

# FREE VIEWING

## PIC-O-DE-CROP FINALS RETURNS TO FREE-TO-AIR TV

Next week's **Courtesy Garage Pic-O-De-Crop** finals will be broadcast on free-to-air television to "all Barbadians and all of the world to see", the National Cultural Foundation (NCF) has announced.

"With the support of the minister, the ministry, and the Prime Minister's Office and the board of the NCF, I am very pleased to announce that this year the finals will be broadcast live and free of cost," NCF chief executive Carol Roberts announced at the Wildey showroom of marquee sponsor Courtesy Garage during the show's media launch and draw for the finalists' order of performance.

The calypso competition, which traditionally has been broadcast by the country's two main radio networks, has been kept off free-to-air television screens for decades in a bid to protect box office sales for the contest. In the mid-1990s, the final began to air on pay-per-view on the **Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation's** Multichoice TV service, beginning a watch party alternative tradition for many.

The decision came after extensive discussions among government and NCF officials, recognising the event's cultural significance, Roberts declared.

She said: "This **Pic-O-De-Crop** competition is extremely important to the presentation of those intangible cultural aspects of our **Crop Over** festival, but it's also important because, like no other competition or event, it gives us a capsule of the issues of the day creatively expressed by our calypsonians."

The NCF chief also highlighted the strong presence of young talent in this year's finals,



**Chief Executive Officer of the National Cultural Foundation, Carol Roberts.**

noting the success of former **Junior Monarch** participants at the senior level.

"It is worthy to note that once again former and current **Junior Monarch** winners and participants have excelled at the senior level," Roberts said. She specifically mentioned examples of successful transitions from junior to senior competitions.

She said: "You can not ignore the fact that **Sammy G, Tae**, a three-time winner at the junior level; Trinity who is not only participating tomorrow night in the **Junior Monarch** finals, but she is also a **Pic-O-De-Crop** finalist; **Grateful Co** that we know fondly as **Coco**, a double **Junior Monarch** winner; and **Quon** who has won **Junior**

**Monarch** twice and **Pic-O-De-Crop** once, is this year's reserve.

"Again, it shows that intangible connection between the two competitions."

Eleanor Rice, tent manager of All Stars tent, expressed her excitement at having an unprecedented nine members from her tent in the finals. "It feels really good," Rice told reporters. "I am excited, I cannot wait until next week Friday to see what is going to happen at the finals, and I know [the finalists] have to be excited as well. This is the first time in Barbados that we've had nine persons out of one calypso tent."

Shontae **Tae** Alleyne-Clarke, who recently made history by winning her third consecutive title at the **2023 Scotiabank Junior Monarch** finals, shared her enthusiasm about making it to the senior finals on her first attempt.

"I am very happy about the position that I will be appearing in, I'm not nervous or anything because it's a competition at the end of the day whether you compete against the big ones or the small ones," Alleyne-Clarke said. "It's a real good opportunity to be here, I am happy that I made the finals on my first try, and I am going to come as hard as I can."

The finals, scheduled for Friday, August 2, will feature 18 calypsonians performing in the following order: **Mr DeeJay, Kid Site, Sammy G, Chrystal, Colin Spencer, Sir Ruel, Darin Holder, Eric Lewis, Sammy Dello, Grateful Co, John Yarde, Billboard, Trinity, Tae, iWeb, AC, Imara, Biggie Irie**, with **Quon** as the reserve. (SB)

# NAB to train 600 home help workers



**Director of National Transformation Initiative Dr Allyson Leacock (centre) and Director of the National Assistance Board Colleen Walcott sign the agreement as People Empowerment and Elder Affairs Minister looks on.**

The National Assistance Board (NAB) has announced a major training initiative for its home assistance programme, in partnership with the National Transformation Initiative (NTI).

The programme, set to begin on Thursday, will provide training for 600 home help workers, with a focus on enhancing relational skills and service quality.

NAB Director Colleen Walcott revealed that the initiative was prompted by findings from an independent client satisfaction survey. "The common theme really coming out of that survey was the need for training," she said. "Workers were asking for skills in terms of communication and engaging with diverse clients. And our beneficiaries were asking for an improvement in service in terms of how our workers engage with them."

The training programme represents a shift from technical skills to interpersonal abilities.

Walcott explained: "We wanted a methodology where persons would immerse themselves in the care and that it would really be guided by the guiding principles of empathy, compassion, and giving care—not just doing a task or providing for a need, but really caring for lives. In other words, putting persons back at the centre of care."

The collaboration between NAB and NTI, which began last year, aligns with

NAB's current work programme that heavily emphasises human resources and training, said Walcott. She described the partnership as "just one other step in the journey of a long and enduring and productive relationship between the two entities".

Highlighting the NAB's commitment to practical training methods, Walcott said: "We did not just want another set of theoretical training where persons come into the classroom, they're here, they go out, and then they do not apply." She stressed the importance of engagement in the training process, stating, "We want persons to be really, really, really engaged in the training."

The initial phase of the training will be conducted face-to-face for all 600 workers, reflecting the NAB's dedication to personal interaction.

"We pull our workers out of the environment deliberately because that is how care is supposed to be delivered and administered, touching persons and interacting and engaging with persons," Walcott explained.

The training initiative will begin with cohorts of 60 individuals, as the NAB steps up its drive to enhance service delivery and quality for its elderly and disabled beneficiaries. (RG)