

**WELCOME ADDRESS AND BRIEF COMMENTS OF THE PRESIDENT OF WAND
RE-OPENING OF THE REFURBISHED MORRIS MARSHALL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
ST BARBS LAVENTILLE, SATURDAY 2ND MAY 2015 AT 10.00 A.M.**

Senator the Honourable Brigadier Carl Alfonso (retired), Minister of National Security and Mrs Alfonso
Your Excellency Mr Gerard Latulippe, High Commissioner for Canada and Mrs Latulippe
Your Worship Alderman Raymond Tim Kee, Mayor of Port of Spain
The Honourable Mr Justice Rolston Nelson, Judge of the Caribbean Court of Justice
Mr. Anthony Roberts, Chairman of the San Juan Regional Corporation
Mr. Anthony Watkins, Keynote Speaker
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Members of the Board of WAND
Father Clyde Harvey and Members of the Morris Marshall Foundation
Members of the Community
Children
Members of the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen

Welcome and Good Morning.

We thank all those who took time from their busy schedule to join us today to celebrate the opening of the refurbished Centre. We also wish to thank Father Clyde Harvey and the Board of the Morris Marshall Foundation, for giving WAND the opportunity to partner with them in the service of the people of St Barbs, Laventille.

WAND is interested in ensuring that the children of the area develop basic learning patterns and skills that they will use for the rest of their lives. We believe that homework assistance will go a long way in preparing the children to compete at the national level with other children in the school system, especially the highly competitive SEA annual examination.

WAND is pleased to be associated with the Morris Marshall Board in their pursuit of implementing a homework programme.

To this end, WAND began working with the Board through Father Harvey in 2014, and financed a Holiday Programme for some of the children of the area during the months of July and August of that year.

Once the analysis of the programme showed what it could do to enhance the goal, we developed a strategy to raise the necessary funds to refurbish the Centre, as the first step in achieving the homework goal.

The WAND family firmly believes that positive early childhood Experiences, can make a great difference to the mental health of individuals. Thus, our decision to invest in this programme to assist the Morris Marshall Organization, in their quest to provide the children of St. Barb's and environs, with a comfortable and safe place to work and study.

Together with funds raised from the High Commission of Canada, Wand's fund raising functions, and donations from good Samaritans, WAND was able to obtain the necessary funds for the refurbishment and formed partnerships with other institutions.

AND HERE WE ARE TODAY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

In this context, we enlisted the assistance of the Ministry of Community Development, which has promised to provide programmes and Support. We wait to hear from the Ministry as to the commencement of these programmes.

We also hope that YTEPP will be able to assist and contribute in some way, in the development of useful programmes for the community, so that the Centre could be used during the daytime hours, Monday to Friday.

It is important to note that no funds were given directly to the Morris Marshall Foundation, and that all financial transactions remained between, WAND and the service providers.

WAND is especially grateful to the Architect and the Contractor who worked very hard to achieve what you see here today, unfortunately, the project could not be completed in time for today's function as the Contractor became seriously ill during the period of implementation. However, work will continue to completion and classes will commence on Monday 4th May as planned.

In order that these efforts not be wasted, the assistance of YTEPP and the Ministry of Community Development is crucial to the sustainability of the project, as the Morris Marshall Foundation does not have the resources to support on a continuous basis, a Homework Centre and daily training programmes.

Wand is hopeful that our involvement, small as it may be, will benefit in particular the children, and that coming out of this exercise a strong Parent Teacher Association will emerge to give support to the Centre, to the children, and the community at large who we also hope will use the Centre.

We trust and look forward to hearing of good results as the children learn and understand that pursuit of excellence will bring success and rewards in life.

In order to continue our work, keep abreast of the progress of the Centre, and provide the necessary updates to our donors, we look forward to receiving timely reports from the Morris Marshall Administrator.

May God bless all who helped us, as we, the ladies of Wand move on to another project, to assist another organization that needs our help and support.

Thank you.

*Jan Bocas-Ryan
President, Director
WAND*