



# NEWSLETTER

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Aripo River

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## RIVERSPEAK 3 GOES VIRTUAL

The third instalment of the annual RiverSpeak spoken word competition was held virtually for the first time this year. The competition which usually features live performances was instead completely hosted through video submissions and online voting. This year's competition was launched as a joint venture between the Adopt A River Programme (AARP) and WASA's Corporate Communications department. Another new development in the competition's format was the inclusion of a Primary Schools category in addition to the customary eligibility of Secondary School students only. This change proved to be very successful, and our young entrants delivered some of the most spirited performances.

Judging was done by a distinguished panel which included members of the group Circle of Poets, Roger Karim and Kyle Amos representing WASA, and Candace Santana representing the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA). The People's Choice winners were selected by the public through online voting on our social media platforms. After a challenging deliberation the winners were decided.

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# RIVERSPEAK WINNERS

## PRIMARY SCHOOL



1st Place Winner **Natalia Richards,**  
**St Joseph Girls R.C**



2nd Place Winner **Amari Pacheco,**  
**Grant Memorial Presbyterian**



3rd Place Winner **Emma-Rose Williams**  
**Siparia Hindu SDMS**

## SECONDARY SCHOOL



1st Place Winner **Aaliyah Lara**  
**ASJA Girls' Tunapuna**



2nd Place Winner (tie) **Dylan Mohammed**  
**St Anthony's College**



2nd Place Winner (tie) **Josiah Fraser**  
**Northgate College**

## PEOPLE'S CHOICE



Primary School Category - **Samaiya Lewis**  
**TML Primary, St. Joseph**



Secondary School Category - **Aulani Bowen**  
**Northgate College**



# REACHING OUT



*Online Class Session*

Engaging our citizens and bringing awareness to the importance of all our watershed issues has remained an important aspect of the AARP's mandate. Where possible, outreaches and education and awareness activities were safely held physically at various locations and communities, and virtually through online interactions with several schools and community groups. We are grateful to our many partners and stakeholders for collaborating with us to serve their communities.

Here Are Some Highlights:



*West Bees, Diego Martin*



*Massy Express, Maraval*



*JTA, Marabella*



*JTA, Carlton Centre*



*JTA, Cross Crossing*



# A COMMUNITY AT WORK



The tight-knit community of Aripo has been leading the way in conserving their environment through regular clean-ups to rid the riversides and surrounding areas of solid waste left by inconsiderate persons. These clean-ups are coordinated by the Aripo Community Council with support from the Adopt A River Programme. To date the community has held five such exercises during 2021 including most recently on Sunday 5th December. Aripo continues to be a model community for taking the initiative to ensure that their community is kept clean and healthy. It was a joy to partner with this community, as they protect their watershed and the pristine water which it produces.





# WARRIORS TAKE ON CARONI RIVER

On Sunday August 29th 2021, there was a joint river clean-up exercise between the Adopt A River Programme and the Caroni River Warriors – a volunteer group spearheaded by Mr. Kevon Mohammed, Director at Islander Ecological System Limited. Also there to support the event were Councillor Kimberly Small of the district of Barataria, and members of Eco System TT.

Using a barge and boat, the teams collected as much solid waste material as possible from a section of the Caroni River which flows behind El Socorro before winding its way to the sea. The group was alarmed by the quantity of garbage trapped on the banks of the river including plastic and glass bottles, household appliances, and various other debris. The task, though daunting, was tackled fully and enthusiastically by the persons present.

These types of activities aid in waste removal from the river but is just a small step in dealing with the vast pollution issues existing in the Caroni River. The clean-up was accomplished to bring to attention the state of the river and to highlight the impact which upstream activities such as littering and dumping has on the Caroni River, which is the largest in Trinidad and the main source of water for the Caroni Arena Dam which provides water for thousands of citizens. The groups involved are planning to host subsequent clean-ups and awareness activities in the coming year to raise awareness of these issues.



# RIVER CHECKS

As part of its ongoing attempts to protect and enhance the condition of our watersheds the AARP conducts seasonal water quality monitoring of several rivers throughout Trinidad and Tobago. By collecting and testing water samples from these rivers during the dry and rainy season the AARP can monitor the ambient water quality over time. The data collected would serve as an early indicator of any observable changes in the water quality which would then need to be investigated further through laboratory testing and field visits.

We are aided in water quality monitoring with the assistance of groups such as Nature Seekers and the Sangre Grande Conservation Group which have adopted the Salybia and Matura rivers. We encourage other groups and communities to get involved. Visit our website ([www.adoptarivertt.com](http://www.adoptarivertt.com)) for more information on how you can join us.



*Salybia River*



*Matura River*



# WATER AND THE ENVIRONMENT REFLECTED THROUGH ART

The second instalment of our Water and the Environment Art Competition was launched in August inviting artists of all ages to send us their visions of Water and the Environment. There were over 40 participants whose ages ranged from 3yrs to 57yrs old. The paintings depicted both the splendour of water as well as showed the negative impacts which activities such as pollution and dumping can have on our water resources and the environment. Pictures of all entries can be viewed on AARP's social media pages on Instagram and Facebook.



## WINNERS AS CHOSEN THROUGH ONLINE VOTING



*Under 15 winner: Amarah Mannette*



*16 - 25 winner: Neera Carrizales*



*26 and over winner: Keisha Padilla*





# RIVERBANK STABILIZATION IN LOPINOT



Lopinot Village was the site of the first Adopt A River riverbank stabilisation project utilising the Vetiver System to reduce land slippage. The project was developed by the AARP to reduce land slippage along the Lopinot River which was contributing to flooding and compromising several houses built near to the riverbank. The project is a collaboration with the IAMovement through its ME WE GREEN project, which, like the AARP, is funded by the Green Fund. The Vetiver System which involves the planting of hedgerows of vetiver grass, is a green infrastructure tool which is meant to provide relief from continuous soil erosion through the retention of slopes and riverbanks. Our objective is to stabilize over 800ft of the Lopinot riverbank using this hardy clumping grass which will form a strong vertical column which will penetrate the soil 10-12ft deep and grow 4-5ft high in just 6 weeks. The vetiver will provide a long-term environmentally friendly solution to stem the collapse of the riverbank. The initiative is implemented with the endorsement of the Office of the Member of Parliament for Lopinot/Bon Air West as well as Councillor Dwayne Mora of Lopinot.





# RISK REDUCTION IN ARIPO VILLAGE

The AARP has also implemented the use of the Vetiver System in the village of Aripo in order to reduce the risk of landslides and land slippages along the only road into and out of the village. Over two thousand (2000) vetiver plants were installed at two hillside locations which are prone to landslides. Once fully established the roots of these plants will form an interlocking system which will hold the soil together thereby reducing landslides. In addition to this, the grass growing above the soil will aid in slowing the flow of water overland during rainfall events, reducing erosion and soil loss. The IAMovement has also partnered with us in this project to provide their technical expertise in the installation of the Vetiver System. The completion of the installation was possible through the hands-on contributions of the Aripo Village Council, community members, the Aripo Police Youth Club and Councillor Kerry-Ann Roberts-Kasmally.





# HARVESTING THE RAIN

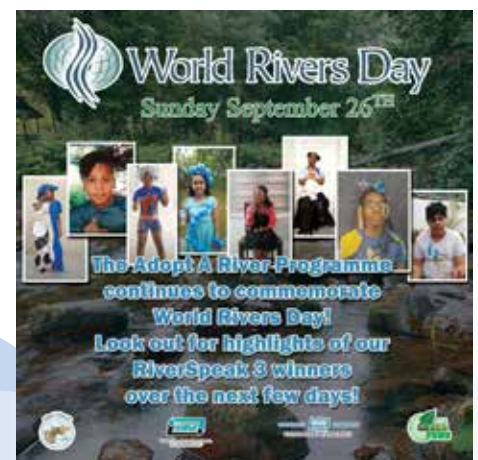


A Rainwater Harvesting installation drive, spearheaded by the Ministry of Public Utilities (MPU) and the AARP will benefit several communities around the country. This project aims to provide homes within 10 communities where pipe borne water is scarce or unavailable, with an augmented supply of water. The water collected from the 1000-gallon harvesters can be used for activities such as farming, construction and household cleaning tasks. The initiative, which is in its primary stage, has thus far conducted field visits to communities across the country to identify potential beneficiaries. Habitat for Humanity, a partner in the initiative, will oversee the construction of the harvesters.

# WORLD RIVERS DAY 2021

World Rivers Day (WRD) is a global celebration of the world's rivers and is observed annually on the fourth Sunday of September. Established to increase public awareness of the importance of rivers to our lives and livelihoods and encourage citizens to maintain healthy rivers, WRD is commemorated by activities led by environmental groups and communities around the world.

This year, the AARP chose to commemorate WRD by highlighting the importance of rivers and the role of trees in protecting them. A week-long social media campaign featured pieces from our RiverSpeak spoken word competition to inform, engage and inspire our audience. Additionally, tree planting exercises were conducted at various locations with the help of Adopters and partners. Some of the locations included Basse Terre Recreational Grounds Moruga, Aripo Village, Santa Rosa First Peoples Heritage Site, Mundo Nuevo, Greenvale Park, Moriah Recreational Park, and Beausejour Village. Over one hundred trees were provided by the Forestry Division for the exercises. The public was encouraged to follow the example of our partners and to plant trees of their own.





## WORLD RIVERS DAY TREE PLANTING



## DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly 1 billion persons in the developing world do not have access to clean safe water, and more than 2.4 billion people have no access to any type of modern sanitation facilities?

Water is a limited resource. Our activity within the watersheds makes a huge difference to the quality and quantity of water that is available for use.

As we understand just how scarce our water is, and the value of clean water, we must all take steps to preserve and conserve it.

Check our pages below for our  
**Water Conservation Tips & AARP Tidbits, Activites and Events.**  
**Riverspeak Highlights available on Youtube.**

Facebook: **Adopt A River Trinidad & Tobago**

Instagram: **@adoptarivertt**

Youtube: **Adopt A River TT**