

CHANGE NEWSLETTER



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AFC HOLDS COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The Alliance For Change (AFC) has been reaching out to various Regions across Guyana engaging its leadership, general membership and supporters.

Recently, Leader of the AFC Khemraj Ramjattan visited Essequibo and met with the Regional Management Committee (RMC) and party supporters.

The discussions focused on the party's place in Guyana's politics currently as well as plans for the future. The contributions of the AFC Regional Democratic Councillors were also examined with the aim of intensifying the collective

work of the APNU+AFC Coalition. In similar manner General Secretary David Patterson visited several regions recently including Region 5; Chairman of the AFC Raphael Trotman visited Region 10 and National Executive Valarie Garrido-Lowe visited Region 9.

The AFC through its National Executive Committee (NEC) recently "reaffirmed the need for the AFC to be a vibrant and independent voice and national actor, and recognised that a period of introspection, rebuilding and recalibrating, is needed in the immediate months ahead."



TROTMAN GIFTS TABLET TO SUB-REGION 2 NGS TOP PERFORMER

On Wednesday November 4th 2020, Chairman of the Alliance for Change Raphael Trotman, donated a Tablet on behalf of his party in commemoration of the party's 15th Anniversary to the Upper Demerara/Berbice Sub-Region 2 top National Grade Six performer; Madanna Alistine who attended Howell Wilson Primary School in Ituni, grained 498 marks to secured a place at one of Guyana top high schools, Presidents College.

In his remarks, as part of a simple handing over ceremony at Watooka Guest House, Linden, Chairman Trotman stated that at a time when schools across the country are still

closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, this device will go a far way in ensuring that there are no difficulties with virtual learning. He further mentioned that the awardee's performance reminded him of the Region's outstanding performance in 2006, little after AFC was formed, giving praise to her teachers and parents who guided her in her efforts. He assured that the AFC will give support in any way possible to assist in future endeavours.

Those in attendance were Geographic Member of Parliament Devin Sears, AFC Municipal and Regional Councillors as well as local executives.



THANK YOU FRONTLINE WORKERS

The AFC recognises and thanks all our frontline workers for the invaluable work they are doing in saving lives during this corona virus pandemic while putting their own lives and those of their families at risk. Nevertheless, the Region and the Ministry of Health must ensure that those staff in the hinterland who worked since March without payment unto now, gets paid as early as possible, especially since the Christmas Season is upon us. The AFC is also concerned about the continued firing of workers across the country by the PPP administration and calls upon the Government to consider the hardships our Indigenous brothers and sisters face as part of their daily lives and do not take bread and butter out of their mouths.



MP SEARS CONTRIBUTES TO CANCER AWARENESS IN LINDEN

Hon. Devin Sears, MP, made a monetary donation to the Women On The Move Group, organizers of Cancer Awareness Month activities in Linden.

In a comment he stated, "Cancer can affect anyone and the efforts we make now could go a long way in sensitization, prevention, research and eventually cure."

There are an estimated 18 million cancer cases around the world, of these 9.5 million cases were in men and 8.5 million in women according to www.wcrf.org/

PERSAUD, REGION 7'S NEW VICE CHAIRPERSON



**Kamal Persaud,
New Vice Chairperson
Region 7, (Cuyuni-Mazaruni)**

Kamal Persaud is our new Region 7 (Cuyuni-Mazaruni) Vice Chairman of the Regional Democratic Council (RDC), recently taking the oath of office. Persaud served prior as the Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Bartica and has developed a reputation in the region for getting things done.

Vice Chairman Persaud will be serving under Mr. Kenneth Williams as Chairman at a time when COVID-19 infections and deaths continue to increase nationally and the role RDCs play has become that much more critical. The Alliance for Change takes this opportunity to wish our comrade and her team all the very best in this new sphere of public service.

CHANGE NEWSLETTER TEAM



Valarie Garrido-Lowe



Sherod Duncan



Devin Sears

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HIGH ACHIEVER AT NGSA STUDENT RECEIVED TABLET FROM AFC REGION 7



The Alliance for Change (AFC) is celebrating its 15th Anniversary as a political party. As part of its activities to recognize this achievement, recently Region 7 Councillor David Daniels handed over a tablet as part of the AFC's observances.

Travin Benjamin, a National Grade Six Assessment (NGSA) student of the High Achievers Institute of Learning in Bartica, attained 473 marks at

the examinations this year and was awarded Three Miles Secondary School and was the recipient of the gift.

As part of reducing the spread of the COVID-19 virus, in-person learning has been curtailed nationally, making devices such as tablets become in greater demand as online learning increases. The simple handing-over ceremony was held at the Bartica Baptist Church.

**SATURDAY
5TH
DECEMBER**



CAR WASH and BARBECUE



**CAR WASH
\$800**

**BARBECUE
\$1000**

678-7581 OR 671-0288

CENTRE FOR CHANGE
Railway Embankment, Kitty, Georgetown





TOP ST. BEDE'S PRIMARY STUDENT RECEIVED TABLET FROM AFC

Khemraj Serspersaud, 12, who did well at the recently concluded National Grade Six Assessment (NGSA) earning the highest marks for his school St. Bede's Primary School in Waikarebi, Barama River, Moruca Sub Region, Region One.

Serspersaud gained 448 marks and was awarded a spot at Santa Rosa Secondary School. The Acting Head Master of the Primary School Tejraj Chitranjan said he is very happy and proud of his pupil.

Alliance For Change gifted Serspersaud a Tablet with extra memory, a haversack with books, pens and pencils and other school items.

The AFC is celebrating its 15th Anniversary as a political party. As part of its activities to recognize this achievement the Party has been giving various educational items to students for their academic performance.

(See attached pic. In photo: AFC GS David Patterson hands over a tablet to Acting Head Master of the Primary School Tejraj Chitranjan of St. Bede's Primary School. AFC Executives Valarie Garrido-Lowe and Sherod Duncan look on.)

MP HUGHES ATTENDS 'INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM'

Alliance For Change (AFC) Member of Parliament Catherine Hughes recently attended the virtual 'Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2020' themed "Building Trust in a time of COVID-19 response and post COVID-19 recovery".



She stated, "The issue of "Trust" was a strong theme highlighted in the presentations. How Parliamentarians are viewed on the internet and their ability to utilize the internet effectively to promote their personal and national agendas were highlighted. The ethical issues and the importance of all MP's starting from a position of truth and the building of trust in the service of their constituencies was emphasized."

The former Minister of Public Telecommunications said, "There was consensus on the importance of National Parliaments co-operating and exchanging best practices in the current COVID-19 world in dealing with internet related public policy issues. It was further agreed that Parliamentarians have an important task of pushing the legislative agenda which must create new laws or revisions to address the challenges. The protection of citizens in this digital age, issues of protection of personal data, cybercrime, the importance of protecting and respecting individual human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are agendas that must be adopted by all Parliaments. Legislation must support and protect citizens. Parliaments must make national legislation and the rules necessary for good governance."

She reiterated, "The need to advance trust in digital technologies, trust in public officials and trust in the Parliament as an institution was advocated. Knowledge, information and communication are key to this and the need to control misinformation and "fake news" is a major challenge in today's world. The session highlighted that citizens must be able to trust information published online and trust their Parliamentarians. This poses a unique challenge when it comes to deliberate misinformation in politics. Members of Parliament must balance the politics of their political parties with the

greater national good, the need for honesty in relation to the people they serve."

"The issue of universal access to internet connectivity in all countries was highlighted as of major concern. It was stated that in today's world access to the internet must be considered a human right, given that in many communities the internet is the only vehicle that allows persons to continue their education, access health and other government services. Given these considerations ensuring equality in access must be of concern to all Parliaments. The case of El Salvador which recently passed a Bill on Universal access as a human right – as a means of ensuring none of its citizens are left behind was shared as a best practice," MP Hughes stated.

It was recognized that most importantly the Internet can make Parliaments more transparent, it makes the study of bills and the ability to connect with citizens on the work of Parliament much easier. It can facilitate more stakeholder engagement, build trust with politicians and assist with bringing laws to the Parliament. In moving forward the deliberations highlighted again the importance of universal access and the role Parliaments can play in eliminating digital exclusion.

The focus in the future must be on how we can connect all Parliaments, Parliamentarians and Citizens. The negative issues associated with the Internet were also highlighted such as - cybercrime, cybersecurity and online bullying. Parliaments were advised to place digitization high on their agenda and to increase international collaboration amongst Parliament to ensure global agreement on the Internet and access must be developed. New laws must be enacted, regulations and safeguards put in place. Governments are bound to support these initiatives so that the digital divide is eliminated.

**ARE YOU A MEMBER OF AFC?
IF NOT PLEASE CALL
+592 223-2934 or 503-0139**

WOMEN FOR CHANGE MESSAGE ON INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS 2020



Violence against women and girls is a scourge that still plagues our neighborhoods, communities, nation and world, largely under-addressed.

Each of us will have to take stock of what we can contribute to eliminate this scourge. Is it mentorship, counseling, advising, calling the authorities, observing and reporting, forming community groups to educate and support? It can be any number of things, as the wisdom to make a change finds us. What we cannot tolerate is inaction and willful ignorance of the signs.

The citizen, the congregant, the neighbour, the colleague, the government official, the passerby, the professional, the technocrat, the helper, the teacher; no one is exempt or

absolved from playing their part in leaving the world better than we found it.

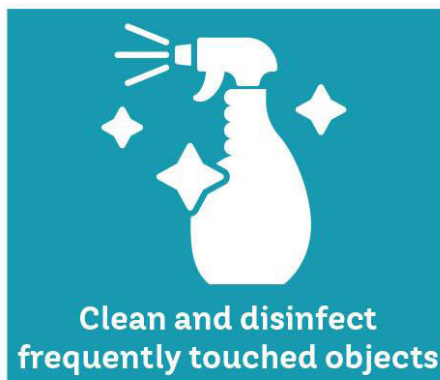
Women raise us. Women birth us. We are indebted always to ensure their highest dignity and safety. Let us not fail them.

On this International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (and Girls), 2020, let us recommit to bring our best selves to the solving of this global problem and dreadful practice.

“Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect.”

Tamara Khan
President
Women for Change

COVID-19 (the disease caused by the novel coronavirus) *What you can do*



Letter to the editor

NO PAYMENT YET FOR MORUCA COVID 19 TEMPORARY RESPONSE CONTRACT STAFF

Dear Editor,

Over the past 11 months from January to November 2020 several Morucans attached to the Kumaka District Hospital, Moruca Sub-Region, Region #1, have been suffering the unfortunate fate of non payments under the Administration of the Regional Health Officer (RHO), Dr. Steven Chefoon, whom is said to be giving the staff a royal run around. The approximate total number of staff of 26 includes kitchen and ward maids, porters, cleaners, office and store clerks, drivers, cooks and generator attendants. Out of these 26 persons, three (3) persons were paid for 2 months and two persons were paid for one month only. All the others have received not a single dollar from the regional administration.

So far two staff (one cleaner and driver) has been fired without final payments. What is more sickening is that the cleaner who is a mother of more than 10 children has been fired after contracting the deadly corona virus while on the job and to date hasn't received not a dollar. The driver who has a family and felt total frustration for non payments had decided to take matters in his own hands and got himself fired. According to the letter of termination issued to those terminated, it states that payments will be made. In addition, according to the Severance Payments Act it also states that an employee being terminated is entitled to the final payments. Now tell me, why is the Ministry of Labour silent? Why is the Ministry of Amerindians Affairs silent? Why is the Ministry of Local Government silent? Why is the Ministry of Health silent?

This is the level of frustration these temporary staff are being made to work under and more so this is the level of exploitation the Indigenous people of Moruca are made to work under the Regional Health Officer (RHO) administration. According to reports the RHO was approached by staff about their payments and the response they got was way beyond appalling to their expectations. He firstly vented his frustration and their impatience following up with him, secondly he told them if they can't wait for their money they can resign and leave the job. This is the most irresponsible response anyone can ever get for waiting so long on their salaries.

It is to the suspicion of many that there is more to this given that the RHO claimed that many of these staff didn't have the required documents such as TIN and requesting contracts to be redone. However, upon further inquiries the RHO claimed he had misplaced all their contracts. It is estimated that all together the sum of G\$15,000,000 to G\$20,000,000 is due to be payable to the 26 or more staff. We are calling on the those relevant authorities to launch an investigation into this matter urgently so that our indigenous brothers and sisters can be paid their monies. They have sacrificed themselves for us during this Covid 19 pandemic.

Yours sincerely,
Concerned Morucan



OUR YOUTH, OUR FUTURE

My name is Elbert John. I am a proud twenty-one year old Patamuna yemoinei (handsome) young man. I hail from Paramakatoi, a beautiful village that is located in the scenic Pakaraima Mountains of the Potaro/ Siparununi Region, Guyana. Paramakatoi is a small village with approximately 3,500 residents.

My childhood was a memorable one. Life in a village as remote as Paramkatoi can be difficult. Economic opportunities and social services are limited but the natural beauty of the area compensates for all the challenges. With the refreshing air, a spectacular view of the majestic Kawa Mountain, glamorous sunsets, wildlife and waterfalls, Paramakatoi was my childhood paradise. In addition, being the fourth child in my family made life interesting for me. I recall many wonderful moments that I spent travelling on foot across the Pakaraimas with my parents and five brothers and sisters. My parents ensured that I learn about traditional Patamuna life and they taught me to be proud of my culture. This meant that like my older siblings, I accompanied my family to the farm, went on hunting and fishing trips and learned to care for my younger brothers and sister. Sometimes I wondered why life was so hard but now I am beginning to value the knowledge and skills that I gained in my early years.

One of the benefits of being brought up with my cultural traditions is that I am a fluent Patamuna speaker. So even though all my classes were in English when I attended the primary school and later, the secondary school at Paramakatoi, I never lost my traditional language. Similarly, while I enjoy a variety of Guyanese food, a meal of boiled fresh or smoke meat with cassava bread with a bowl of thirst-quenching cassiri remains special to me. Over the years I have seen a few changes in Paramakatoi. For example, while most villagers continue to farm and hunt and fish for a living, more are turning to mining and a few try to engage in small business ventures. The development of a tomato industry has created op-



Ever busy Elbert John

portunities for farmers to plant, dry and sell tomatoes that are used for a special brand of Guyanese tomato ketchup and salad dressing. There is also some access to the internet and it is now possible to use a cell phone. This helps to improve communication.

I have observed, also, that there are more organized activities that allow the villagers to keep some Patamuna practices alive as they join with other Indigenous communities to celebrate Indigenous heritage. At the same time, however there is some evidence that families are moving away from traditional Patamuna architecture as they replace thatch roofs with aluminum sheets and use more concrete for constructing homes and other public buildings.

After finishing my secondary education at Paramakatoi, I applied to study the Bina Hill Institute/ Youth Learning Centre (BHI/YLC) in Region # 9. The BHI/YLC offer a range of courses. For example, I gained new knowledge and skills in courses such as home economics, sewing, agriculture, forestry and tourism and hospitality. In addition, I have had the opportunity to study Indigenous Culture (songs, dances and stories) Macushi Language, weaving and sculpture.

The programme at the BHI also allows students to go on field trips and to plan and manage large gatherings and events. In this way students get hands on experience in conducting real events. My first year at the BHI/YLC was very challenging but I have enjoyed my second year. The BHI/YLC closed at the end of March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, as I am about to resume classes at the BHI/YLC I am looking forward to graduating. I feel that perhaps I am closer to my wildest dream: to become a medical doctor. If my dream comes through then I will be able to play an important role in improving the lives of people, especially my Patamona brother and sisters.