

NO: 557/19

2019 SENIOR GAMES OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED

Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs, Cynthia Forde, intends to lead by example by participating in the finale of this year's National Senior Games - the track and field competition - slated for the National Stadium on Whit Monday, June 10.

Minister Forde expects to be joined on the track for a celebrity race by a number of her Cabinet colleagues, including Minister with responsibility for Sports, John King; Minister of Energy and Water Resources, Wilfred Abrahams; Minister of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy, Kirk Humphrey; and Minister in the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Investment, Marsha Caddle.

Speaking during a ceremony to officially launch the games in Independence Square last Saturday, the Minister with responsibility for Elder Affairs encouraged seniors to sign up for the games, noting: "You do not have to be a professional athlete to be a part of what we are doing here. I'm not a professional athlete; all it calls for is to make up your mind and to become intimately involved."

Predicting that this year's games will be the best ever, she reminded seniors that there was a range of activities to choose from, and encouraged them to peruse the calendar to see which sports piqued their interest.

In addition to the track and field, the sporting disciplines include lawn tennis, table tennis, road tennis, cycling, basketball, squash, dominoes, netball, archery, bridge, chess, darts and a 5K run and walk.

Stressing the importance of exercise and proper diet to good mental and physical health, Minister Forde lamented: "There are too many thousands of our citizens who are living longer, but they are generally plagued with numerous ailments, diseases and challenges, which impact on the quality of life."

-more-

ADD: 2019 SENIOR GAMES OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED-1

She advised that participating in the games was one way of combatting this challenge. “I want to remind you that the Senior Games and other engagements in exercising the mind and the body will help to turn around the ugly scourge of diabetes, stroke, heart disease, dementia and other things.”

In an appeal to both participants and supporters to come out in their numbers to this year’s games, Minister Forde stated: “I implore all of you here today to get on board as we show the rest of Barbados, the region and the world that our seniors are ready, willing and able to set the trend that age is nothing but a number.”

The opening ceremony was preceded by a parade of teams from Jubilee Gardens to Independence Square. **(JS/BGIS)**

NO: 558/19

RENEWED EMPHASIS ON COMMUNITY SPORTING EVENTS

Minister with responsibility for Sports, John King, says that his ministry is joining forces with the National Sports Council to host island-wide community sporting events next year, in an effort to encourage Barbadians to be more active.

Referring to the recent Indigo Wellness Index, which rated Barbados as the sixth unhealthiest country in the world, the minister stated: “I’m saying that this ranking for Barbados, regardless of how well or how skewed the statistics may be, really does not represent the Barbados that you and I grew up in, and it means therefore that we have got to do something to change these statistics.”

He was speaking at the launch of the 2019 National Senior Games in Independence Square last Saturday.

Mr. King reminded his audience, made up primarily of senior athletes, of growing up in a Barbados with grandparents who walked everywhere for miles; attending schools where everyone was involved in sports; and of living in communities where everyone joined the social and sporting clubs.

ADD: RENEWED EMPHASIS ON COMMUNITY SPORTING EVENTS-1

“Persons of all ages should recognize the importance of cultivating healthy lifestyle habits as well as participating in civic activities, which can contribute to the progress of our nation,” he submitted.

Minister King lauded the Senior Games, noting that the event played a pivotal role in encouraging seniors to stay active. He added: “Efforts aimed at motivating our seniors to achieve greater value and quality in their lives by staying healthy, active and fit must be applauded.”

The 18th annual National Senior Games will run from May 2 to June 10, under the theme **Live Well....Live Long**. Seniors will compete in 15 sporting disciplines.

(JS/BGIS)

NO: 559/19

REGISTRATION FORMS FOR SENIOR GAMES AVAILABLE

Registration forms for this year’s National Senior Games are now available, and may be collected from three venues.

From Monday to Friday, interested persons may visit the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs, at Warrens Office Complex, Warrens, St. Michael; the National Sports Council, Blenheim House, My Lord’s Hill, St. Michael; and the National Assistance Board, Murrell House, Country Road, St. Michael, during normal working hours.

The deadline for registration for the track and field competition, which comes off at the National Stadium on Whit Monday, June 10, is May 27.

The National Senior Games, which involves 15 disciplines this year, is open to anyone aged 40 years and over. **(JS/BGIS)**

ATTENTION NEWS EDITOR:

MINISTER OF ENERGY AND WATER RESOURCES, WILFRED ABRAHAMS, WILL COMMISSION A PV SYSTEM, AS PART OF THE UNDP DREAM PROJECT, AT THE IVY COMMUNITY CENTRE, THE IVY, ST. MICHAEL, TOMORROW, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, BEGINNING AT 10:00 A.M.

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO COVER THIS EVENT.

NO: 560/19

FINAL TOWN HALL MEETING ON PLASTICS BAN

The final town hall meeting to discuss the ban on petro-based single use plastics will take place tomorrow, Wednesday, April 24, at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, Two Mile Hill, St. Michael, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Minister of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy, Kirk Humphrey, will again join a panel of speakers to discuss various aspects about the ban, including the alternatives available, and listen to the concerns of those involved in the industry.

Bus transportation will be available after the meeting to take persons to the Fairchild Street and Princess Alice bus terminals.

All are invited to attend. **(JRB/BGIS)**

ATTENTION NEWS EDITOR:

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO COVER THIS EVENT.

NO: 561/19

SIGN-UP NOW FOR JUNIOR FIRE CADET PROGRAMME 2019

Opportunities are open for children ages 13 to 15 to sign up for this year's Junior Fire Cadet Programme, being hosted by the Barbados Fire Service (BFS). It runs from Monday, July 15, to Saturday, August 24, at the Barbados Fire Academy, Arch Hall, St. Thomas, from 8:30 a.m. daily.

-more-

ADD: SIGN-UP NOW FOR JUNIOR FIRE CADET PROGRAMME 2019-1

The objective of the programme is to develop young leaders with high moral values, and is designed to expose them to the culture, functions, discipline and customer-related services of the BFS.

Courses to be taught during the five-week programme include First Aid, including bandaging and splinting; water survival and rescue; squad drill; knots and lines; hose and hydrant drill; extinguishers; and a positive development session and drama. There will also be a session on fire safety.

Interested persons are asked to download application forms from <http://www.fireservice.gov.bb>. The user may navigate to the menu Research/Publications, and click on the drop down tab marked Forms. Alternatively, they may visit the Bridgetown Fire Station, at Probyn Street, The City, to collect their forms.

Application forms must be returned to the Bridgetown Fire Station, or the nearest Fire Station, by Friday, May 31.

For further information, persons may contact Adrian Brome or Ryan Glasgow at 535-7901 or 535-7885, or via email at adrian.brome@fireservice.gov.bb, or ryan.glasgow@fireservice.gov.bb. (JRB/BGIS)

ATTENTION NEWS EDITOR:

DR. PAMELA DOTTIN, OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE UNIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES, WILL DELIVER THE FEATURE ADDRESS AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY FOR THE INSTRUCTORS DEVELOPMENT COURSE AT THE REGIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM TRAINING INSTITUTE, PARAGON, CHRIST CHURCH, ON FRIDAY, APRIL 26, BEGINNING AT 3:00 P.M.

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO COVER THIS EVENT.

NO: 562/19

UPGRADE YOUR TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS WITH CTP

The Community Development Department will restart its Community Technology Programme (CTP) from Monday, May 6, at resource centres island-wide.

Persons interested in attaining technological skills are encouraged to take advantage of the free 10-week level one and level two courses in Microsoft Office 2010 Suite.

The CTP is also offering three and six month-training courses at select centres, for a fee. These courses include Computer Networking; Social Media Marketing; Computer, Tablet and Cellphone Repairs; Office Administration and Technology; Music Production for Beginners; and Business Accounts using Quick Books.

Courses will also continue at St. Clements and Holy Innocents Anglican Churches.

For more information on the courses, interested persons should call the Community Development Department at 535-1655, 535-1662 or 535-1699. **(SP/BGIS)**

ATTENTION NEWS EDITOR:

AS PART OF ALLEYNE WEEK 2019, WHICH RUNS FROM APRIL 23 TO 26, THE ALLEYNE SCHOOL, AT BELLEPLAINE, ST. ANDREW, WILL HOLD ITS FOUNDERS DAY SERVICE TOMORROW, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, BEGINNING AT 9:00 A.M.

THERE WILL ALSO BE A CONCERT IN THE SCHOOL'S AUDITORIUM ON FRIDAY, APRIL 26, FROM 1:20 TO 2:40 P.M.

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO COVER THESE EVENTS.

THE REAL COST OF USING PETRO-BASED PLASTICS

A BGIS NEWS FEATURE

Barbados imported over 100 million individual plastic bags in 2017 - that is enough plastic to wrap around this island 368 times.

It also imported 150,000 pounds of plastic cups, equivalent to 43 ZR vans that same year, and 140,000 pounds of plastic straws, equal to the weight of nine 40-foot containers.

Globally, recent studies estimate the cost of plastics at US\$2.5 trillion per year, with between eight and 12 million tonnes making its way into the world's oceans.

Now, Barbados has joined the fight to ban all petro-based single use plastics, with a ban on its importation on April 1, and its usage from Monday, July 1.

And, with a range of alternative products already on the market, some are questioning the difference in costs between those and the traditional products.

But what is the real cost of making the switch?

Minister of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy, Kirk Humphrey, stated: "The cost is not necessarily between the cost of a polystyrene cup and the cost of a biodegradable cup; the cost really is the cost to clean up Barbados, protect our coral, save our fish and save our own health.

"At the end of the day, it has been found that there are a lot of microplastics in the things that we consume. Those are the real costs.... So, when you are looking at the true cost of what we are trying to protect, you could see this is a massive saving for Barbados."

He added that while some may see the ban as an inconvenience, it was one that was necessary, especially as there was evidence showing the damage straws could cause to the environment.

Mr. Humphrey made reference to pictures of turtles with straws sticking out of their noses and other forms of marine life dying after ingesting plastic, which they mistook for food.

“At the end of the day these things don’t go away,” the minister stated.

This view was supported by Marine Biologist and Sustainability Consultant, Nikola Simpson, who also identified health, the environment and by extension, the economy, as the real costs that needed to be considered.

She explained that there are seven types of plastic, many of which contain toxins that have been linked to diseases such as cancer, and can contribute to a low sperm count in men.

“When we throw plastic away, it usually goes into our food, our water and our soil. When it is thrown at the side of the road, it gets into our gullies; it gets into our drains and blocks the drains and sewerage system.

“It is estimated that by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish by weight in our oceans. Chances are, if you are eating fish you are eating plastic,” she pointed out.

The marine biologist said that when plastic enters the ocean, species such as sea turtles and fish mistake it for their natural diet, such as jelly fish. So, a clear plastic bag floating in the sea is easily mistaken for a jelly fish.

“So, they eat the plastic and it can only go down; it can’t come back out,” she said, noting that this inevitably had an impact on marine life, such as sea turtles, whales and fish, which often choked to death from ingesting plastic.

Ms. Simpson also pointed out that persons who ate fish could potentially be eating plastic, which was also eaten by fish. “I have done work dissecting fish, and have seen bits of plastic in the fish gut,” she said.

However, Styrofoam containers, another banned item in Barbados, have also been flagged as causing health concerns.

“Styrofoam or polystyrene is a plastic that also contains many chemicals and toxins, which have potential negative impacts on our health. When you warm up your food, or heat your food in a microwave in Styrofoam, the bad chemicals leach into your food,” she said.

She added that while the average person would not pick up a piece of Styrofoam and bite it, that was technically what they were doing when they heated their food in such containers.

Meanwhile, Ms. Simpson also noted that the environmental impacts of plastic were wide ranging as there was no such term as “thrown away” when it came to plastics.

“Plastics don’t break down; they break up into smaller pieces. The smaller the pieces, the more places they can go. Plastics are pretty sturdy and that is what makes them so successful. So, they are cheap, convenient and sturdy, and that’s also a problem,” the marine biologist said, noting that the environmental and health impacts were connected.

She added that most of the plastics thrown into the landfill are packed on top of each other, and usually leach into the soil. Ms. Simpson said that eventually some of the chemicals in the plastics break into smaller pieces, and enter the soil, and then enter our groundwater.

Julia Rawlins-Bentham

2019-04-23