

MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT & INNOVATION

SPEAKING NOTES

RECOGNITION OF MS. ANN HAVEN

Mister Speaker, It is a privilege to rise today to recognise and pay tribute to a truly remarkable Caymanian, **Ms. Haven**, whose life of service has made an immeasurable difference in the lives of children across our Islands. In my statement in Parliament on Friday last week, I mentioned very briefly that Ms. Haven is an example of an older persons in our community who continues to give back and contribute significantly to these islands.

Ms. Haven has a deep and genuine passion for children that has nurtured that quality within her. Whatever the reason, one thing is certain: **children have always found a home in Ms. Haven's heart.**

In 1984, after several years of informally caring for children in need, Ms. Haven approached the Department of Social Services, now the Department of Children and Family Services, to become an official foster parent.

In March 2009, Ms. Haven marked **25 years as an official foster parent**, representing a quarter-century of dedicated service to the Department, to the community, and, most importantly, to the children entrusted to her care.

Over the course of her fostering journey, Ms. Haven has cared formally for at least 63 children, many of whom came to her with a variety of special needs and from a wide range of ages.

Mister Speaker, to these children, Ms. Haven was not simply a foster parent. She was a source of stability, comfort, discipline, encouragement and love. She was someone they could depend on when circumstances had left them vulnerable.

Mister Speaker, being a foster parent is not simply about providing a roof over a child's head. It is about creating a safe place where a child can heal, grow, learn to trust, and begin to believe in their own future. Ms. Haven has done precisely that and either directly or indirectly, the entire Cayman Islands community is better for it.

Mister Speaker, Ms. Haven's contribution is truly immeasurable, and when we consider the countless meals prepared, school mornings attended, illnesses cared for, tears comforted, birthdays celebrated, lessons taught, boundaries established, opportunities created and, above all, the love given to children – we owe Ms. Haven and people like her a world of gratitude.

Mister Speaker, Ms. Haven was recognized late last month by CIBC which is indicative of the impact that her service has had across the entire community, both public and private sectors. Today we celebrate Ms. Haven here in Parliament not simply for the number of children she has cared for, but for **compassion and commitment** she has given to each one.

Mister Speaker, may Ms. Haven know that her years of service have not gone unnoticed. **Thank you, Ms. Haven.**

Furthermore, Mister Speaker, may our community continue to recognise that when we invest in the wellbeing of a child, we invest in

the future of our entire Islands. So, when the Department of Children and Family Services makes it's next effort to identify new foster parents to answer the call to care for and love our children in care, I pray that we will add several new families to the list who have hearts as big as Ms. Haven's.

Mister Speaker, I am proud to honour Ms. Haven today and to offer, on behalf of this Honourable House, The Ministry of Social Development and Innovation, the Department of Children and Family Services and the people of the Cayman Islands, our sincere gratitude for a lifetime of service, love and dedication to our children.

Thank you, Mister Speaker.