

Highlights from NCPD's 2016 Graduation Ceremony

National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) held its 2016 Graduation Ceremony on Thursday 14th July 2016 at the San Fernando City Hall City Auditorium. The theme of the ceremony was *'I believe I can.... I believe I will'*.

Thirty-two (32) trainees graduated in yesterday's ceremony having successfully completed the recently concluded National Examination Council (NEC) Craft Certificate Level I in the areas of Woodwork, Beauty Culture, Welding, Agriculture, Bookbinding, Garment Construction and Food Preparation. In addition, six (6) trainees, who graduated in 2015, also successfully completed the NEC Craft Certificate Level II in the area of welding, in the July 2016 examination.

Mr. Sudhir Ramessar, President of the Trinidad and Tobago Paralympic Committee was the feature speaker at the day's proceedings. Mr. Ramessar was born with Spinal Bifida. He was enrolled as a live-in student at the Princess Elizabeth Centre until age twelve (12). He then attended ASJA Boys College and the Princess Town Senior Comprehensive School where he obtained a number of passes at both levels of examinations. He also successfully completed a Certificate in Internal Audit at the University of the West Indies. Mr. Ramessar has been employed in the public service for the past twenty-eight (28) years and is currently serving as an Auditing Assistant at the Ministry of Works and Transport.

Mr. Ramessar speaking from his personal experience told the graduates *'when people would talk about my Dis-ability, I would hear This-ability. We must remember that there is Ability in Disability'*. He encouraged the graduates to continue to strive for excellence. He ended with his own twist to a quote by Theodore Roosevelt who said *'Believe you can and you're halfway there'*, to which he added, *'Believe you will, and you're already there.'*

Ms. Kahaya Sooklalsingh, Programme Manager, NCPD in her remarks mentioned some the challenges NCPD faced in the past training year including late releases of funds by the Ministry of Education. She indicated that *'NCPD to date has not received funding for the period January –June 2016'*. Ms Sooklalsingh also reminded the graduates that *'you have only passed a milestone in the journey of your lives. This is not the end; in fact, it is the beginning'*.

Ms. Lillian Kanhai, Valedictorian, told her fellow graduates to *'quiet the voices that tell you it will be too hard. Believe that you can do it and believe that you will be successful.'* Ms. Kanhai graduated from the Beauty Culture Programme and won a number of special awards including the Most Outstanding in Beauty Culture, Most Outstanding in Art, The Dr. Wendy Diaz Award for Punctuality and Regularity, The Adella Dick Challenge Trophy for the Most Outstanding Remedial Trainee 2016, and the coveted Joseph La Touche Challenge Trophy for Trainee of the Year 2016.

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ABOUT NCPD

NCPD is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) which promotes equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities through training, information, research and consultative services. For more information on the National Centre for Persons with Disabilities, please visit our website, www.ncpdt.org, or contact us by telephone at 652-4880 or via email at ncpd1@hotmail.com.



Photo 1: Mr. Sudhir Ramessar, President of the Trinidad and Tobago Paralympic Committee presenting award for Joseph La Touche Challenge Trophy for Trainee of the Year 2016 to Ms. Lillian Kanhai, Class Valedictorian

For more information you may contact Ms. Lisa Bholai, Research and Communications Officer at 652-4880, via email at ncpd.rco@gmail.com or visit our website www.ncpdt.org



Photo 2: The 2016 NCPD Graduating Class with Mr. Sudhir Ramessar, President of the Trinidad and Tobago Paralympic Committee (left), Dr. Beverly Beckles, CEO of NCPD (Centre) and Ms. Shereen Baksh, Chairman of NCPD Board of Directors (right)

