



**Remarks by
The Honourable T. Desmond Bannister,
M.P.**

Minister of Education

**At The
National After-School Arts & Craft
Programme**

Art Exhibition

**Friday, 4th December, 2009
Central Bank of The Bahamas
Market Street**

5:00 pm

SALUTATIONS:

Mrs. Patricia Collins; Deputy Director of Education;

**Mrs. Genevieve Richards and Mrs. Rose Cleare
Centre Managers for the National After-School
Art Programme;**

Mr. Timothy Nottage, Resident Instructor;

**Students enrolled in the National After-School
Art & Craft Programme;**

Staff of the Central Bank of The Bahamas;

Parents and Supporters;

Good evening.

I am delighted to be here to afternoon to witness the talent and creativity of the youth of our nation.

I must firstly thank Prime Minister Ingraham for appointing me to this position at this time of year because of the warm and festive welcome I have received. Just yesterday, I attended the Ministry of Education's Annual Carol Service which featured the melodious voices of students from both Public and Private Schools throughout New Providence.

Now today, I am treated to the magnificent imagery and artistic expressions of the students of the National After-School Arts and Craft Programme in this wonderful exhibition.

It shows that scales of positive achievements among our youth outweigh the negative that is perceived and committed by a few. It is events such as these that solidify the notion that music and art can “tame the savage breast”.

I wish to thank the organizers of this event, Mrs. Richards and Mrs. Cleare, Mr. Nottage and Mrs. Collins who stays in the background and allows this team to do this part to assist our young people in produce excellence through art education.

Thanks also goes out to the renowned Mr. Maxwell Taylor, the “Founding Father” of the programme who still finds time on his visits to The Bahamas to give the young artists advice on how to hone their craft.

Thanks to the Central Bank for allowing the Exhibition to be held here, where many more persons will get the opportunity to see the talented works of these students, appreciate it, and even purchase some for homes and offices here and abroad.

I understand that in the short time that this programme has been in existence (2005 to be exact) it has guided the innate ability of these students to a level where they are empowered to pursue art as a career and to make a viable living from it.

Artists from the National After- School Programme, has achieved critical acclaim for their works, Charlthron Strachan, a product of this programme has won the Governor of the Central Bank of The Bahamas “Governor’s Choice Award” two consecutive years.

Pia Ellis, Cherelle Williamson, Walter Evans Jr. and Raymond McKenzie are just a few who have reaped fame and a small fortune (in some instances) for their participation in this programme.

From what I see here today, the objectives of this programme which are:

- **To foster an appreciation of art and craft as part of the defining characteristic of our culture.**
- **To nurture and develop indigenous talent at the high school level**
- **To foster opportunities to showcase the work of young Bahamian artists and craftsmen have been achieved in the short history of this venture.**

I would like to say, that the biggest success of this programme has been the socialization of the students. They hail from both public and private schools; the represent socio-economic backgrounds and other have different traits; but the love and art enables them to see each on equal ground.

It suggests to us that we need more of these types of adventures for our children and that we must engage them activities that they are interested in, and will promote their skills and abilities.

Ladies and gentlemen, as I look around this room, I see the hope and promise of a brighter future for our country. I see Bahamians who are preparing to give The Bahamas' cultural and historical legacy another boost because, these works I am certain will like the Rembrandts and the Picassos be passed down through the ages.

I salute the students for the effort they have put into their works and their willingness to be the best they can be at this young age.

I thank you the parents for supporting your children in this programme; I am certain they will remember your sacrifices in years to come and reward you well for it.

Thank you all for coming out to experience this wonderful exhibition and may it make your heart glad as done so for mine.

Have a wonderful holiday and enjoy the exhibition.