**AWARD SPEECH**

**FOR**

**RUBY WOODS**

Hello everyone and thank you for **giving** me the opportunity ….to **GIVE**. Being a part of this organization inspires me on so many levels and with each gesture of kindness, each expression of community, and each acknowledgement, I am encouraged and motivated by the warmth and memories of our home. (**If you would like to acknowledge any of the organizers, hosts, or people that nominated you for the award, do so here**). I would like to thank some people for doing a wonderful job in organizing this event. To \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, thank you for your attention to every detail and for making tonight so festive and special. To\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, thank you for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. And of course to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I literally would not be here without your support and encouragement.

Tonight I have the great privilege and blessing to receive the Humanitarian Award for Community Service. It is such an honor to be recognized in this way, but I have to say that I would and **DO** give service for the sake of enriching our community both here and back home in St Vincent and the Grenadines. I truly believe the saying that “A candle loses nothing if it is used to light another,” and that expression illustrates why I am so happy to be standing in front of all of you. From my vantage point up here on this podium, you know what I see? I see a room full of faces…. A sea of smiles…. A gathering of symbolic candles just waiting to be ignited in order to light the way so that others may see their own light more clearly. It is true that “sharing is caring” and “To whom much is given, much is expected.” I am humbled to think that so much has been expected of me because that means that my blessings are many. As I give and support our friends and neighbors, I know and I believe the spirit of goodness will grow inside all of us. And while I appreciate all of the kind words that come with this award, I must admit that I cannot accept this alone. I have been guided by some of the greatest teachers… my mother, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ gave me life and taught me the value of respecting others. She taught me that extending a hand in friendship and support yields far more than the effort it takes. She taught me that no matter what we did or didn't think we had, we had our **SELVES**, our resilience, and our strength to persevere and conquer the odds…. And those odds were abundant! (**Wait for the laugh**). The other great teacher in my life was my late husband, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (**Do you want to say**). Some of you knew him well, and I take comfort in that. He taught me about giving, partnership, and the power of emotional support (**Or use three words that describe what your husband taught you**).

To paraphrase the actor, Gregory Peck, “I'm not a ‘do-gooder.” …. I simply take part in activities I believe in.” It is increasingly obvious in this day and age that as we are able, we must give whatever we can in support of our friends, families, neighbors and community. We have no idea what might happen in the next day… the next hour… the next moment, that will cause us to rally attention and resources for the purpose of helping others. By doing small…. And sometimes significant acts of kindness, we find our strength as individuals and as a group. I am always amazed at the power our community can have, and I am always thankful to have wonderful people by my side, offering a hand to lift others. We are all in this life together and it is up to us to do what we can to leave this world in better shape than when we got here. Thank you all for this wonderful recognition…now let's get to work and make this world a better place!