

NEWS RELEASE

Transforming Tobago through technology

DFED ushers in new era of development

A new era of progress and development in Tobago has gained momentum with the recently opened Mt. St. George Information Technology, Literacy and Homework Walk-In Centre located at the Mt. St. George Multipurpose Community Centre.

This facility is the 17th Walk-In Centre opened in Tobago and the initiative is being facilitated by the Tobago Information Technology Limited (TITL), a state enterprise under the Division of Finance and Enterprise Development (DFED).

Assemblyman Jack, Secretary of the DFED, officially opened the Mt. St. George Centre. He told the gathering "The residents of Mt. St. George and environs have joined over 33,000 Tobagonians who have benefitted from the services provided at the Walk-In Centres across the island. We have embraced our mandate to boost human capacity through Information and Communications Technology (ICT). It is our vision to equip all Tobagonians with the technology needed for their own development and by extension, Tobago itself. Every sector of our society is reaping benefits from this initiative and we will continue to work hard for the progress of all Tobagonians."

With the first centre built in 2008, the benefits of the network are extensive and positive impacts have been felt in every sector of Tobago society. Students have utilised the facilities for after-school academic support in a variety of subject areas, including Mathematics, English and Information Technology. Over 2,200 persons have received training and earned certifications in basic and advanced computer courses and applications, and small businesses also use the facilities for standard business services and training of staff.

Ms. Harris, a resident of Hope, boasted of her newfound joy as a result of participating in one of TITL's computer training programmes, "I'm really grateful for the training and now I am computer savvy. A whole world of information, learning and even entertainment, has been opened up for me. It just goes to show that it is never too late to learn and I really want to congratulate the Division for investing in the development of Tobago people."

As explained by Assemblyman Joel Jack, this initiative is part of the multi-pronged approach to facilitate the evolution to a knowledge-based economy in Tobago. He explained other parallel initiatives have been implemented including teacher-training focused on incorporating ICT in the curriculum and infusing technology in the classroom. Recently, more than 50 teachers and 100 students were trained in application (app) development as well as in areas such as robotics. 'Introduction to Animation' workshops are also offered through E-IDCOT in partnership with TITL, YTEPP, TSTT and Animae Caribe.

Jack also made note of a bigger vision behind the various initiatives, "In building a knowledge-based society, we are looking at fostering growth in new productive areas such as developing an animation industry in Tobago, hence the training in this area of expertise. Apart from the direct economic benefits, we believe that this investment in technology will also improve community wellbeing and strengthen

our social fabric by providing better linkages within the local community, while also facilitating greater international integration. Technology is transforming Tobago's ability to contribute on a global level."