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The future of Carnival was on display as the pupils of Mucurapo West Secondary School showcased their talent and energy at the school's annual calypso and soca competition held last Thursday.

Fourteen-year-old Nekeisha Victor lived up to her name and emerged as the overall winner of the day's contest. She set the crowd alight with a commanding performance of her calypso "Life too short", which proclaimed her belief that education is the key to progress and that life was too short to waste.

Celebrating 30 years of tradition, the energy and excitement was tangible as the competition received an extra boost through the support of bp Trinidad and Tobago, who fully sponsored the event this year. The school is the alma mater of outstanding performers such as Denise 'Saucy Wow' Belfon, Sean Bailey and Kensa Thomas and Darryl 'Double D' Durham.

Ronda Francis, corporate responsibility manager, bpTT, explained the company's support of the school's Carnival celebrations: "We have been long-standing supporters of our unique culture. From steelpan to various local musical forms, bpTT has collaborated to preserve and promote our national traditions. The young people are our future and that is why we chose to support this wonderful and enduring initiative of Mucurapo West Secondary."

Organiser of the competition was teacher Ricardo Smith, who also provided musical accompaniment. Smith explained that the school, formerly Mucurapo Junior Secondary, had several components to the event, including a calypso and soca competition, as well as demonstrations of ole mas and dancing performances by the students.

Bolstered by loud applause and cheering of their schoolmates, the nine competitors, all female,

stretched the judges to the limit as they demonstrated energy and creativity in their calypso and soca compositions that focused mainly on social problems and also promoted the upliftment of young people.

Placing a close second overall was Tear Joseph with her heartfelt rendition of "Junior" which related a mother's painful loss of her son to a life of drugs and crime. Jackie Thomas took third place with her call for discipline - "Bring back the belt", while Mahalia Villafana rounded up the top four overall and also won the soca category with her infectious performance of "Get ready for it".

Calypso monarch Victor captured the essence of the school's endeavour, "It is wonderful to be part of this event that has so long been a part of our school's identity. We are all winners and it's nice to know that everyone who takes part gets a prize. It's not only about winning but about uplifting the students to feel pride in our ability to rise above the problems we face."