



# Servol 50 Years of Service 1970-2020



**Sr. Sister Ruth Montrichard  
Chair, Servol.**

## First Steps

This year, we celebrate 50 years since the birth of Servol in 1970, when our Founder, Fr. Gerry Pantin left his teaching position at St. Mary's College and in as he said in a "moment of Divine madness" walked up the hill of Laventille to ask the now famous Servol question: How can we help you?

It was in listening attentively to the answers to this question that Servol was born. It made

him realize that before you do anything in a community, you ask the question and then involve them in the programme through attentive listening and respectful intervention. It was in this listening stance that Fr. Gerry approached the then Brigadier Joffre Serrette to "lend" him twelve members of the Defence Force (soldiers and sailors) who would be the first Servol Social workers. For eight years their job was to visit the communities in Laventille and East Port of Spain, to listen to and dialogue with people, find out their needs and how they could become involved in community programmes. The needs were many but mainly they wanted education for their children, jobs, sporting fields.

One of the very early programmes was the Child to Community Project. In those days many toddlers were in private schools where there was a young woman from the community with an alphabet chart and a ruler, keeping children quiet while parents worked. The programme trained these young women to become efficient, caring and effective Early Childhood Teachers and new centers were set up.

Then came Jobs. This was more difficult since many young people had dropped out of school and had no training. We persuaded business places to employ some 300 young people over a period of time but many never went to the jobs. This made us realize that attitudinal and skills programmes were essential.

So in 1975, the Beetham Life Centre was established and programmes were developed to help the young people prepare for the world of work by offering both life-skills and skill training. Soon Communities were asking for the programmes for their adolescents and Centres were established with the help of the community; they were asked to provide the building, Servol with the help of overseas funding in those days, would train instructors and provide equipment and so the programme grew and developed.

Today, Servol continues to serve the children of our nation and our communities from Point Fortin to Diego Martin, from Chaguanas to Mayaro, facilitating fifty-nine (59) Early Childhood Centres, Parent Out Reach Programmes, three (3) Day Care Centres, two (2) Special Schools, ten (10) Junior Life Centres, ten (10) Adolescent Development Programmes, nine (9) Skill Training Centres and three (3) High Technology Centres and two (2) Teacher Training Centres. This with a staff of over 500 including, Administrators, Teachers, Instructors, Support Staff and Community Boards of Education. Departments of Accounts, Pension, and Credit Union serve the staff and support the projects.

So, we have come a long way and today we are thankful to those members of the Defence Force and Child to Community Project, the volunteer secretaries, who in the early days set the foundation for the programmes, to our pensioners who "took the heat of the day", to our Board of Directors and Boards of Education who continue to give voluntary service, to the many businesses and individuals who supported us, to the successive Governments who by continuing our subvention has helped us to pay salaries, to the Principals and students of schools who continued to support our Servol Poor Man's Dinner, Foundations both local and overseas who helped us to set up projects, to the many other NGO's who partner with us.

We pray this year that God will bless each in the way He knows best. For our staff we pray that they will be blessed with courage and wisdom as we continue to try to make a difference. We will continue to care and to serve. We are Servol.



**Executive Director of Servol,  
Mrs Allison Haynes Basalo**

## A Pied Piper

50 years of service in giving hope and providing opportunity where none existed before, is by no means an easy task. This organisation was birthed amid the 1970 Black Power uprising and it is interesting to note that 50yrs later, here we are celebrating during another struggle for freedom of expression of who we truly are, as we resist and battle with the Coronavirus pandemic.

Father Gerard Pantin, founder of Servol stated in his book entitled the Silent Prophet, "History is a funny thing, it repeats itself always, and this time not no different." This milestone and the realities of the current crisis demand that we revisit and evolve our abilities to deliver quality programmes in marginalised communities. We remain determined to honour our mandate which states, SERVOL is an organisation of weak, frail, ordinary, imperfect yet hope-filled and committed people seeking to help weak, frail, ordinary, hope-drained people become agents of attitudinal and social change in a journey which leads to total human development.

We do this through respectful intervention in the lives of others and we seek to empower individuals and communities to develop as role models for the nation.

Over the years, our ability to do this effectively and successfully required the assistance of several countries, communities, and by extension every individual that accepted Servol with open arms, enabling us to enter their lives, homes, businesses, community centres and to even stand on street corners to engage young people and invite them to join us on a journey of discovery.

That transformational journey with its many learning and growth opportunities, triumphs and trials, has established Servol as a unique and proven institution and has allowed us as an organisation to routinely provide pathways to success impacting generations of individuals in the nation of Trinidad and Tobago and has been a role model for similar organisations and programs here and abroad. The simple but powerful question, "How can we help you?" continues to create momentum for the journey, embodies the heartbeat of Servol and reveals the purity of the intent of its founders

Today that question continues to be the change agent in many lives, just as it was in my own life when I became a student at Servol 37yrs ago. I take this opportunity to say thank you, not just for the significant impact Servol has had on my own life, but to also say thank you on behalf of the many, many other lives that have been improved and transformed by this organization. I am both honoured and humbled as I lead and serve among the ranks of the MANY passionate and hard-working people who give of themselves daily to keep the organization true to its mandate. I and many other current members of staff are representative of the undeniable truth that Servol is both OF the people and FOR the people.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to plunge the entire world into uncertainty, I am sure many of us have begun to re-evaluate our perspective on the lives we live, given to us by our Creator. One of the things that is becoming very clear, is that making a difference requires commitment. Commitment to remain true to the values that have established us as a beacon of hope for 50 years, commitment to remain steadfast as uncertainty increases and commitment to remain selfless in a time when self-preservation is the order of the day.

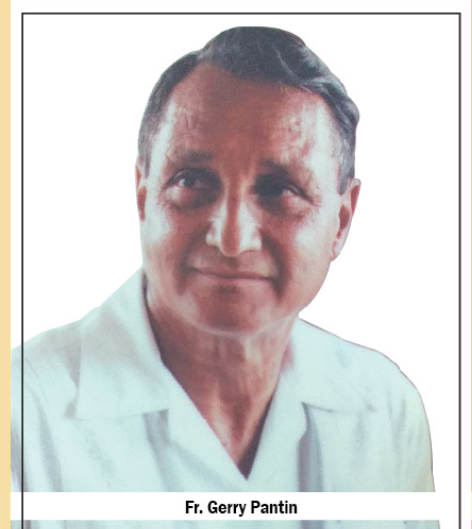
As we celebrate this significant milestone, we the members of the Servol family, yes the Servol FAMILY, men and women who for 50 years have supported each other, built together, struggled together, debated and wept and celebrated together and who come and go but remain forever connected in heart to a cause that cannot and will not die, say THANK YOU. Thank you for accepting and helping to manifest the vision of one man Fr. Gerry Pantin:

- A man who was called by God and who in a moment of divine accuracy, climbed the hills of Laventille with nothing in his pocket but hope and a desire to work together to bring change others thought was not possible

- A man who bravely faced an often misunderstood, struggling, frustrated and angry people listening and reasoning with them when no one else would
- A man who filled people with possibility, convincing them that they held in their hands the power to bring change to themselves and their generations
- A man who defied the burden of stereotype by identifying, drawing out and amplifying the seed of success lying deep within the people for whom he genuinely cared
- A man who equipped the people with marketable skills that set them on a path to achievement and sustainability and created a ripple effect that changed the nation

Like the Pied Piper of Hamelin, Fr. Gerry drew many as he traversed along hills and valleys playing his tune. A tune that we have played for 50 years, and will continue to play, as we commit to sustaining his legacy of selflessness, transformation and empowerment to those who and for whom we represent the only portal for hope and opportunity that tune .....

## "HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?"



**Fr. Gerry Pantin**

**Founder 1928 - 2014**

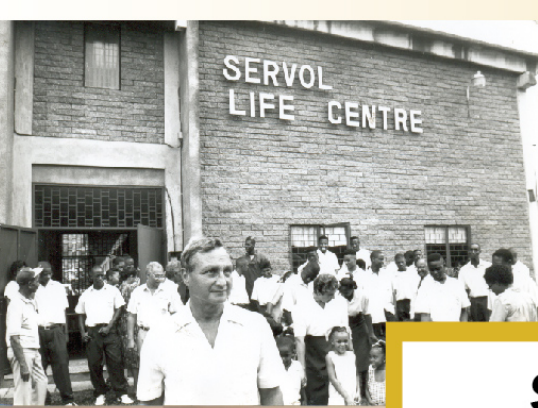
## SERVOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Sr. Ruth Montrichard- Chairman
- Allison Haynes Basalo- Executive Director
- Douglas Camacho
- Peter Clarke
- Ian Collier
- Brian De Vignes
- Helen Drayton
- Ashton Pierre- C.S.Sp
- Diana Mahabir Wyatt
- Roger Hamel Smith

## Executive Committee

- Allison Haynes Basalo- Chairman
- Annette Persad- Secretary
- Pat Mosca- Finance
- Gillian Adams- JLC
- Raana Ramoutar Deputy Director
- Adeltha Willson- Deputy Director
- Sr. Ruth Montrichard
- Stacy Salazar- Human Resource





# SERVOL PROGRAMMES

Based on a philosophy of attentive listening, respectful intervention and lack of cultural arrogance the organization developed several holistic programmes to help at risk children, youth and communities. Centres are facilitated and supported by Boards of Education made up of members of the community.

**Day Care Centres (4)** these provide safe and caring spaces for children 2 mths to 3 years

**Early Childhood Centres** in fifty nine communities give quality all round education to children from 21/2 to 4 and prepare them for primary school... This is supported by the Parent Outreach Programme.

**Special Schools.** One in North Trinidad and the other in South help and educate differently abled children. Many of them continue their education in the Servol programmes and do well.

**Junior Life Centres:** These ten centres cater for young people between the ages of 12 and 15 years. They are placed here by the Ministry of Education when they sit the SEAA two year programme prepares for the move to the Servol Skills programmes.

**Adolescent Development Programme:** This 3 month programme is a pre-requisite for entry in all skills programmes. It provides the opportunity for young people to come to terms with themselves and prepares them to become compassionate, productive and disciplined persons. A course in Parenting prepares them for family life and stable relationships.

**Skills and Hi Tech Programmes:** Across the country these 15 Centres train young people in a variety of skills, prepare them for job training and for the world of work as well as continuing their academic, social, spiritual and creative development.

**Teacher Training:** Servol has established two Teacher Training Centres- a Regional Centre for Early Childhood Teachers and a training department for Instructors in the Adolescent Development Programme.



## SERVOL'S MISSION STATEMENT

Servol is an organization of weak, frail, ordinary imperfect yet hope-filled and committed people seeking to help weak, frail, ordinary, imperfect, hope-drained people become agents of attitudinal and social change in a journey which leads to total human development. It does so through respectful intervention in the lives of others and seeks to empower individuals and communities to develop as role models for the nation.

## SERVOL'S VISION STATEMENT

To help create a society where disadvantaged communities, children and young people are empowered and educated to attain their full potential, improve their quality of life and enhance their family life and thus become productive citizens willing to help their neighbour and to create a just, safe and caring community.

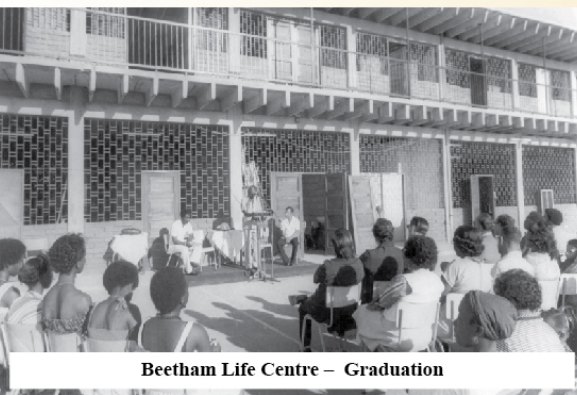




Soldiers, Sailors & Secretaries



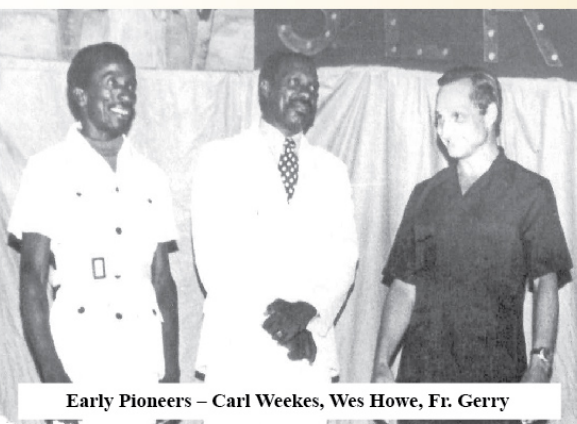
LEFT TO RIGHT: BACK : W. Phillips, C. Spooner, M. Joseph, P. Robinson, G. Pantin, D. Grant, L. Grey, C. Charles  
FRONT: O. De Freitas, T. Lambikin, I. Heywood, K. Richards, M. Valdez



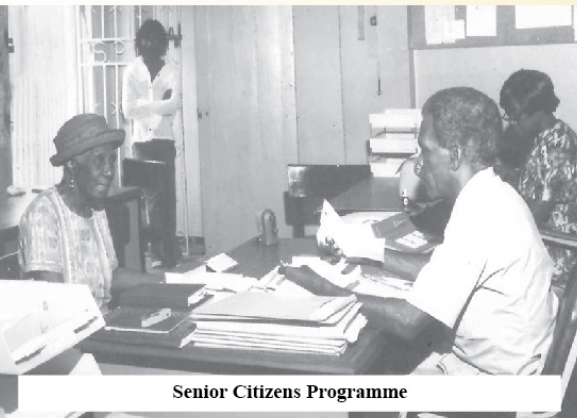
Beetham Life Centre – Graduation



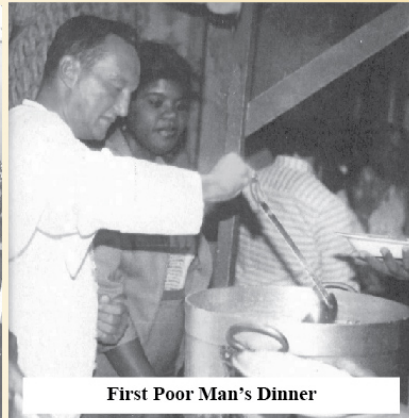
Harlem Bakery Team



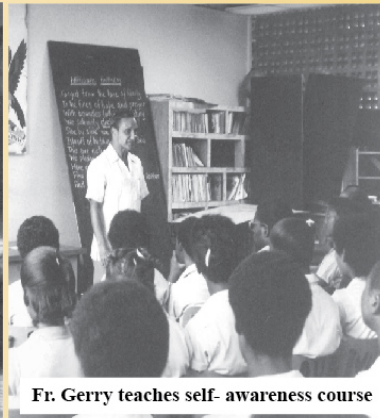
Early Pioneers – Carl Weekes, Wes Howe, Fr. Gerry



Senior Citizens Programme



First Poor Man's Dinner



Fr. Gerry teaches self-awareness course



St. Barb's Clinic

# Mile Stones

- 1970 - Fr. Pantin, Wes Hall go into Laventille
- December - first Poor Man's Dinner
- 1971 - Defense Force Personnel Join Servol
- 1972 - School for Handicapped Children
- 1973 - Gran Couva Farm
- 1975 - Skills Training
- 1977 - Training Early Childhood Teachers
- 1978 - Southern Office, Beetham Life Centre
- 1979 - Servol Printery
- 1981 - Life Villa Opens - Beetham
- 1983 - Opening Forres Park Life Centre, Caribbean Life Centre
- 1987 - ADP Centres Opens
- 1990 - ADP started in YTC
- 1991 - ADP Secondary Schools
- 1993 - Launch Parent Outreach Programme
- 1994 - Hi-Tech Centres Alternative Nobel Prize
- 1989 -1997 – Junior Life Centres, El Socorro Life Centre, Diego Martin Life Centre and Arima Life Centre.
- 2001 - Advance Skills Centre
- 2004 - New Head Office- 110-112 Oxford Street, Port of Spain.
- 2005 - Servol Credit Union
- 2008 - Sangre Grande (St. Andrews) Centre
- 2010 - Happy Venture Special School South
- 2012 - Opening of Fr. Gerry Pantin Building, Hospitality, Finance, Pension
- 2014 - Fr. Gerry Pantin dies- RIP (23rd June)
- 2016 - Budgets cuts, staff Retrenched, centres closed (Morvant, Princess Town and Arouca)
- 2016 - Opening Fr. Gerry Pantin Life Centre, Point Fortin, Television Production opened
- Early Childhood Accreditation
- Father Gerry Pantin, Memory of the world UNESCO
- 2018 - Agriculture and Hydroponics - Forres Park
- 2021 - 50TH Anniversary



## The Servol Adolescent Development Programme (ADP)

One of the first reports written by Fr. Gerry in 1971 after a few months working

In the Laventille area stated that besides poverty, lack of basic facilities, poor housing, and poor nutrition etc., one of the major problems then was the lack of stable family life –absent fathers, absent parents, “barrel children”, abuse of children and women. He further stated that if family life and the education of small children was not attended to, that our country would pay dearly for it in years to come! And so to implement and in some way repair the lack of stability and parent care and education both the Early Childhood /Parenting Programmes and the Adolescent Development (ADP) were born.

Many a young trainee has said that the “ADP” was a life-saver and a light of hope in life. This 3 ½ month programme precedes skill training and focuses on recreating “family-life” in the school setting; caring instructors, mentors, adults who listen and guide and respect them. The programme seeks to build self-esteem and hope in a future and to instill in the young people values of caring, kindness, respect for themselves and for others, compassion for the vulner-



able- the aged, the children. Boys as well as girls visit the day care centres and learn how to interact with babies, children and the differently abled, they visit old people’s home and care for the aged. It helps them to deal with anger and frustration, boredom and hopelessness and to believe in themselves.

Courses aim to develop the whole person- Spiritually, Intellectually, Creatively, Emotionally and Socially (SPICES) with classes in self-awareness, spirituality and meditation, public speaking, academics, parenting, small and

large group activities, sports, rap sessions, handicraft , music, moral and civic development, health and environment, educational visits and field trips.

The remarkable change in young people is repeated over and over by the young people themselves who tell us how they have changed in positive ways and how the programme has prepared them for their adult lives, their future and for better parenting of their children. Since its inception some 110,000 young people have benefitted from this course.

## Testimonies

My name is Justin Gittens, and I am a past trainee of Servol. I did my ADP at the Princess Town Centre, after which I then went on to pursue the following skills; Television Production and Industrial Electronics.. Today I own J. G Media and I am grateful to Servol for all my accomplishments.

Jeremiah Ferguson, represented Servol at the 15 National Youth Parliament, October 30th, 2017. A former Home Health Aide trainee who attended the El Socorro Regional Life Centre.

Kimberly Crichton pursued the ADP at the Servol Maraval Centre. I would like to express my thanks to Servol for giving me the tools that I have used to succeed at the highest level.

At age 17 I was introduced to Servol Adolescent Development Programme. In this programme the instructors prepared me for life, real life. Servol has really helped me on my journey, and today I am a respected and independent woman.  
Tavia Balkissoon Lee-Chung.

My name is Edison Jacob, and I attended Servol Princess Town Life Centre in September to December, 1990. What Servol did was to change my life through the ADP. I must point out the areas that was of special interest to my development; Rap session, public speaking and group therapy. What Servol has to offer is very good to shape someone and make them more than they see themselves.

From student to Deputy Director: As an instructor, Coordinator and now Deputy Director. I have learned a lot and have developed new management skills. I am humbled and privileged to continue the work of Fr. Pantin that started 50 years ago.

I was privileged to attend the Fr. Gerry Pantin Life Centre, Point Fortin. When I entered the Adolescent Develop Programme I was confused and had no clue of how it would have turned out. The ADP course affected my whole life and helped me to make better choices. I am, where I am today because of the Servol programme.  
Shudelle Alcindere.

I dropped out from school at 16 and got into the wrong company. Soon I was on drugs and committing petty crimes. A friend told me about Servol and I decided to give it a try. The Adolescent Development changed my life. Today I have a stable job and a family I care for, love and support. Thank you Servol.  
M. J



**SERVOL SUCCESS**

“Switching gears from fashion to the news-room made me appreciate how much Servol’s training prepared me to adapt and apply my talents to vastly different careers.

**For this, I will be eternally grateful.”**

Alicia Boucher  
Broadcast Journalist CCN TV3



**SERVOL SUCCESS**

“God truly used the Servol organisation to reveal, develop and polish me into accepting that I am more than what society may have expected me to become.

Today, twenty-something odd years later, I am an Entrepreneur, holding a Bachelors and a Master’s degree, stronger, more assured, and comfortable with who I am. Today I use my gifts and talents for the development of individuals, utilising techniques learnt from my experience at the Servol organisation.”

Roxanne Rosaes-Pulido  
Business Consultant



**REGISTRATION IS ON-GOING**

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ADMIN. DEP’T: 638-0593

**SOUTH-CENTRAL ZONE**  
ADMIN. DEP’T: 653-5402

**DONATIONS CAN BE SENT TO:**  
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**OR YOU CAN CALL:**  
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