then take the bottom ties, one in each hand, and secure with a bow at the nape of your neck.
- Pull the bottom of the mask over your mouth and chin.

How to remove a face mask

- Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before touching the mask. Avoid touching the front of the mask. The front of the mask is contaminated. Only touch the ear loops/ties/band. Follow the instructions below for the type of mask you are using.

Face Mask with Ear loops: Hold both of the ear loops and gently lift and remove the mask.

Face Mask with Ties: Untie the bottom bow first then untie the top bow and pull the mask away from you as the ties are loosened.

Face Mask with Bands: Lift the bottom strap over your head first then pull the top strap over your head.

- Throw the mask in the trash. Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer.

Tips sourced from <https://www.sfcddp.org/communicable-disease/healthy-habits/how-to-put-on-and-remove-a-face-mask/>





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Getting the Job Done In the New Normal

THE NEW NORMAL

As the Stay at Home measures are gradually lifted and we hope that the medical practitioners can find a cure for COVID-19 very soon.

Despite this optimism, world health leaders have posited that a viable treatment is unlikely until well into 2021, which means many employees and employers may have to get used to a different lifestyle 'a new normal' even while restrictions are

being relaxed to facilitate the reopening process.

In Trinidad and Tobago, our experts have suggested what the new normal might look like. These are:

1. Wearing of face mask;
2. Frequent sanitation of person and surfaces;
3. Physical distancing;
4. Avoid touching self and others and in particular your face;
5. Staying home if ill or unwell, etc.

Truly the face of work has changed, as COVID-19 makes us reimagine our lives differently. It brings us to a fundamental question about how we work and what spaces we occupy.

In the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) our mission states that we are the beacon for the public service. As such, we continued in the month of May, on the advice of the medical fraternity to implement safety measures/precautions to protect staff and citizens visiting our various offices.

One such measure is the use of virtual interactions which have become a part of the new normal. Despite the global pandemic, meeting the needs of our citizenry is of paramount importance. As a result, our staff continued to work tirelessly by planning and executing initiatives using virtual platforms.

Working remotely demanded a method which employees could stay connected but still practice social/physical distancing. Several meetings were held with local, regional and international partners via online platforms to advance the work.

We understand that the work must continue especially now as the need to protect and secure the wellbeing of every boy, girl, woman, man and our vulnerable groups is much greater than before. The OPM is committed to overcoming each hurdle to safeguard the human right of all citizens.

THE NEW NORMAL

- Wear a mask over your nose and mouth when you go out in public
- Keep your distance from others (6 feet)
- Stay home if you are ill
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Cough into a tissue or into the crook of your elbow
- Avoid touching your face
- Clean then sanitize surfaces (e.g. table tops, door knobs and cell phones)

#TTBEATCOVID19

ChildLine continues to walk the talk



CHILDLINE

FREE
TELEPHONE
COUNSELLING
FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PERSONS

800-4321 OR 131

Call any time to make
an appointment!



childLine
WE HEAR, WE CARE
800 4321 or 131

Along this COVID-19 period, ChildLine has taken matters into their own hands in meeting the psychosocial needs and staying connected to our nation's children's in creative and new ways.

A little History lends perspective ...

ChildLine is dedicated to the protection and care of children and young persons in Trinidad and Tobago. Arising from the COVID-19 restrictions, ChildLine has made significant adjustments to the

format and range of services offered. Activities and campaigns in May 2020 have mainly focused on promoting self-care and psychosocial wellbeing. ChildLine has greatly increased its social media presence via its official website, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and more recently YouTube.

ChildLine and COVID-19

The organization has used its growing social media platforms to produce a number of live and pre-recorded videos on subjects ranging from educational to recreational. Some of these include a mini-series on "*Quarantine Gardening*" from home, live moral storytelling for children, and the "*Life Lessons*" series on dealing with real life issues that children typically face. They have also produced a series of website articles and social media posts on family activities, parent-child communication, non-violent discipline, identifying and preventing child abuse, and emotional coping strategies for staying at home. ChildLine has offered free webinars on "**Child Protection Awareness**", "**Introduction to Psychosocial First Aid**", and "**How to talk to children about difficult topics**" to provide information and guidance to the public during this period. A webinar on "*Mental Health and Self-care Awareness*" can be expected in June 2020, in addition to an advanced version of "**Improving Parent-Child Communication during the COVID-19 Pandemic.**"

The new normal, our future and beyond

In adjusting to the new normal, the organization has been offering its usual counselling services via telephone. ChildLine has also begun preparations for the introduction of in-office counselling, in accordance with social distancing recommendations, to be fully implemented in June. In-office counselling will be provided for both local children and Spanish-speaking children on the move. The official website will also continue to provide an online chat feature, initiated in March 2020, for persons who would prefer a private messaging format.

For the conceivable future, ChildLine intends to continue bolstering its social media content and broadening the availability of its scope of services. Though these are unprecedented times, ChildLine continues to wholeheartedly honour the commitment made to serve children and youths by offering free psychosocial and mental health support from trained professionals. Their confidential Helpline remains free and available 24/7 to persons 25 and under. Follow them on social media and visit their website to stay updated on upcoming services or events.

Special thanks

ChildLine wishes to express its sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Office of the Prime Minister, Gender and Child Affairs, for its continued and kind support to ChildLine.

Article written by **Ms. Mary Moonan, Manager, ChildLine**

Official Website: childlinett.org

Facebook: [TTChildLine](https://www.facebook.com/TTChildLine)

Instagram: [childline_tt](https://www.instagram.com/childline_tt)

Twitter: [childline_tt](https://twitter.com/childline_tt)

YouTube: [ChildLine Tri](https://www.youtube.com/ChildLine_Tri)

Celebrating 5 Years in Protecting Our Children...

CHILD PROTECTION IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS



Celebrating 5

Children's
Authority
of Trinidad and Tobago

On May 18, 2020 the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago commemorated its fifth year of operations in the service of protecting our nation's children from all forms of abuse, violence and neglect. As partners in child protection, the Office of the Prime Minister joined the national community in celebrating their fifth anniversary! Mr. Hanif Benjamin, Chairman of the Children's Authority shared a few words to mark this momentous occasion.

"I am pleased today to commemorate with you, the Authority's five years of operations as a child protection agency. The proclamation of the Package of Children's Legislation in May 2015 gave the Authority the mandate to provide for children in need of care and protection. While five years as an organisation is considered embryonic, we have achieved a significant milestone, as we have positively impacted the lives of numerous children and their families. As every one of you is aware, the task of child protection is no easy feat.

Yet, despite the challenges that come with the job, many of you have stayed the course. Firstly, I want to recognise and applaud the **58 staff members**, some of whom have been with the organisation since 2011 and are observing this achievement with us today. And secondly, I also want to **congratulate and applaud each staff member for their tireless commitment to the children of Trinidad and Tobago**. Last year when we thought about how we would recognize this achievement, no one could have imagined it would be done under such conditions. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which requires social distancing and persons to work from home, as far as possible, we are not able to meet as a team in one location. These are truly challenging times and on behalf of the Board of Management, I extend **heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for your tremendous efforts, resilience, and commitment during this pandemic**. Over the past two months, we have made changes to the way we operate, to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of those we serve. From all reports we are successful and that is a testament to your dedication, especially those who are on the frontline every day. I salute you.

As many of you may know, my journey as Chairman of the Board of Management of the Children's Authority began in 2017. At the start of my Board's tenure, several targets were set, as we sought to build on a great deal of work that went into establishing this agency. I am pleased that after three years, we have achieved, with your help, many of the goals.

These include:

- Re-engaging stakeholders and developing strategic partnerships
- The establishment of an External Funding Committee and receiving funds and donations funding
- Promoting the adoption of older children
- 100% Medical Benefits for all staff members
- Conducting an HR audit to ensure the Authority has the required number of skilled staff to meet the needs of those we serve
- Signing Memorandum of Understanding with key stakeholders, like the North Central Regional Health Authority; the Tobago House of Assembly and the Counter-Trafficking Unit
- Decentralizing our services by opening four Assessment Centres throughout the country, and full CATT operation in Tobago
- Developing three Child Support Centres, which include one in Tobago
- Continuing to advocate for the development and enhancement of existing laws and systems within the child protection framework
- Contributing towards legislative amendments for a better-coordinated approach to child protection

Article continues on the next page

Celebrating 5 Years in Protecting Our Children...

Team CATT, while we acknowledge our achievements, which we should do, we still have a long way to go. Our journey has only just begun, as we are currently developing the Strategic Plan that will take us from 2020-2023. Just as we can look back and celebrate our many successes as an Agency, we can also look back and see the many areas we do need improvement in as well. These include a reduction in our backlog cases, to ensure children are receiving care, protection and relevant services, in the shortest possible time-frame. Additionally, we need to take an overall look at our processes. These and more are a huge task for us all, but I am certain that we have the capacity to reassess and improve the way we do business.

As we look ahead, I am working diligently to get us three buses that we can re-purpose for our community caravan outreach. These will allow us to have mobile offices in Trinidad as well as in Tobago – **taking the Authority to the people**. Allow me to say a very big thank you to all the staff members that go out of their way and work duties to represent the Authority on the media, presentations, panels, outreach, etc. You are the flag bearers. **“Child Protection Is Everybody’s Business”** and we are ramping up our efforts to engage with the community as well as our partners in the sector. We need to get other key stakeholders who are already “at the table” with us, on board. While we have great working relations with several of them, for our nation’s at-risk children to be assured of timely service, we need to sign Memorandum of Understanding to solidify inter-agency partnerships. The success of the Children’s Authority over the past five years cannot be attributed to one person or one Board. So, allow me to say **thanks to the current Board of Management, former Boards of Management, former Directors and the staff, both past and present**. You have all made an indelible mark on the child protection landscape. Today let us renew our commitment to the children of our nation. Congrats Team CATT on achieving the 5-year mark.

<p>DO YOU WANT YOUR CHILD TO COME UP TO YOU AND TALK?</p>	<p>✘ “I will give you some licks if you fight with your brother again!”</p> <p>✔ “Come up to me and talk if you had a disagreement with your brother.”</p>	<p>✘ “I never thought you would be this nasty and watch something like that!”</p> <p>✔ “We are naturally curious. If you want to know about anything related to sex, come and ask me anything”</p>
<p>✘ “Wow. You’re being overdramatic right now.”</p> <p>✔ “If you’re thinking about some really dark thoughts, come and talk to me about it. I’m always here to listen.”</p>	<p>✘ “I heard you fell and broke grandma’s plants. Why would you do that?”</p> <p>✔ “We all make mistakes. If you made one, don’t hesitate to tell me.”</p>	<p>Your past reactions towards your child’s behaviour will determine whether they feel comfortable enough to come up to you or not.</p>

CHILD PROTECTION IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED

.....

CONTACT OUR HOTLINE AT:

996 OR 800-2014

.....

HELP IS ON THE WAY

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has heeded the call by persons in need by providing grants to religious organizations for the purposes of purchasing goods for the preparation and distribution of hampers and food support to citizens and permanent residents whose incomes have been adversely affected by COVID-19 and who are in need of emergency food supplies. The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), which has the portfolio for Ecclesiastical Affairs, issued grants to religious bodies who applied and were able to fulfil the recommended criteria for just distribution. Throughout the month of May the OPM sought to collaborate with religious organizations to execute the fair and widespread delivery of food and cleaning supplies. This system will continue for a period of three (3) months (April-June 2020) so long as the participating bodies are able to facilitate. The OPM recognizes the challenges being faced by so many in our nation due to the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to seek the best interest of the wider public.

HOW TO ACCESS

Visit the Office of the Prime Minister's (Gender and Child Affairs) website: www.opm-gca.gov.tt or Facebook page [@genderandchildaffairs](https://www.facebook.com/genderandchildaffairs) for more information.

GIVING TO THOSE WHO NEED IT THE MOST

Armed with their masks and social distancing protocols in mind, religious bodies took up the challenge to assist the Office of the Prime Minister in fulfilling its efforts to help those in need. The



Photos courtesy SWAHA and Bethel Church of their preparation for distribution drives across Trinidad and Tobago as part of the COVID-19 Relief Response.



Keeping an Eye on Youth Development

On May 28, 2020 the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) held a meeting which engaged the participation of several stakeholders including the youth representatives on the National AIDS Coordinating Committee (NACC). Ms. Shadè Alfred and Ms. Chanda La Touche delivered their presentation which gave an overview on the NACC, its priority areas of focus, ongoing projects and ways in supporting the youth agenda of the NACC.

BALANCING THE SPOTLIGHT...

Virtual launch of the Spotlight Initiative in Trinidad and Tobago



The **Gender Affairs Division** teamed up with the **European Union (EU)** to conduct the virtual launch of the Spotlight Initiative in Trinidad and Tobago. The Trinidad and Tobago Spotlight Initiative launched on May 28, 2020 marks the official start of the Spotlight Initiative programme bringing together the Initiative's key partners, including the government, civil society, the United Nations and the European Union. It will support the overall goal of the project: ensuring implementation of integrated, quality and accessible services and prevention approaches to **eliminate family violence**.

Ms. Jacqueline Johnson, Permanent Secretary (Gender and Child Affairs) in the Office of the Prime Minister formally participated in the virtual launch and conveyed the Government of Trinidad and Tobago's pleasure to be collaborating on the Spotlight Initiative to support a comprehensive approach to preventing and responding to family violence in innovative and new ways.

" We look forward to mutually designing and implementing strategies to inform evidence-based decisions and to mainstream gender throughout all policies, programmes, and projects under-taken by and through this Initiative.

The Spotlight Initiative will support and build upon the work of the Gender and Child Affairs Division to shape a gender-just society where gender-based violence in all its forms becomes something of the past and unheard of.

The quality of human life is not only inextricably linked to economic development and some humanist would argue that more importantly, it is the sum of our value based life experiences, our social, psychological conditions and relations which are important to ensure the highest quality human life and ultimately, equality and equity in all facets of the development of women, girls, men and boys. "

Ms. Jacqueline Johnson
Permanent Secretary (Gender and Child Affairs)
Office of the Prime Minister