

# **ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC.**

## **REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS PRESENTED MAY 28, 2017**

The board of directors continues to meet monthly with most of those meetings being by teleconference. In addition to board meetings there have been several other meetings by members of the board and special committees.

### **Events Being Planned**

#### **2017 Boat Cruise**

Event Date: Friday, August 11 aboard Enterprise 2000. The event is jointly coordinated by SVGAT and Toronto SVG Support Group. The 150 Early bird tickets at \$45.00 have for all intent and purposes been distributed and considered sold. Regular tickets are now available at \$55.00 each. It has been determined by the two joint coordinated parties that part proceeds from the event be donated to the School for Children with Special Needs in SVG. The School accepted the offer and thanked the Association for the gesture.

**2017 Unity Picnic** – Dennis Bucchan, Odel Lewis & Claudius Samuel are our representatives on the Unity Picnic Committee. As well, Sandra Bobb our Secretary is the chair of the Committee. Ongoing meetings are held by the committee and a number of persons from the 3 organizations have been coopted to assist with a number of events for the event. On behalf of the Organizing Committee, the SVGAT is looking for up to 10 persons to volunteer in different areas on the day of the event. Discussion are also held with the St. Lawrence Parks Commission to get them participating in this year's and future years' events so as to take some of the financial burden off the UPC. We look forward to see the results of the discussions.

Unity Picnic Date: **Saturday, July 15** (third Saturday of July) at Brown's Bay Provincial Park, 1000 Islands. Parking tickets are on sale for both areas of parking and can be obtained from a number of persons. Prices for parking are \$37.50 for the primary parking area and a limited number of early bird ones at \$25.00 for the off-site parking area. Those who did not get tickets for the primary area or the early bird ones will pay \$27.50 on the day of the picnic.

The UPC is once again reminding the general public and in particular those attending the picnic to be mindful of the liquor laws of Ontario and to observe them. Also, one of the areas of high cost arising from the event is the amount of garbage that is scattered on the ground. Garbage bags are distributed to vehicles entering the picnic area and if they are used it will minimize the amount of garbage that is spilled.

#### **2017 Unity Picnic Bus Trip**

4 buses are reserved and the pricing remains the same as last year – \$50.00 for adults and \$30.00 for children under 12 years. The tickets are now available. Buses will depart from the usual areas in West Toronto and in Scarborough from 7:00 a.m.

#### **2017 Local GTA Picnic and Walk-a-Thon**

The Board of Directors has agreed to continue with the annual walk-a-thon which would end with a family picnic at Northwood Park off Sheppard between Keele & Arleta on Sunday, June 25 in place of the usual monthly meeting. We are making a strenuous effort to get folks to participate in the walk-a-thon to raise funds to offset the amount due to the children in the Adopt-A-Child Program. Following the walk which begins at 10:00 from the Jane & Finch Mall a family picnic will be held at Northwood Park which is off Sheppard Avenue West at Sentinel. Pledge sheets for the walk-a-thon are now available.

## **2017 Independence Anniversary Celebrations**

St. Vincent and the Grenadines celebrates the anniversary of its Independence from Great Britain which took place on October 27, 1979. As usual, the Association continues to organize a number of activities to mark the occasion here in Toronto. The events include:

Thanksgiving Church Service – Sunday, October 22 at venue to be determined;

Independence Gala – Woodbine Banquet & Convention Centre, Saturday, October 28

Flag Raising Ceremony – Toronto City Hall on

Community Discussions – Sunday, October 29. To be finalized.

## **Adopt-a-Child Program**

It was recognized that funds were not remitted to the children sponsored through the Adopt-a-Child program during 2014 to 2016. The board of directors has been in contact with the principals of the two schools and is aiming to get the outstanding funds to the children prior to the end of the year starting from this month. The term of sponsorship for those children end in 2017. The amount due to this program is \$4,800.00. If there are persons interested in contributing to the outstanding amount please speak to any member of the Board.

## **The Scholarship Program**

The board will continue to support this program and will have the relevant committees in place soon.

## **Website & Insight**

The Association is still without a Public Relations Officer. As such, the website is not being updated as frequently as it should be. An appeal is hereby made to have an individual volunteer to assist the Association with this responsibility. It is also time for us to begin working on the July issue of Insight, our quarterly newsletter. The rising cost of production of the newsletter and reduced income from advertisements have caused the Board to print only a limited number of copies of Insight going forward. Until the board can find advertisers to help bear the costs the newsletter may only be sent through emails. We encourage all persons who wish to have the Insight to provide us with their email addresses so that they can be emailed to them.

## **Membership in the Association**

As of the middle of May the Association has a total of 40 persons as registered members for 2017 with 7 of them being honorary members. The board of directors is looking for ways to provide incentives for persons to be rewarded for being members. Currently, members will get up to a 10% discount off the cost of admission for the following events – Bus Trip ticket to the Unity Picnic and the Independence anniversary banquet. In addition, members and their immediate families who use the services of Arbor Memorial at any of its cemeteries and funeral homes are entitled to the Arbor Alliance Program discount.

## **Council of Caribbean Associations – Canada (CCAC)**

The SVGAT is one of the founding members of this Association which started with 14 organizations of 13 Caribbean countries. Currently there are 10 member groups that participate. At its recently held AGM elections were held for a two-year term with results as follows: President – Gideon Exeter (St. Vincent and Grenadines Ass'n); Vice President - Carlton Abbott (Antigua & Barbuda Ass'n); Secretary – Ingrid King (Alliance of Guyanese Canadian Organizations); Treasurer – Sandra Pierre (Grenada Ass'n Toronto); PRO – Claudia Davis Ewan (Montserrat Ass'n Toronto); Board Member – Egbert Balthazar (Commonwealth of Dominica Ontario Ass'n). The CCAC will again present 2 bursaries of \$1,000.00 each to eligible applicants. The application and other related information for those interested in applying can be found on the CCAC's website, [www.caribbeancouncilcanada.org](http://www.caribbeancouncilcanada.org) and also on the SVGAT's website, [www.vincytoronto.com](http://www.vincytoronto.com). The CCAC is staging a 5km walk-a-thon raise funds for its scholarship program on Saturday, August 19 at Morningside Park in Scarborough. Part of the amount each member association collects from pledges is given back to the participating organization. A date for the annual seniors' event will be announced shortly. The CCAC has accepted an invitation from the organizers of the annual Caribbean Carnival Festival

formerly known as Caribana to participate in this year's parade. Cordel Telfer has volunteered to organize members of the SVG community who wish to participate and represent St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the CCAC's section of the parade. Gideon Exeter, Petra Ryan-Phillips, Erlene Granderson and Cordel Telfer are SVGAT's representatives at the CCAC.

### **Eye Glasses for SVG**

The board of directors has accepted to start a project to collect and ship eye glasses to St. Vincent and the Grenadines for the Lions Club South to match up with persons in need of them. The Club will work closely with opticians on an ongoing basis to help the less fortunate who are in need of them. Persons are asked to bring whatever glasses they have along with the prescription (if possible).

### **Recognizing Our Own, Celebrating Their Success**

From time to time communities around the world show appreciation to persons whose lives and work are of an outstanding nature and therefore recognize those persons for their contribution to making their communities and the world better environments. Each year, the local, provincial and federal governments of Toronto, Ontario and Canada respectively reach out to organizations like ours to recommend persons for special recognition. Also, our Association have recognized persons within our own community for their contributions. The board of directors is inviting members of our community to submit the names of individuals who they feel deserve special recognition for the lives they live and their contributions to society.

### **Correspondence:**

#### **OUTGOING –**

1. Letter to Canadian Airlines regarding meeting to discuss partnership
2. Congratulatory letter to Elma Gabriel on her recognition by the June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Award for Voluntarism 2017 Committee
3. To Consul General Huggins re invitation to Boat Cruise
4. To TD Bank re changing signatories to the bank account
5. To Searchlight Newspaper, SVG re advertisement for boat cruise
6. Communication with various other companies re advertisement for boat cruise
7. School for Children with Special Needs in SVG re proceeds from boat cruise
8. Presidents of SVGAM and SVGAO re proceeds from SVG Unity Picnic

#### **INCOMING**

- a) From CCAC regarding meetings and representation
- b) Response from School for Children with Special Needs in SVG
- c) From Ministry of Citizenship re nomination for government recognitions

*Committee chairs for the respective committees will entertain questions and comments with respect to their particular portfolios.*