



Trinidad & Tobago Equestrian Association

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release*

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### **RAHAEL PLACES 3<sup>rd</sup> IN CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS:**

**August 11, 2014:** Once again, T&T's riders did not disappoint in the latest overseas Equestrian International Dressage event. Two of our youngest competitive riders, Hadley Rahael and Michelle Sabga-Aboud performed very well in a most exciting Equestrian Dressage event in Concord, Massachusetts. Rahael (13 years) and Sabga-Aboud (14 years), represented T&T in this year's Children of the America's Dressage Invitational (CADI) Event held at the Bear Spot Farm, July 30<sup>th</sup> to August 02<sup>nd</sup>. The T&T Equestrian Association has been fortunate enough to have riders qualify year over year for the past 3 years, for this very competitive international event. Over 33 countries were invited to participate, and CADI brings together the region's best young riders, giving them the chance to represent their countries in an international event, to ride a required FEI (Federation Equestre Internationale) test, to develop and perform a freestyle ride and receive coaching from top trainers. Part of CADI's mission is not only to bring together youngsters with a passion for equestrian riding, but also to introduce the discipline and beauty of Dressage to new generations of riders from North, South and Central America and the Caribbean Islands. CADI is a challenging event for these young riders as each is allowed only two rides (on separate days) on their assigned show horses before riding in the competition. It's a very short time for them to become accustomed to horses they have never ridden before.

Rahael had set the tone at last year's CADI event, by placing a solid 6<sup>th</sup> overall, and was determined to better her placing, both girls having trained intensively over the weeks leading up to the competition. Being a borrowed-horse competition, Rahael was assigned a pony named "Jose", placing 4<sup>th</sup> in the first day of competition in her set FEI Dressage test with a score of 65%. On the second day, she showcased her Freestyle test, set to the music "Pirates of the Caribbean" and this performance, with a terrific score of 69% moved her up to 3<sup>rd</sup> place overall. A wonderful competition for this young rider indeed. .... /2



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Sabga-Aboud was assigned a very difficult pony named "Bentley", but she rose to the occasion, this being her first time representing the red, white and black. She earned a score of 57% in her set FEI Dressage test on day one, and then improved on her score with a 60% and a lovely Freestyle test set to "Yellow Bird". The Freestyle tests for the two T&T riders were designed by the renowned Dressage trainer, Greta Wrigley, with the assistance of FEI Dressage judge, Heather Stalker, both who hail from Ocala, Florida. In support of their local equestrian community, the fees earned by these ladies for designing the tests were generously donated to their local horse rescue charity.

Both Rahael and Sabga-Aboud are coached locally by Margaret Auerbach and Sara McCartney of Goodwin Heights Stables. They were kindly invited by Coach Roberta Foster of Congo Road Stables in Barbados, to attend the "CADI Boot Camp" held there the week before the riders from Barbados and Trinidad left for Massachusetts. This gave these young ladies the added experience of riding at a different location with unfamiliar horses just before the start of competition.

McCartney accompanied her riders to the CADI event, and when asked to comment on their performance, had this to say, *"Once again, Hadley proved that she belonged in this competition of international riders. Her performance on both days made me so proud to be there. Her CADI coach made a point of saying how impressed she was with how well Hadley was prepared for this event. In fact, she has invited Hadley to return to the US to ride her horses in shows next summer. What a wonderful opportunity! Michelle who has been only riding for a short while gained a wealth of experience from this competition. Like Hadley, I am very proud of Michelle who took this challenge of riding an uncooperative pony by the reins (pun intended!) and gave it her very best effort."*

Each year, the T&T Equestrian Association works towards sending the best riders to local, regional and international events, and once again our country's gifted riders were given the chance to showcase their talents at an international event.

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