

NEWS

# Inadequate funding for diabetes camp



**DIABETES CAMP:** Participants of the Diabetes Association's Diabetes Camp received medical history bracelets yesterday from camp organisers at the closing ceremony at Milner Hall, University of the West Indies' St Augustine Campus, yesterday. PHOTO BY KEITH MATTHEWS

**PRESIDENT** of the Diabetes Association of Trinidad and Tobago Carlton Phillips, yesterday, lamented on the lack of funding the association has received to carry on its annual camp, "Camp Cocrico".

The four day camp was created 14 years ago to give children living with diabetes the opportunity to participate in a holiday camp.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of the camp, at Milner Hall at the University of the West Indies, St Augustine, Phillips said they had a serious problem with getting sponsors for it.

"We receive a yearly subvention from Government at the cost of \$150,000, the camp costs more than half of that each year. We usually have to spend more than \$70,000 to provide for this camp in order to supply food, accommodation and transportation and to pay the staff. We wrote to 60 firms this year requesting sponsorship and everybody told us that things were tight and they were being frugal. We are praying that by some miracle next year we would get help with funding," he said.

He told the children the camp was created for them to be educated about the disease as "education is far cheaper and better than medication."

Carol Sarwansingh, camp co-ordinator and director of Bismark Medical Technology, later handed out CARE medical history bracelets to the children allowing them to have their entire health care history available at any time. The bracelet has a flash drive which connects to a computer where the medical history is uploaded.

"It holds an individual's medical history as well as their family members. If something were to happen to any of them a health facility would have access to their medical history. This is a fantastic product that could save lives because instead of spending time looking through documents and files, everything is on the bracelet and it is something that should be implemented in the country's health facilities," she said.

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By CAROL MATROO



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