



**Remarks by**

**The Minister of Education**

**The Honourable Carl W. Bethel, M.P.**

**At the**

**R.E. A. C. H. Autism Awareness Rally  
Mall-at-Marathon**

**Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2009**

## **SALUTATIONS:**

**Mr. DeCosta Bethel; President of  
R.E.A.C.H.;**

**Father Basil Tynes and Mrs. Tynes;**

**Officers and Members of R.E.A.C.H.;**

**Parents and Supporters;**

**Ladies and gentlemen;**

**Good afternoon.**

**It is my pleasure to be here today to join with members of REACH on this auspicious occasion – World Autism Awareness Day the launch of Autism Awareness Month. It is important to note that the United Nations has sanctioned this event because of the prevalence of this condition in the worldwide community.**

**I must take this time to publicly commend the officers and members of REACH for their determination in raising awareness of AUTISM and lobbying for the inclusion of autistic children in The Bahamas.**

**Just in its 11<sup>th</sup> year of existence, the Reach organization has drawn national attention to this cause, and educated our citizenry to the level that people have now become more accepting of children who are affected with autism.**

**Research indicates that Autism is spreading at an alarming rate worldwide. A Centre for Disease Control Study in the United States revealed that one in 150 children will be diagnosed in that nation with an autism related disorder.**

**This suggests that with a smaller population, The Bahamas may see a dramatic increase in the number of children afflicted as well. It is therefore reassuring that we have an organization such as REACH that is here to assist the Government in ensuring that the rights of these citizens are realized and their cause is not lost in the myriad of problems that The Bahamas is faces.**

**I wish you to know that the Ministry of Education has an obligation to ensure that all children regardless of their station or condition in life receive a basic education. While we applaud you, we accept that we have to do our part to support you so that all of our children have a better quality of life through education.**

**Thank you once again for raising awareness of this issue and the right for inclusion of these citizens in our society.**