

# Change

Official Newsletter of The Alliance For Change

Unlocking Guyana's Future

Alliance For Change



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## WELCOME 2009!

### In This Issue

- Welcome 2009!
- Thousands of Children feted
- Answers to parliamentary Questions
- Upcoming Events

The year 2009 is upon us and there are great expectations that the dark events of 2008 will become a distant memory. 2008 will be remembered as the year of the Lusignan, Bartica, and Lindo Creek massacres, and of extensive flooding. For the most part, the economy continued to under perform as the VAT took its toll on business owners, and every Guyanese citizen who has had to pay more for goods, and services, while at the same time seeing their income shrink.

This coming year will not be an easy one, despite the government's senseless and irresponsible claim that the global financial crisis will not affect Guyana.

### Other News:

The National Executive Committee held its 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Meeting on November 29, 2008. A number of sub-committees have been reconvened. A special committee will also be reviewing the 2006 elections results and making recommendations for upcoming elections.

AFC Leaders visited flooded areas in Region 4 on the East Coast of Demerara, and in Region 2 in the Pomeroon, and the party is presently engaged in a drive to provide bleach, detergents, disinfectant, and food supplies to persons affected in Regions 6,5,4, and 2.

Plans are also afoot to renew the Seeds of Change effort to share seeds and seedling plants to persons in the areas hardest hit by the floods.

We all know that it has affected all of us in some measure. We will also have to face the reality that crime will continue to rise, and because of the ineptitude of this government, discrimination, maladministration, victimization, and even more floods and damage to property will be visited upon many. We will however have to confront and defeat these evils in our midst.

The AFC will continue in 2009 to fight for social justice and equality for all.

- We will fight to ensure that the rule of law is not only written in books, but known, understood and upheld by all;
- We will fight to ensure that the Guyanese populace is properly educated and enjoys the right to know and access information from every and any medium of their choice.
- We will fight to ensure that members of the security forces regain the respect they deserve, by firstly ensuring that they themselves respect the law and moreover the citizens that they are to serve and protect.
- We will fight to ensure that the rights of workers are respected and can enjoy better wages and working conditions;
- We will fight to ensure that monies approved in the national budget are not squandered and stolen, but applied sensibly to ensure that the people of Guyana benefit directly through better social programmes including housing, roads, drainage, security, education, and economic relief to farmers and the many others suffering from disasters such as flooding.

We urge you to stand steadfast in this new year as together we confront and overcome the challenges, and prepare to begin to reap the bountiful harvest that awaits us. Every attempt to divide, distract, and disillusion us will be made but you are forewarned that this is the political tactic of your opponent who is running scared that the AFC has survived and is picking up momentum. The right to protection from criminal elements, protection from Human Rights abuses by the State and other blatant forms of disregard for their lives, denial of rights of freedom of speech, expression, and of association, and access to information as in the case of Region #10 where the right to listen to radio and view television other than that provided by the State is continuously being denied. Daily, we are seeing our basic rights being rolled back by draconian laws, regulations and government policies. It is time for a Change."

### OFFICE SPACE SECURED

The new AFC administrative office is located at 77 Hadfield Street, (immediately behind the Brickdam Police Station). Members are encouraged to visit, and to send information on issues there.

The AFC's Elections Petition to obtain the Region 10 seat is being deliberately delayed by the PPP/C and the government. So said AFC Chairman, **Khemraj Ramjattan, MP** at a press conference held on January 19, 2009. Over two years have passed since this injustice was committed against the AFC and people of Region 10.

The AFC has called for a reduction of the fares being charged for the crossing of the Berbice River Bridge

The "AFC on the Move" TV programme continues on Saturdays @ 4pm on Channel 9 and is rebroadcast on Channel 6 on Sundays.

## Upcoming Events:

Outreach visits will be done in Region 4 (East Bank Demerara) on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> at Yarrowkabra, and in Region 6, Berbice on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2009.

Party Leader, **Raphael Trotman** is to attend a Special Prayer Breakfast at the invitation of the US Congress in Washington, D.C., U.S.A. on February 3, 2009. President Obama is to attend.

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*"The first step towards change is awareness. The second step is acceptance"*

## A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL AT CHRISTMAS AND THE SPIRIT OF GIVING WAS REMEMBERED AND OBSERVED

The executive of the AFC, members, supporters, and friends of the party all chipped in to ensure that hundreds of children had a Merry Christmas despite the wet and soggy conditions that existed throughout the season. Beginning with food hampers were shared in Mahaica, then on Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> December, at Whim Corentyne when over 2000 children were fed and feted by Dr. Ramayya, and the AFC! Again, on December, 27, another 300 children in Sophia, Lodge and Werk-en-Rust were given gifts, sweets and food by the party.

The true meaning of Christmas must never be lost or forgotten and in our Christmas message we reminded all Guyanese that "Though we have all experienced the reality that money is very hard to come by at this time, we must continue to depend on Almighty God Who is the Giver of all things. We must remain grateful for what we already have and realize that the love of family, of each other and the birth of Jesus are the most important things to celebrate. May we not therefore lose sight of the true reason for this season of giving and renewing."



## AFC PARLIAMENTARY TEAM CONTINUES TO EXPOSE GOVERNMENT INCOMPETENCE AND FAILURE

Questions are put on behalf of citizens in various communities, and we expect that they will use the answers as the basis of voting at the next elections. Some shocking revelations have been made as seen below.

1. "No way" was the answer given by Min. of Education in answer to questions posed by **Raphael Trotman, MP** as to whether the government would give compensation to the relatives of Tenesha DeSouza who died in a pit latrine in Santa Rosa, Region 1, and the girls of the Waramadong Secondary School in Region 7, who died when a fire swept through their dorm as they slept. When asked as well about the placement of flush toilets at all schools in Guyana we got another No!. This is the shameless behaviour of an uncaring government.
2. The Attorney-General in answer to a question posed **MP Trotman** on pending inquests, stated that there are a record 249 Coroner's Inquests pending before the courts. People who have been waiting for justice to find answers on the unnatural deaths of their relatives will have a long, long wait.
3. **MP Latchmin Punalall**, questioned the Prime Minister about matters of electricity and water affecting the people of Region 8 and his responses were: No electricity service will be provided by government even though residents found the cost of the private facility to be too high and burdensome. On providing water, the Min. of Housing & Water accused the residents of wasting water and therefore they will have to accept what they get! She was able to get the Min. of Health to declare that an ambulance would be provided to Mahadia by December, 2008.
4. **David Patterson, MP** questioned the Min. of Finance on the filling of vacancies of the two top offices at the Valuation Division, and the provision of staff and equipment to allow Town Councils and NDC's to carry out their valuation exercises efficiently. The reply was that the government had no intention of doing anything about these outstanding matters.
5. **Sheila Holder, MP** questioned the Min. of Agriculture about the price Guyana's sugar was being sold at in Trinidad & Tobago as it is our information that corruption is afoot. His nonsensical answer was that he could not disclose the price publicly as the price had to be kept secret from competitors. So much for having a lean, clean, and transparent government!