

Viewpoint by Janet Jagan on the Guyana Relief Council's 12th anniversary

“Caring and Sharing.” What a beautiful and meaningful slogan that expresses what the Guyana Relief Council is all about!

Caring is an important element in any organisation which has the responsibility to help people in need. If we do not care about people and their problems, then we are just robots carrying out directives. But that is not the case with the Guyana Relief Council, made up of men and women who have volunteered to help Guyanese in distress.

I am happy to join with others in congratulating the Guyana Relief Council on its 12th anniversary. It has been a fruitful and useful 12 years, seeing the expansion of services to Guyanese in need and the growth of the Council's resources. I refer particularly to its new hostel, known as the emergency shelter, built to help the needy with temporary shelter. It came into use during the floods last year and proved to be a great asset.

The Relief Council has continued, with efficiency and innovation, to raise funds to help those suffering from natural and man-made disasters, fire being one of the major calamities affecting too many families. Its fund raising events draw support from a wide cross section of Guyanese.

The Guyana Relief Council also has a firm reputation for accountability, so necessary in this form of organisation.

The band of dedicated volunteers is led by Mrs. Yvonne Hinds. I remember well when the late President of the Republic Cheddi Jagan asked Mrs. Hinds to head and help rehabilitate the almost defunct Relief Council. “She is a very practical woman and can handle the difficult task,” he told me. The results show that he was perfectly correct!

Let me repeat the Council's policy, which is firmly adhered to. It states” The Guyana Relief Council does not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex, age, marital standing, personal appearance, family responsibilities, political affiliation, physical and/or mental handicap, source of income, nor place of residence or business. The Council is geared to give help, as far as is practicable, to all citizens of Guyana who have suffered through natural or man-made disasters.”

I quoted this statement of policy because it is so necessary and relevant to understand, that all help is given on a principled basis without any preferences.

My thanks to all the dedicated volunteers who have in these 12 years, made the Guyana Relief Council a success and an organisation to be proud of.