

LEISURE TODAY

Healthier food pick

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LINK BETWEEN HEART AILMENTS AND SINGLE MUM

by Neville Clarke

Could the higher incidence of heart disease among women in Barbados be linked to many of them being the only breadwinner in a family?

Former marketing manager of Super Centre, David Neilands, raised this question on Saturday night while delivering the keynote address at a Heart & Stroke Foundation fund-raising event held at the official residence of the British High

Commissioner at Pine Hill in St Michael.

Stressing the importance of strong family units in a society, Neilands said: "We need to rebuild the family circle. I am no expert. But isn't it conceivable that the higher incidence in heart disease among women is due to the stress of often being the only breadwinner in a family? The increased consumption of comfort food comes from lack of time that used to be used to talk to children about why they should eat their vegetables. How many families sit at the table together any more? We need to educate."

Noting that in the region today one in three children and one in five adolescents were overweight, Neilands suggested that local policymakers should build into the Common Entrance Examination syllabus an awareness of the foods grown here and their nutritional value, combining practical know-how by taking a serious look at the **School Meals Programme**.

Addressing the issue of food security, the former marketing manager expressed regret that policymakers were not doing enough to assist local farmers to contemplate diversity.

"My pet subject is breadfruit, grown in backyards 'behind the paling'. In the supermarkets we purchased from anybody who had a tree bearing. There is no commercial farming. The

breadfruit is 121 calories a half-cup serving and is rich in fibre, potassium, calcium phosphorous and many other nutrients.

"I am an Irishman, and while we may hold claims to the potato, most people know it originated in Peru. The breadfruit which arrived in the Caribbean, courtesy of Captain Blyth, is a staple food and in my expert opinion tastes as good or better than Irish potatoes. Studies in Barbados estimate that an acre of land could yield as much as 13 tons of breadfruit. We need to grow more and develop the technology to process it into finished products that meet the needs of the busy consumer," Neilands added.

Arguing that hope sprang eternally in the human breast, and referring to the production of chips from the sweet potato at a plant in St Philip, Neilands said: "A local farmer has just invested significantly in machinery to process his sweet potato crop into fries that will now compete with the imported product. It will offer a locally grown culturally recognizable healthier alternative that could be used in the fast-food industry, as well as in restaurants, hotels and supermarkets. We need more heroes."

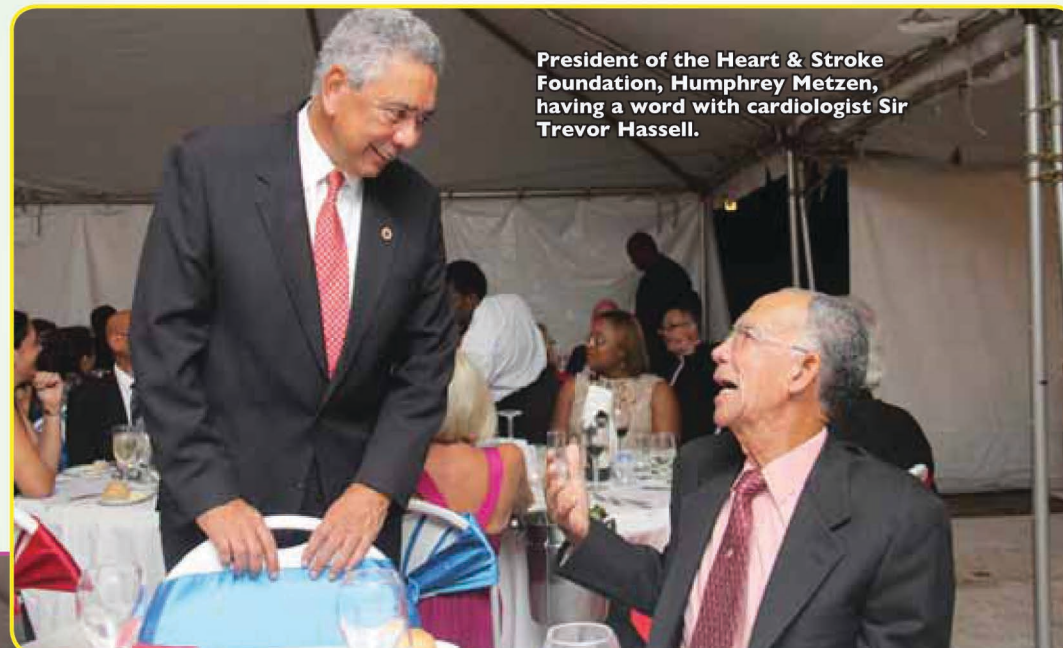
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Town crier Caroline Gardiner amused the large audience at the fund-raising event.



Featured speaker at the fund-raising event, David Neilands, addressing patrons.



President of the Heart & Stroke Foundation, Humphrey Metzen, having a word with cardiologist Sir Trevor Hassell.



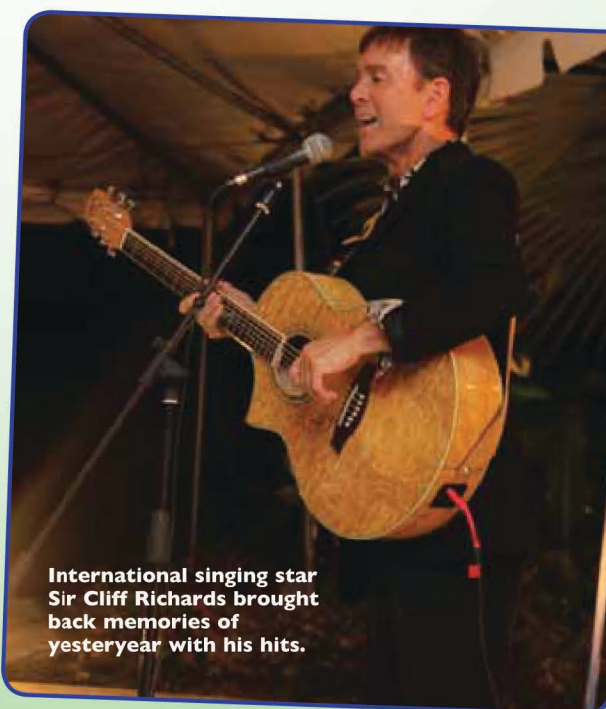
Cardiologist Dr Jerry Ishmael was one of the patrons at the event.



Sir Charles Williams and Lady Williams (right) lent their support to the fund-raising event.



The Heart & Stroke Foundation-sponsored fund-raising event attracted a large crowd of well-wishers.



International singing star Sir Cliff Richards brought back memories of yesteryear with his hits.



Patrons enjoying each other's company.