



# The Eastern *Vibes*

**Monthly Newsletter 2025**

**February 2025, Issue #127**

## Launch of TT Moves Wellness Club



Eastern Regional Health Authority Staff Members at the Guaico Secondary School

**According to the Ministry of Health, Non-Communicable Diseases is one of the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in Trinidad and Tobago.**

On February 15, 2025 the Eastern Regional Health Authority, in

collaboration with the Ministry of Health hosted the launch of the Wellness Club at the Mayaro Civic Centre under the TTMoves banner.

Over **100** persons answered the call to join the Wellness Club Soca Walk, which began and ended at the Mayaro Civic Centre.

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## Launch of TT Moves Wellness Club (Cont'd)

The activities continued with a cool-down aerobic session and a health fair.

Attendees were provided with a wide range of primary healthcare services which included Blood Pressure Testing; Blood Glucose Testing; Body Mass Index (BMI); Prostate Specific Antigen; Vaccination and Medical Consultations. Also available were booths by the Mental Health; Dental; Pharmacy; Health Education; Medical

Social Work; Nutrition Departments; Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative Unit and Healthy Hospital Initiative. The Ministry of Health and Alcohol Anonymous were also present to provide information to clients.

Persons were entertained by Freetown Collective while they visited the various booths. To encourage relaxation, persons were treated to Massage Therapy and Virtual Gaming.



## Fitness Fun for Everyone

**Exercise plays an important role in maintaining good health and keeping your body in shape. It is also known to help reduce stress, lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, improve moods and cognitive function.**

Recognising that several persons are interested in getting fit during the Carnival season, the Wellness Department scheduled a Carnival Burn Programme to provide easy access to professionally guided training sessions to members of the community and staff. The sessions were scheduled for every Saturday during the month of February from 7:30 a.m. to

8:30 a.m. at the Sangre Grande Enhanced Health Centre.

217 persons comprising of the Wellness Groups, the Chronic Disease Group at the Sangre Grande Enhanced Health Centre, the public and staff participated in these sessions. The group demonstrated their energetic moves as they mirrored the Physical Training Instructors of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, Ms. Karthy Portillo and Mr. Chris Portillo who guided them through the 1-hour session.

Persons were encouraged to keep on their fitness journey as 30 minutes of exercise every day can greatly improve their health.



# Through Calypso and Ole Mas Our Stories Are Told

Members of staff representing various units took center stage on February 14, 2025 to tell their stories in our annual Calypso and Ole Mas Competition under the theme, **"Soca on D' Campus"**, the back car park of the Sangre Grande Hospital Campus was transformed into a mini Carnival Village set for an all inclusive experience filled with premium entertainment, food, refreshments, ambience and vibes. Staff were greeted by air dancers, Moko Jumbies, Dame Lauraine and even the Midnight Robber.

Hundreds of staff packed the venue to support their colleagues with their witty compositions and

three portrayals which highlighted office politics, picong, health advice and current affairs. The three member judging panel were truly amazed with the quality of talent and had a difficult time selecting the winners in each category.

The afternoon climaxed with a scintillating performance by special artiste Yung Bredda who had the audience on their feet singing every line of his popular hits as several of them joined him on stage for his performance.

Vibez Rhythm section kept the tempo going with their performance after the announcement of the results.



# Calypso and Ole Mas Results



The Eastern Regional Health Authority Sports and Cultural Committee extends their heartfelt gratitude to all individuals who contributed to the success of this year's Calypso Competition.

*Congratulations to the winners and  
Thank You to all performers of the Calypso Competition*



*Edwin Deluge*



*Garvin Henry*



*Baac John*



*Debra Samuel*



*Annadot Prince*



*Jewel Williams*



*Mekieba  
Thomas-Gubreka*

*Congratulations to the winners and  
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*Mekieba  
Thomas-Gubreka*

*"Caring is the Key"*

# Snap Shots of Soca on D' Campus



## Donate Blood Save A Life



The Eastern Regional Health Authority conducted several blood drives aimed at increasing the supply of blood that is available for emergencies. Over **91** persons responded to the call and made the decision to donate blood.

In an effort to encourage persons to become Voluntary Non-Remunerated Donors a multi prong approach was utilised targeting staff and increasing access in the communities with mobile drives. These were conducted at the Rio Claro Fire Station on February 13, 2025 and at

Xtra Foods Car Park, Sangre Grande on February 20, 2025.

The in-house blood drives which were led by the Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Unit were held at the Sangre Grande Blood Donation Centre on February 8 and 12, 2025. The Healthy Hospital Initiative Unit in collaboration with the Trinidad and Tobago Medical Association also conducted a staff blood drive during the period February 17 -22, 2025.

## Nurses at the Sangre Grande Hospital Enhancing their Skills and Competencies

The Eastern Regional Health Authority is developing the theoretical and practical skills of nurses attached to the Sangre Grande Hospital in the area of IV cannulation and venepuncture. 13 nurses recently enhanced their competencies to perform this medical procedure which requires precise technique and knowledge of vein selection and patient safety protocols.

This is a significant achievement for the

Authority to commence training in this field and we are confident that the skills acquired during this training will significantly benefit our patients and enhance the overall efficiency of our healthcare services.

Thank you to everyone involved in attaining this milestone. Together, we are building a stronger, more skilled healthcare team dedicated to providing exceptional care to our community.

# Healthy Me Challenge



Hike to Mermaid Pool

**Health and wellness is a lifelong pursuit. The Nutrition and Dietetics' Department (N&D) at Sangre Grande Hospital Campus (SGHC) believes, "The strength of the team is each individual member" – Phil Jackson.**

We recognise all Eastern Regional Health Authority staff as members of a family and a strong family comprises healthy individuals. It is with this tenet that the New Year, Healthy Me Challenge for this year, 2025, was launched!

A Chinese proverb states: **"The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."** Thus, the 35 days of challenges began on January 6, 2025. It was a journey that supported healthier bodies and minds with positive, sustainable, behavioural habits. The overall goal of the New Year, Healthy Me Challenge was to educate staff and engage all to promote a community of health and well-being through daily fun and interactive activities.

Through this initiative, the N&D Department's position in guiding communities towards a healthier lifestyle in accordance with the ERHA's mission and vision, was further solidified.

The challenge was only open for staff and the response was very encouraging with 132 registered to participate. Daily challenge emails for 35 days were sent to all registered staff. The daily challenges focused on Mental Health Wednesdays, Fruit Fridays, Exercise sessions and even a Challenge Hike. Each daily challenge was intentionally varied in type, intensity and difficulty, with the central theme of educating and promoting a healthier and holistic approach to wellness that was not weight centered. Participants hiked, prepared meals, engaged in self-reflection, stress management techniques and learned about healthy food choices and lifestyle habits.

## Healthy Me Challenge (Cont'd)



Nutrition and Dietetics' Department staff with participants of the Healthy Me Challenge

An added bonus was the staff interaction and engagement, as activities were often discussed among staff with anticipation for the following day's challenge.

The N&D SGHC staff recognised that 35 days were not sufficient to ensure lifelong health and well-being but it is our deepest hope that the participants use the information learnt to propel them towards continued success in their health journey. It is also our desire that health and well-being be contagious and the adage of the African proverb that, ***"Each one, teach one"*** will be the New Year Healthy Me Challenge legacy for 2025 and beyond!

The Department held a Closing Ceremony on February 28, 2025 at the Dietitian's Office, South Block, Sangre Grande Hospital Campus

and prizes were awarded to the six top contestants. The results were as follows:

**1st Place - Ruth Mahabir**

**2nd Place - Olivia Peters Melville**

**3rd Place - Stacy Ann Guera**

**4th Place - Sandy Derick Rivers**

**5th Place - Chrystal Bute-Ward**

**6th Place - Thalia Thomas**

The Nutrition and Dietetics' Department is happy to serve you and our community at large. We thank everyone who would have participated, supported and promoted this challenge and we look forward to your support in upcoming nutrition education initiatives.

## Secondary Schools Empowered to make healthy choices



Students of the Sangre Grande Secondary School

Over 900 students were empowered during the Carnival Outreach programme to make healthy choices. The North Eastern Secondary School population and students in forms 2, 3 and 4 from the Sangre Grande Secondary School attended the lecture which was conducted by on February 20, 2025 by staff from the Health Education and Medical Social Work departments. These engaging talks covered topics such as

the powerful influence of music on behaviour, the risks of alcohol consumption and essential carnival safety tips. During the session, students were invited to listen to various music tracks and to share their thoughts and emotions in real time. The excitement continued as they participated in lively skits and got into character in various roles which made learning an unforgettable experience.

### **Carnival Safety & Sexual Transmission Lectures at Ministry of Social Development & Family Services, Social Welfare Division**

As part of their national carnival safety and sexual health programme, the Social Welfare Division invited the Eastern Regional Health Authority's Health Education, Medical Social Work and Pharmacy departments to facilitate an interactive session with members of staff and clients.

Topics discussed included HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections, HIV Treatment and Management, as well as Carnival, Beach and Camping Safety.

# Carnival Safety Lecture Series at Health Centres

**Safety is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as, "The condition of being safe; freedom from danger or risks."**

During the Carnival season the number of risks factors a person can be exposed to may increase due to the activities he/she participates in. With this in mind, the Health Education Department, St. Andrew/St. David facilitated lecture sessions on personal safety during Carnival celebrations throughout the county. The sessions were conducted by Mr. Isaac John, Health Education Aide, at Sangre Grande Enhanced Health Centre, Manzanilla and Valencia Outreach Centres and also at the Child Health and Chronic Disease Clinics.

Clients were given the following tips:

- **Wear a hat, protect your eyes, use sunscreen, and seek shade, especially during the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. as the sun is most harmful at that time.**
- **Avoid high noise levels or wear earplugs to protect your hearing. Stay away from speaker boxes at events and music trucks.**
- **Stay alert and avoid using public restrooms alone. Move in groups and steer clear of dark, isolated areas.**
- **Pre-arrange transport or designate a sober driver.**
- **Be cautious when buying drinks; never leave them unattended and cover them while moving through crowds.**
- **Secure valuables and avoid displaying large amounts of money or jewellery.**
- **Carry identification with emergency contact information.**
- **Check the weather before camping or heading to the beach. Share your itinerary with someone at home.**

## Health Fair at Matura Secondary School

***"Through education, we plant the seeds of curiosity that grow into the trees of knowledge."*** Author unknown

The Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA) has a responsibility to educate our students on health related matters to empower them to understand their bodies in order to make informed decisions which will help them to develop lifelong positive behaviour. With this in mind, a health fair was held at the Matura Secondary School on February 12, 2025 as part the Authority's on going outreach initiative.

The ERHA team engaged the students and provided information on healthy eating, roles and functions of Medical Social Workers, wellness, dental care, chronic diseases and health screening.

The team included members of staff from the Health Education; Nutrition; Nursing; Medical Social Work and Dental departments.

To encourage participation and to assess the students understanding quizzes, displays and demos were used. The students were also awarded tokens for their participation.

# Childbirth Education & Wellness Classes



Members of Staff from the BFHI Unit, Wellness Department and participants of the Wellness Fusion

**A number of factors must be taken into account when preparing for childbirth. It is important for the potential mother to understand what happens during labour and the importance of maintaining good physical health throughout pregnancy.**

With this in mind the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative Unit collaborated with the Wellness Department to officially commence its Wellness Fusion Initiative on January 31, 2025 at the Sangre Grande Enhanced Health Centre. This initiative aims to prepare pregnant women and their support system/families for stages of labour and birth as well as the postnatal period.

Participants completed practical and theoretical educational sessions on topics such as exercises during pregnancy; preparation for delivery, breastfeeding positions and complications for labour and delivery; proper techniques to bathe baby; ways to safely care for infants and oneself post-delivery; health education and general wellness guidance.

This collaboration aims to build confidence and the bond between antenatal clients and their support partners, enabling a successful birthing and breastfeeding experience.

# Jump Rope Competition at Matura Government Primary School



Ms. Cindy-Lou Dannett, Principal, pose with winners of the Jump Rope Competition

**According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children benefit from physical activities in various ways. They can improve academic performance, brain health, muscular fitness, heart and lung health and cardiometabolic health.**

In an effort to get children to put down the electronic devices and to participate in outdoor activities, the Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA) Matura Wellness Centre in collaboration with the Matura Government Primary School held a jump rope competition for students on February 7, 2025, at the Matura Government Primary School.

Ms. Imani Edwards-Taylor, a former national jump rope athlete, delivered a motivational speech at the start of the event. She shared her insights on the importance of physical

fitness and the positive impact of participating in sports. She also encouraged the students to embrace sportsmanship and to commit to staying active.

Mrs. Astra Edwards-Bennett, the ERHA's Wellness Coordinator, informed the students about the vision and mission of the ERHA Matura Wellness Centre. She also emphasized the importance of adopting healthy habits for personal well-being and the greater benefit of healthier communities.

Before the competition began, Mr. Jason Chapman led the students in an invigorating warm-up session. His energetic session helped to prepare the students physically and mentally, ensuring they were ready for the upcoming challenges. The event featured several rounds, with participants showcasing their skills in various jump rope techniques.

The competition was judged by a panel of experts in the field which included Ms. Imani Edwards-Taylor, Mrs. Astra Edwards-Bennett, Ms. Vernelle Joseph and Mrs. Abigail Taylor. Each judge brought their experience and knowledge to the event, ensuring a fair and objective evaluation of the participants' performances.

After the competition, prizes were awarded to the top winners in each category. Additionally, all students who participated in the event received a token of recognition for their efforts.

This initiative is part of the overall goal to foster healthier communities through stakeholder engagement and the promotion of wellness.

# The ERHA Adopted a Collaborative Approach to Increase Awareness on Cancer as We Commemorated World Cancer Day



The Oncology Team chats with students from the Manzanilla Secondary School and Sangre Institute of Higher Learning at the Nalis Library, Sangre Grande



World Cancer Day Awareness Health Talk at Brothers Road Outreach Centre

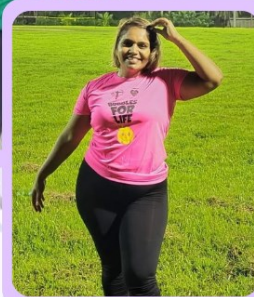
On February 4, Outreach programmes were held by the Oncology Department with students from the Manzanilla Secondary School and Sangre Institute of Higher Learning at the Nalis Library, Sangre Grande; the Brothers Road staff held education sessions at the Outreach Centre and the Health Education Department engaged the Chronic Disease Exercise Class at the Sangre Grande Enhanced Health Centre.

The Health Education Team expanded their reach and hosted a programme at the Ministry of Works and Transport office at Guaico, Sangre Grande on February 6. Services provided included basic screening among others to assist with early detection of cervical cancer; Blood Pressure and Blood Sugar Testing. Lectures were also done on cancer of the cervix, breast,

colon, lung and prostate. The Medical Social Work Department also provided information on the support needed for persons diagnosed with Cancer and their caregivers.

Clients were invited to participate in a virtual 5K walk during the period February 3 to 28, 2025. Over 200 persons registered to participate and were asked to show their support by wearing a colour to represent cancer and submit their photos. The first 100 participants to show they completed the 5K were awarded prizes.

The Health Education Department Nariva/ Mayaro also interacted with **50** members of the public at Hero's Pharmacy on February 4, where they distributed educational brochures.



# World Cancer Day VIRTUAL 5K



# World Cancer Day

**“UNITED BY UNIQUE”**

‘Behind every diagnosis lies a **unique** human story - stories of grief, pain, healing, resilience, love and more. That’s why a people-centred approach to cancer care that fully integrates each individual’s **unique** needs, with compassion and empathy, leads to the best health outcomes.’

-[worldcancerday.org](http://worldcancerday.org)

*“Caring is the Key”*

# Happy Retirement



*Mrs. Basmath Gopie*

Mrs. Gopie has served the Authority with distinction and pride for the last 25 years. She began her career as a Patient Care Assistant in May 2001 after completing her training with the Eastern Regional Health Authority in the year 2000 and was assigned to the Sangre Grande Hospital. Over the next seven years she worked in numerous departments including the Operating Theatre, Central Sterilization Services Department (CSSD), Ward 4, Outpatient Clinics and Accident and Emergency Department.

In 2003, after saving a little girl from drowning, Mrs. Gopie was awarded the Hummingbird Silver Award for Gallantry by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. In the same year, she also received the **"Youngest Female Hero"** award from the Heroes Foundation of Trinidad and Tobago.

In 2008, Mrs. Gopie was reassigned to Nariva/ Mayaro, where she served in every facility. Mrs. Gopie has made her professional development a priority and was trained in CPR, Safety and Health as a Safety Warden and Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis. She also pursued training at the University of

the West Indies in Social Work and Vision and Hearing Screening with the Ministry of Health.

Being a member of the Biche community for more than 25 years, she has bridged many gaps between patients, families and the ERHA staff. She was very transparent with her colleagues and was always willing to mentor her junior Patient Care Assistants. Because of her frank and open communication with everyone, she provided guidance and counselling without prejudice but with diplomacy and confidentiality, correcting when necessary.

Some of her strengths include being an advocate on behalf of patients, sound judgement and the ability to motivate staff to get the job done.

Mrs. Gopie spent the last seven years at the Rio Claro Accident and Emergency Department, from where she retired in January 2025.

Members of staff demonstrated their appreciation to Mrs. Gopie in a retirement function which was hosted on February 13, 2025. She will be greatly missed.

*Happy Retirement Mrs. Basmath Gopie*

*"Caring is the Key"*



**HIGH WIND ALERT  
IN EFFECT !  
Yellow Level**

# HIGH WINDS



## How Do High Winds Develop?

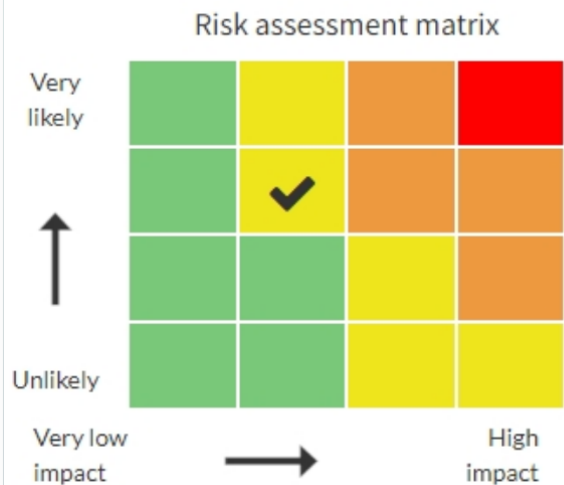
In most cases, high winds are caused by atmospheric pressure variations. Strong winds can be frightening. As they blow stronger and stronger, you may begin to feel helpless. It's important to pay close attention to local weather warnings so that you can prepare for high winds if they are headed your way.

## An Example of a Previous High Winds Alert for February 2025:

The Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Service recently issued a warning of **High Winds Alert #1 - YELLOW LEVEL** for the period: **Tuesday 11th February 2025 at 1:00 p.m. to Monday 17th February, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.**

### Description:

Strong low-level winds will produce breezy to windy conditions over the next several days, with a high potential for gusts exceeding 55 km/h, especially near showers. These strong gusts may be brief but can displace unsecured roofs, loose outdoor objects and can even topple trees or weaken structures. Additionally, a Hazardous Seas Alert remains in effect as these winds will contribute to rough sea conditions.



## What to do Before and After High Winds?

### Before High Winds:

- Trim tree branches away from your house and power lines.
- Secure loose gutters and shutters.
- Identify an interior room of your house to take shelter.
- Charge batteries for cell phones, booster packs, weather radios and power tools.
- Update your emergency kit. Ensure food supplies and water last for at least 3 days.
- Tie down all loose items outside.

### After High Winds:

- Do not go near downed power lines and be sure to report fallen lines to T&TEC.
- Conduct an initial damage assessment of your immediate area.
- Continue to listen to the local news for updates.
- Be careful when removing debris that may have blown in your yard.



**In case of an Emergency, you can contact the following numbers:**  
**Fire: 990    Ambulance: 811    Police: 999    ODPM: 511    T&TEC: 800-8832**



**February 2025**

**Sangre Grande Hospital Campus**

Ojoe Road, Sangre Grande  
Tel: 228-3742/226-4744/668-2273  
Fax: 668-4368

**Brothers Road Outreach Centre**

Brothers Road  
Tabaquite  
Tel: 656-2547/340-6895

**Cumuto Outreach Centre**

Main Road  
Cumuto  
Tel: 226-1106/643-9075

**Manzanilla Outreach Centre**

Eastern Main Road  
Manzanilla  
Tel: 226-1111/668-2063

**Rio Claro Health Centre**

De Verteuil and Dougdeen Street,  
Rio Claro  
Tel: 226-1104/644-2236/644-0181

**Rio Claro Accident and Emergency**  
Tel: 226-9230

**Toco Health Centre**

Paria Main Road, Toco  
Tel: 226-1576/670-8277

**Toco Accident and Emergency**  
Tel: 226-9428

**Mayaro District Health Facility**

Pierreville, Mayaro  
Tel: 226-1575/630-1258/9  
Tel/Fax: 630-1257

**Coryal Outreach Centre**

Balata Hill Road and Cumuto Main Road  
Coryal  
Tel: 668-8066

**Grande Riviere Outreach Centre**

Hosang Street  
Grand Riviere  
Tel: 670-8264/385-5421

**Matelot Outreach Centre**

Main Road  
Matelot  
Tel: 670-2428/354-0052

**Sangre Grande Enhanced Health Centre**

Ojoe Road  
Sangre Grande  
Tel: 226-1102/668-2509

**Valencia Outreach Centre**

Alexander Street  
Valencia  
Tel: 226-1260/667-8197

**Biche Outreach Centre**

Canque Village  
Biche  
Tel: 280-9781/668-9053

**Cumana Outreach Centre**

Toco Main Road  
Cumana Village, Cumana  
Tel: 226-1134/670-8250

**Guayaguayare Outreach Centre**

Guayaguayare Road,  
Guayaguayare  
Tel: 226-4090/630-8777

**Matura Outreach Centre**

Toco Main Road  
Matura  
Tel: 226-1261/668-6276

**Sans Souci Outreach Centre**

Main Road  
San Souci  
Tel: 670-2382/280-8694

**Satellite Dialysis Unit,**  
Narine Ramrattan Building  
Naparima/Mayaro Road,  
Rio Claro  
Tel: 226-9353

**Submit Articles / Pictures for the ERHA's Newsletter by the 20th of each month to  
[corpcomm@erha.co.tt](mailto:corpcomm@erha.co.tt)**

**Website : [www.erha.co.tt](http://www.erha.co.tt)**



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