

## 79 conclude steel pan workshop

**R**epublic Bank Right Start Pan Minors Music Literacy programme concluded on Thursday with certificates being awarded to 79 students for steel pan music skills.

This year's programme started in mid-July with 115 students from different regions on board. Another 16 participants from Berbice and 20 from Linden received their certificates on Friday during their final session.

Permanent Secretary of the Culture, Youth and Sport Ministry, Alfred King, said playing steel pans is one way for young children to spend their leisure time wisely, as pan playing not only develops music skills but also life skills.

The programme faces several challenges, King explained, including meeting the cost of maintaining instruments, providing trained instructors, and costs associated with running workshops. He commended Republic Bank's efforts to have the programme going.

Music Development Officer of the Culture, Youth and Sport Ministry, Andrew Tyndall, said the music camp was held at six venues: Tutorial Academy in New Amsterdam, Wismar/ Christianburg



**The beginners' class from Tiger Bay showcasing their certificates as representatives from the Republic Bank and the Culture, Youth and Sport Ministry look on**

Multilateral in Linden, and Christ Church Secondary School; School of the Nations; and the Youth, Culture and Sport Ministry in Georgetown. He explained that this kind of social intervention is important for children who come from less fortunate communities.

School of the Nations' Director, Dr Brian O'Toole, who was present at the ceremony, deemed the programme extremely successful.

The mother of a 10-year-old participant from Tiger Bay told *Guyana Times* that she was very proud of her son. She said he has two younger brothers who could learn from him. Tyndall credited Republic Bank with having helped the ministry to expand the camp to rural

communities. The students attended the workshops for free. The ministry provided the children with the instructors, and developed the material and other resources.

The camp was divided into beginners' and intermediate levels, depending on the knowledge of the students. The programme was started in 2010, and the partnership with Republic Bank began in 2009.

Abbas Hamid, the coordinator of the Varqa Foundation, and hailing from School of the Nations, said that although Republic Bank Pan Minors' programme is over, the ministry has provided Varqa Foundation, located at School of the Nations, with a steel pan instructor for a year to help kids learn this art form.