**Christmas Message**

 **by the Minister for Community Affairs, Youth and Sports Programme**

 **Hon. Osbourne Bodden, JP**

December 2016

At this festive time of year, I want to highlight my ministry’s dedication to promoting a merry Christmas as part of its overall remit to improve the social and emotional welfare of the Cayman Islands.

As Minister for Community Services, Youth and Sports my portfolio champions our communities especially those facing hardship.

For some residents life is undeniably hard and it’s a struggle to keep their families properly housed, fed and clothed.

That’s why reviewing our priorities and calibrating our service delivery to meet ongoing demand is a key part of what my Ministry and its departments and units do.

Whether promoting the wellbeing of individuals or families by protecting children from child abuse or promoting fostering, educating on the evils of domestic violence and substance misuse, or improving elderly and disabled rights by crafting robust new legislation; we are here to not only lend a ready ear but to assess the situation and help.

With our well-trained experts and dedicated teams, I am confident that our policies and programmes will provide some relief this Christmas and beyond.

The holiday season, in whichever community you live, isn’t about showy presents and flamboyant decorations. The Christmas spirit is about spreading goodwill, taking care of the less fortunate and sharing the company of loved ones.

What cheers me is that as special as the Christmas period is, my ministry, with its welfare related departments, units and statutory agencies, focuses on providing essential frontline services every day of the year.

2016 has been a busy year for my ministry promoting new policies and crafting new laws to improve the lives of children, the elderly and the disabled.

Though we’ve done fine work in the past year, we’ll have to work just as hard championing the welfare of our communities going forward.

As we close out 2016 and look forward to the challenges of 2017, I want to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year on behalf of myself, my family and the Ministry of Community Affairs, Youth and Sports.

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