

N Focus

Students given career advice

"NEVER LIMIT YOURSELF", "be open, to considering and making use of opportunities".

These were among the key takeaways which ten young female students said they received after spending **International Women's Day** with CIBC Caribbean top executives and senior staff.

The students, drawn from ten secondary schools on the island, are approaching the tertiary stage of their education and contemplating the courses they need to take to achieve their career goals.

Those lessons were borne out during the day from the bank's senior officials, starting with a welcome session with chief executive officer, Mark St Hill; chief auditor Khadija Bourne; chief financial officer Carl Lewis, and managing director, Barbados and Eastern Caribbean Donna Wellington.

Wellington said she looked forward to having the students as guests to interact with them about their careers and provide some insights as to the way forward. She told the students that at their age, she saw the bank from the perspective of a branch involved with handling customers' financial transactions only. She, however, explained that most employees do not work in the branch and assured them that they would learn more about this as the day progressed.

For the students, they all confirmed that it was



DIRECTOR CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS at CIBC Caribbean Debra King (centre) explaining how the bank keeps its external and internal clients informed to secondary students (from left) Nadia Zhang of Harrison College, Alyssa Gittens of Springer Memorial, Kazia Carter of Alexandra, Tyra Taitt of Ellerslie School, Trashana Hinds of The St Michael School and Razariah Goddard of Coleridge & Parry. (GP)

a worthwhile exercise. Later, they toured several departments where they met with senior officers who not only explained the departments' functions and the various careers available but shared personal stories about their academic and career journeys.

Trashana Hinds, an Upper Sixth Form student of The St Michael School, described the staff as approachable, stating: "Having the privilege of venturing across the different departments widened my knowledge . . . and also gave me insight on how best I could accomplish my goal of pursuing my dream career in accounting as I received valuable advice."

"This experience touched me to the point where I feel the need to encourage those in my immediate circle to always dream big and never limit yourself

as there are a range of careers to pursue in today's world. I hope that this great initiative continues in the future so many will be touched in the same way I was!" she added.

Tyra Taitt, an Upper Sixth Form student of Ellerslie School, was also grateful for the experience, describing it as informative and an eye-opener. She spoke positively about the bank's attitude towards women, noting that its staff was 70 per cent women and that women made up about 50 per cent of its senior management.

"It doesn't have to end today, if something pops up in your head, write it down and reach back to us," Michelle Whitelaw, director of personal and business banking channels, told the students as she also surprised them each with a \$500 bank account to get them started on their financial journey. (PR)

Parkinson Memorial girls urged to start saving

START SAVING NOW. That was the advice which Natasha Small, chief financial officer (CFO) of Goddard Enterprises Limited (GEL) gave to teenaged girls of Parkinson Memorial Secondary School.

Describing it as a good habit, Small told them that to do so they had to be disciplined and she stressed that she was referring to money which they received as an allowance from their parents or monetary gifts for Christmas and so on.

Small said they should try to save between ten to 20 per cent of their money and could, with the help of their parents and guardians, open an account with a financial institution.

The CFO's session with the girls was part of GEL's outreach to female students in observance of **International Women's Day** on March 8 and was geared at handing the youth some of the keys to financial success.

In what was an inspiring interactive session, Small introduced them to the



PARKINSON MEMORIAL Secondary School students with divisional people manager – automotive and talent development of Courtesy Garage Stephanie Catling-Birmingham (left) posing with the Goddard Enterprises International Women's Day selfie board. (GP)

ABC . . . having the right Attitude and Behaviour and making the right Choices with regard to managing money, adding that such practices will better equip them for success during their working lives.

But she told them it was not too early for them to start saving, budgeting and practising good money management habits. She suggested they work out a budget weekly using

the school allowance as it would help them to control their spending and serve them well as they grew to handle more financial responsibility.

The CFO demonstrated using a family budget, noting the amount and sources of income and expenses to determine a deficit or a surplus. The students then suggested ways of dealing with a surplus or a deficit. Handling a deficit evoked

much response; the cost-cutting methods mentioned for a family included cutting back on eating out, buying in bulk, which could be done by joining with friends and relatives and carpooling.

Throughout the session, Small kept the girls engaged; interspersed her advice with adages and popular Bible verses as she reinforced her points. "Do not covet, do not conform to the world, don't begrudge people, give to

others; don't be overcome by greed, don't be overcome by pride' were among those she used.

The students were also exposed to a plethora of topics in the afternoon session with Stephanie Catling-Birmingham, divisional people manager – automotive and talent development with Courtesy Garage Limited. Her session included personal branding, work ethic and professionalism coupled with using tools to identify their personal areas of strengths and development.

Under the theme of **Personal Branding**, the attendees were asked to explore the concept by identifying personalities that exude a strong and positive brand and by extension to action the development of their own personal brand, by defining "who they are" through the eyes of their value system. They were advised to ensure that their personal brand is authentic, based on the perception of individuals. (PR)