

NO: 113/19

BARBADIANS TOLD: NOW IS THE TIME TO GIVE BACK

Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs, Cynthia Forde, today appealed to Barbadians, and particularly those who rose from humble beginnings, to go back into the communities where they grew up and give back.

Speaking at a prayer session at Warrens Office Complex organized to observe the **Pause for a Cause** initiative, Minister Forde said that the time was now to return to these communities and mentor the young people.

She lamented: “Nowadays, people feel they have arrived and don’t want to be associated with the villages from which they came, but I appeal to you not to turn your backs. Ours must be a collective response. We have to work together to stymie this decline.”

The Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs spearheaded the initiative, which saw people around Barbados, including those in workplaces, churches and schools, pause for one minute at midday in prayerful silence. The Weekend of Prayer and Reflection is being observed from today, February 1, to Sunday, February 3, in response to the spike in violent crimes experienced last month.

Revealing that she personally knew three of the young men who lost their lives, Minister Forde appealed to those involved in criminal activity to “lay down the arms and pick up the Word of God”.

The Minister of People Empowerment said that as she has seen the population come together to support the **Pause for a Cause** initiative, it has reaffirmed in her mind that there are wonderful people in Barbados.

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“This togetherness says we are ready to move to the next level to pull Barbados back. I pray we will never give up the moral and spiritual gifts handed down by our fore-parents who were steeped in Christian faith.

“We must rid our society of this mentality among the youth of ‘get rich or die trying’. I’m begging you: do not give up the fight. All is not lost,” she said.

The session, which was attended by staff of the Ministry as well as other Government workers who share the office space, was also addressed by Pastor Patrick Drakes of the Barbados Evangelical Association.

Pastor Drakes submitted that in these days of violence, the nation must be reminded that peace was a worthwhile commodity. “Our churches, workplaces and homes must all be at peace,” he said.

He implored parents especially to make sure that their homes were peaceful zones, stating: “We must stop blaming the Government of the day, our schools, our institutions, our neighbours and our children’s friends. Our homes need to be places where peace is evident and where our children can be taught and where the family can be the personification of peace.”

The pastor noted that in order to salvage Barbados, prayer was paramount, since nothing could take the place of commitment to God, and constantly seeking his direction for this country. **(JS/BGIS)**

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SMALL BUSINESS ENTREPRENEURSHIP & COMMERCE CLOSED UNTIL FEBRUARY 5

The Ministry of Small Business, Entrepreneurship and Commerce has advised that its offices and departments will be closed to the public from Monday, February 4, to Tuesday, February 5. This is to facilitate their relocation from the Baobab Tower to the Warrens Office Complex, 1st Floor, Warrens, St. Michael.

ADD: SMALL BUSINESS ENTREPRENEURSHIP & COMMERCE CLOSED UNTIL FEBRUARY 5-1

The Ministry regrets any inconvenience the closure may cause and advises that the offices and departments will reopen on Wednesday, February 6, from 8:15 a.m.

The PBX remains as 535-7700. **(JG/BGIS)**

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MINISTERS' DIARY**Saturday, February 2**

11:00 a.m. Minister of Energy & Water Resources, Wilfred Abrahams, will give an update on the South Coast Sewerage Project at the Barbados Water Authority Headquarters, The Pine, St. Michael.

1:00 p.m. Minister of Creative Economy, Culture and Sports, John King, will cut the ribbon and deliver remarks at Girlfriends Expo, at the Wildey Gymnasium, St. Michael.

Monday, February 4

9:30 a.m. Minister of Home Affairs, Edmund Hinkson, will receive computer equipment from Chinese Ambassador, Yan Xiusheng, at the Chinese Embassy, Rockley, Christ Church.

10:00 a.m. Minister of Small Business, Entrepreneurship, and Commerce, Dwight Sutherland, will deliver brief remarks at the official signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the University of the West Indies and Pitchit Caribbean in the main Conference Room, Administration Building UWI, Cave Hill Campus, St. Michael.

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ADD: MINISTERS' DIARY-1**Monday, February 4**

12:00 noon Minister of Energy & Water Resources, Wilfred Abrahams, will award prizes to the remaining winners of the Ministry's 2018 Energy Month Primary School Essay and Colouring Competition, at the Ministry's Conference Room, Country Road, St. Michael.

Thursday, February 7

8:30 a.m. Minister of Health and Wellness, Lt Col. Jeffrey Bostic, will deliver brief remarks at the World Paediatrics Conference at Radisson Aquatica Resort, Aquatic Gap, St. Michael.

Friday, February 8

10:00 a.m. Minister of Small Business, Entrepreneurship, and Commerce, Dwight Sutherland, will deliver brief remarks at Ellerton Primary School Sports, at the St. George Secondary School, Constant, St. George.

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GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S DIARY**Saturday, February 2**

6:30 p.m. Her Excellency the Governor-General will attend the Launch of the Journal, "The Barbados Bench Bar Journal 2018," at the 3Ws Oval, Cave Hill Campus, University of the West Indies.