



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Address by

SENATOR HAZEL MANNING

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

As read by Mr. Anthony Dalrymple
School Supervisor 111

At the
RBTT Young Leaders National Awards

Centre of Excellence

Tuesday May 29th 2007
10:00 am.

Salutation:

Students, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my pleasure to be here at this National Awards Ceremony that honors excellence in Youth Leadership as evidenced in the achievements of our students in the Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago Young Leaders Project.

I bring you cordial greetings on behalf of the Ministry of Education and at the same time, express kind sentiments on behalf of the Honorable Minister of Education, Senator Hazel Manning and the Chief Education Officer, Mr. Peter O'Neil who are both attending a CARICOM Education Ministers meeting in Jamaica. The Minister has requested I convey the Ministry's appreciation to RBTT for its significant contribution towards the educational development of our young students.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I remember almost 25 years ago when the Royal Bank launched its Youth Savings Drive that sought to teach young people how to save and invest their money. This outreach programme evolved into the Young Leaders Programme in 1991. This is one of the programmes which has become institutionalized in our Secondary Schools and has expanded throughout the Caribbean. Every year thousands of young students take part in the Young Leaders Projects and here in Trinidad and Tobago, our students are embracing this wonderful opportunity to develop their skills and talents which will prove invaluable throughout their lives.

This initiative by RBTT is indeed a commendable one. There is no doubt that as a corporate partner, the bank's involvement in the education of our young citizens offers

our students the chance to work harmoniously with their peers, to show concern for others, to contribute to their communities, and to develop a sense of patriotism for their country and the Caribbean region.

Your theme this year “**Realizing Self-Worth..... Your Choice ... Your Destiny**” is a significant one. Moreso, since it focuses on the process of self-discovery and the development of your individual potential which will enable you to live a meaningful life and make a significant contribution to society.

There may be some things about life that are ordained by a Divine Force or Being, but there are many aspects of life that would depend on the choices you, as young people, make – choices that would affect your life and even the lives of those who are close to you. It is therefore important that you take time to know yourself and that you engage in activities which will help you to do so.

I have no doubt that your involvement in this year’s project would have engaged you in deep moments of reflection and introspection as you worked on your various projects. How this affected you personally is important for your own growth and development.

The RBTT Young Leaders Programme has generated comments from Young Leaders every year which are very positive and motivational. Students highlight the fact that having participated in the programme, they have become more sensitive to the needs of people, their communities, their environment, and social issues. In 1999, Young Leaders

of San Juan Government Secondary School said that “the project helped the Young Leaders to become outstanding citizens in the community. This was achieved through self-control, determination, and a sense of responsibility in the face of adversity.”

In a world that is becoming increasingly difficult, it is especially important for you, the citizens of tomorrow’s world to cultivate the virtues of compassion, empathy, kindness, service, and love. The Young Leaders Project you have engaged in this year allows you the unique opportunity of acquiring such qualities and in the process, to also realize your self-worth and the legacy you can give to this society. I am sure that your participation has been a life-changing experience for you.

Finally, on behalf of the Ministry of Education, I salute the efforts of the Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago and congratulate you for the successes you have achieved through the Young Leaders Programme over the years. The Ministry of Education recognizes your sterling contribution and extends best wishes to your organization in the future.

To all the Young Leaders from various schools, I am sure this has been a rewarding and enriching experience for you. In many respects, each one of you is a winner in your own right. Congratulations and keep this experience close to you always.

Students, Young Leaders, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you.