

now and try to do those assessments for years that have long passed without having certain things in place, I mean, it is counterproductive.

"Appraisals are meant to be done in a timely manner right after the completion of the period under review and it is expected that employees would have been in possession of whatever goals that

they needed to work towards for the end of the assessed period. When that is not done and when the assessment is not done in a timely manner, it makes it almost impossible to do a fair and a justified appraisal for employees after years," James said.

James said that the union and workers do not anticipate any further issues on these matters going forward,

which will result in workers taking a stand.

He commended the employees for taking a stand, saying, "The staff who stands together will benefit together."

He continued, "...and it should be a testament to other employees that you don't have any fear when you're taking legitimate industrial action because the

outcome can only be good for workers. To make it more apt, the union is as strong as the people it represents. So, if you are representing people who are not afraid to stand up for their rights, the union is as strong as a lion. But if you're representing workers that are afraid of the shadow, you can achieve so much and no more."

Intellectual disability forum launched to support families



Janine Darling CEO- Friends of Care Project.



Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda, Sir Rodney Williams.

The Intellectual Disability Forum, created by Friends of the Care Project, recently hosted an informative session which brought together parents, professionals and advocates

dedicated to supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities.

The day featured a range of speakers which included Kendra Telesford, a Canadian



Kendra Telesford, a Canadian certified counsellor.

certified counsellor, Dr Kwasi Tonge — a board member of the Friends of the Care Project — and Dr Tizazi London. Physiotherapist Dr Mauri, along with Anaira Ruiz and teacher, Yumi Valdes, also delivered therapies, practical strategies and personal perspectives along with a sensory story demonstrated by Joanne Tobit. These skills left attendees better equipped for their caregiving journeys.

The forum aims to create a safe and resourceful space where families can connect, learn and grow together.

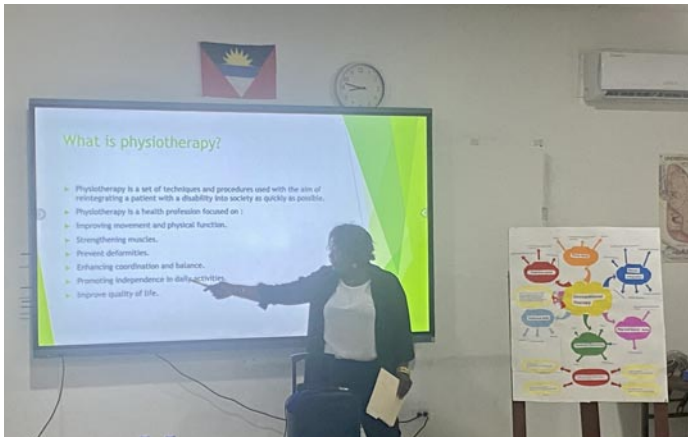
Forum Structure and Ongoing Support

The forum will meet four times a year for full-day sessions. These gatherings will include support discussions,

training opportunities, and interactive workshops designed to empower families with tools and confidence. In addition, monthly meetings will be held, allowing parents to share experiences, concerns and advice designed to foster a strong support network where challenges can be addressed.

Parents will be invited to join a dedicated WhatsApp group — a platform that will provide a space to offer support, share ideas, and discuss ongoing challenges in real time. It will also allow for regular check-ins with families, helping to ensure continued support and engagement.

Friends of the Care Project, recognizing possible emotional challenges, also plans to organise special outings, with



Anaira Ruizand

attention to siblings of children with disabilities. The group will also host occasional social events for parents.

Friends of the Care Project stands committed to supporting families every step of the way, building a stronger, more inclusive future for all.

For more information, parents or professionals who would like to learn more can contact: J.darling.fotcp@gmail.com or katejames.fotcp@gmail.com

About Friends of the Care Project

Friends of the Care Project (FOC) is a not-for-profit organisation providing three core services to children and adults with disabilities.

The organisation operates a developmental centre for children aged between two and 10 years, offering structured early support in a safe and nurturing environment, along with an adult outreach service, primarily support-



Dr Kwasi Tonge, Research Officer and Board Member.

ing individuals with autism. This programme focuses on teaching essential life skills and promoting independence, helping individuals build confidence and prepare for adulthood.

FOC offers a children's outreach service, providing physiotherapy and support for communication difficulties, as well as autism-related interventions and

developmental support tailored to each child's needs.

The long-term vision includes the development of a middle school for children requiring a bespoke curriculum designed specifically to support their individual disabilities and learning needs.

AUA's Open House aims to inspire future healthcare leaders



Photos courtesy AUA.



and Barbudan community while inspiring the next generation of healthcare professionals.

"The Open House provided approximately 15 students with a unique opportunity to explore AUA's state-of-the-art facilities and gain first-hand insight into the field of medicine," the AUA said.

"Participants took part in a series of interactive sessions, including hands-on demonstrations in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), guided tours of the university's advanced Simulation Center, and immersive experiences in the Anatomy & Ultrasound Labs.

Designed to spark curiosity and foster ambition, the event also created space for meaningful engagement between visiting students and AUA's diverse academic community, it added, noting

The American University of Antigua (AUA) welcomed students from five secondary and tertiary schools to its campus on Friday, who participated in an engaging and educational Open House experience.

In a press release, the institution noted that the initiative reflected the university's continued commitment to supporting the Antiguan