



# INSIGHT

**THE ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC. (SVGAT)**

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Quarterly Newsletter

SPRING ISSUE

April 2019

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

### AGM & Elections for 2019

The annual general meeting of the Association was held on Sunday, January 27 at which it reviewed its events and activities for the previous year. President Gideon Exeter who chaired the meeting outlined the accomplishments of the Association during the period of review. He thanked the membership for its support and confidence it placed in him and his team and mentioned the contributions of several board members and partnerships with other organizations like the Bequia Social Organization, the Council of Caribbean Associations – Canada, Toronto SVG Support Group, the Union Island Cultural Association and the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Associations of Ottawa and Montreal that led to a successful year. He thanked them for their support and encouraged them to continue to work with the SVGAT to enhance its image and success.

The chair noted the invaluable financial contributions made by the several advertisers and sponsors help to defray the costs to the quarterly newsletter and the Independence magazine.

### SPECIAL THANKS TO THE NEW ADOPT-A-CHILD SPONSORS

*The Board of Directors is especially grateful to The Toronto SVG Support Group and Mr. & Mrs. Allan John as sponsors and to Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Bucchan, Mr. Andy Lavia, Mr. Kenneth Farrell, Gideon & Nichole Exeter, Jim & Cora Lewis and Mr. Reynold James who have contributed to children in the Association's **Adopt-A-Child Program** for primary school children in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The sponsorships are for five (5) years ending in December 2023.*

In his report the chair mentioned that the SVGAT was celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary over a full year which began in October 2018. The Association was founded on December 1, 1968.

The president noted the continuation of several programs and projects of the SVGAT including the annual scholarship program for students in Toronto, the Adopt-a-Child program that benefits primary school children in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Children's Christmas Party and the Food Hamper Project. The Adopt-a-Child Program was given a boost in 2018 when six (6) new students were given sponsorship for a duration of 5 years. The financial report presented by Treasurer, Dennis Bucchan, showed that the Association ended the year in a positive position while it maintained the programs and projects in 2018.



Following discussions on the board report, the membership elected a president and four directors to complete its nine-person board of directors. Those elected included Gideon Exeter as president, Anthony "Andy" Lavia, Cordel Telfer, Cornetta Mason and Bernadette "Petra" Ryan-Phillips as board members. They joined Prudence Morton, Dennis Bucchan, Erline Granderson and Jim Lewis who were continuing their terms in office.

## Changes in leadership

At the first meeting of the new board, Mr. Cordel was elected as Vice President, a new board position.

In mid March, Mr. Exeter who was in January elected for a third consecutive term as president of the Association resigned suddenly both as president and member of the board of directors.

At the March monthly meeting, Mr. Jim Lewis was elected as president to replace Mr. Exeter. The vacant position on the board of directors was filled by former president Mr. Kenneth Farrell.

## The Current Board of Directors and Officers:

President & Director: Jim Lewis (416-459-2462)  
Vice Pres. & Director: Cordel Telfer (647-717-9731)  
Secretary & Director: Prudence Morton (647-529-3774)  
Dennis Bucchan: Treasurer & Director (905-477-6628)  
Director: Erline Granderson (416-788-5163)  
Director: Petra Ryan Phillips (416-840-7346)  
Director: Cornetta Mason (647-829-8155)  
Director: Anthony "Andy" Lavia (416-258-8763)  
Director: Kenneth Farrell (416-822-3601)

The duration of office for board members are:

Dennis Bucchan – Up to January 2020  
Kenneth Farrell – Up to January 2020  
Erline Granderson – Up to January 2020  
Anthony Lavia – Up to January 2022  
Jim Lewis – Up to January 2021  
Cornetta Mason – Up to January 2020  
Prudence Morton – Up to January 2020  
Petra Ryan-Phillips – Up to January 2020  
Cordel Telfer – Up to January 2021



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Erline – 416-788-5163; Yolanda – 416-919-3433

## Reps on Committees of the Association

**Boat Cruise** – Dennis Bucchan, Gideon Exeter, Erline Granderson, Prudence Morton

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** – Raymond England, Geoff Edwards, Fred Williams, Cheyenne Samuel

**SVG Unity Picnic** – Jim Lewis, Andy Lavia, Gideon Exeter

**Walk-a-Thon & Local Picnic** – Petra Ryan-Phillips (Coordinator)

**Christmas Hamper** – Cornetta Mason, Petra Ryan-Phillips, Gideon Exeter, Kenneth Farrell

**Children's Christmas Party** – Prudence Morton, Cheyenne Samuel

**Disaster Preparedness (Cari-On)** – Prudence Morton, Sandra Bobb, Gideon Exeter

**Independence Planning** – Sandra Bobb, Jim Lewis, Prudence Morton, Dennis Bucchan

**Scholarship** – Cornetta Mason (Chair)

**Council of Caribbean Associations – Canada** – Cordel Telfer, Petra Ryan-Phillips, Gideon Exeter

Join us on Sunday, June 23rd, 2019 for a Walk-A-Thon. Proceeds are for the Scholarship fund. For Donation and/or pledge sheets or further information on the Walk, please contact Petra Ryan-Phillips at 416-840-7346 or by email at [bemuza@hotmail.com](mailto:bemuza@hotmail.com)

The Board of Directors of the SVGAT encourages all interested persons to contribute to its Scholarship Program and the Adopt-A-Child Program to assist our young people with their educational pursuits. Please contact any Board member listed above.

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**DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

Plans are well on the way for the launching of two committees to coordinate Caribbean nationals living in the Greater Toronto Area who are interested in Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response. The idea of getting our communities organized stemmed from one of the pillars of the Council of Caribbean Associations – Canada which has now turned it over to the respective communities to coordinate.

The SVG committee which consists of SVG nationals is called Cari-On which aims to serve as an organization linking professionals, volunteers, and organizations active in all phases of emergency preparedness and management.

A wider committee, Canadian Caribbean Disaster Response Action (CCaDiRA) made up of groups from the various Caribbean countries and working in conjunction with the Caribbean Consular Corp. Both committees are to be officially launched sometime later this year.

Persons interested in joining the SVG Committee are asked to contact Mr. Hayden Jones at 416-889-3293 who chairs this committee.

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**TOWN HALL MEETING**

As part of its series of events to commemorate its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto will be holding a Town Hall Meeting to discuss the past, present and future of the organization.

We encourage you to come out and let your voice be heard. Bring your ideas and suggestions, your skills and talents and help shape the next 50 years of your organization. The meeting will be held on June 30<sup>th</sup> at the Scarborough Civic Centre, Committee Rooms #1 and #2. Refreshments will be served.

*Much has been accomplished...Much more to achieve*

# IMMIGRATION MATTERS

## DID YOU KNOW THAT ...

Contributed by: Sandra Sutherland, RCIC

Persons living in Canada who are being sponsored by their spouse or common-law partner under the spouse or common-law partner in Canada class category may apply for an **open work permit** when they submit their application for permanent resident status. In order to meet the eligibility criteria applicants must have valid temporary resident status and must cohabit and remain cohabiting with their sponsor. Applicants who are out of status will need to wait until their application has been approved in principle before they can apply for an open work permit.

A permanent resident or foreign national who has committed or has been convicted of a crime in or outside Canada may be found to be **criminally inadmissible** to Canada and thus not permitted to enter Canada or, if already in Canada, may not be allowed to remain in Canada.

Despite the legalization of cannabis in Canada permanent residents and foreign nationals who are convicted of a **cannabis-related crime** could be subjected to inadmissibility proceedings and, if found to be inadmissible to Canada, could subsequently face being removed from Canada. Depending on the seriousness of the crime permanent residents may be able to file an appeal and have their removal order stayed pending the outcome of the appeal. Foreign nationals have no appeal rights and, if they reside in Canada, shall be subjected to removal if they have no other recourse of staying in Canada.

**Dependent children** of permanent resident applicants, whether they are included in the application to accompany the permanent resident applicant or not, are also required to undergo medical and criminal checks to ensure that they are not inadmissible to Canada.

Sponsors who apply to sponsor their **dependent child(ren) who also have one or more dependent child(ren) of their own** must meet minimum income requirements based on their family size in addition to other dependants, other valid undertakings, the number of persons being sponsored and their dependent children. This also applies to permanent resident applicants who apply to immigrate to Canada under any category.

If a sponsor attempts to sponsor an **undeclared family member** (i.e.: a spouse, common-law partner or dependent child) he/she risks being found to be

inadmissible for directly or indirectly misrepresenting or withholding material facts. Generally speaking, if a family member was not declared and/or not examined (medical and/or criminal) he/she may not be sponsored in the future. However; if the sponsor attempts to sponsor that family member it is imperative to provide compelling reasons why the person's existence was not disclosed and why the person was not examined. Additionally, compelling humanitarian and compassionate factors should be provided for due consideration.

A foreign national may be sponsored for permanent residence in Canada under the family class category if he/she meets the definition of a **conjugal partner**. A **conjugal partner** is a person who lives outside **Canada, is engaged in a conjugal** (marriage-like) relationship with the sponsor for at least one year, and, could not legally marry or cohabit with the sponsor as a couple because of situation or circumstances that are beyond both of their control (i.e. for religious reasons, sexual orientation, immigration constraints, etc.). This category is intended as an exception category in order to allow the couple to permanently unite in Canada because the extenuating circumstances cannot otherwise be overcome. Generally, a same sex relationship, whereby the couple cannot marry because such marriages are not permitted in the foreign national's country or where there are obstacles that prevent them from cohabiting in a common-law or marriage-like relationship, tends to fall into this category.

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Under special conditions a **citizen or permanent resident of Canada who is alone** in Canada may sponsor a close family member or other blood or adopted relative, with whom he/she has a family relationship, to immigrate to Canada. If the sponsor does not have a spouse, common-law partner, conjugal partner, son, daughter, mother, father, brother, sister, grandfather, grandmother, uncle, aunt, niece or nephew who is a Canadian citizen, a registered Indian or a permanent resident of Canada he/she may sponsor one other relative, regardless of age, provided that he/she does not have any other close relative (i.e.: a spouse, common-law partner, conjugal partner, son, daughter, mother, father, brother, sister, grandfather, grandmother, uncle, aunt, niece or nephew) who could be sponsored instead of the other blood or adoptive relative he/she is seeking to sponsor. The intent of this provision is to give due consideration to close relatives first before making an allowance for other relatives.

**Other relatives** such as adult children, brothers or sisters etc., may be sponsored but the application must be based on humanitarian and compassionate grounds whereby compelling hardship factors could be assessed. These types of applications are fairly complex so it is recommended to enlist the help of a competent authorized immigration representative.

*Sandra Sutherland is an authorized immigration representative and counsel. She specializes strictly in immigration and is licensed with the Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council (ICCRC) as a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC). She can be reached at (416) 431-2829 or via e-mail at [ssutherland@suthernimmigration.com](mailto:ssutherland@suthernimmigration.com).*

## **NEWS FROM SVG**

### **New Health Facilities in Rural Areas of SVG**

[News784 National](#)

The Newly opened Levi Latham Health Complex is expected to result in a significant improvement, in the provision of health care services in the Marriagua Valley. The point was made by Minister of Health, Wellness and the Environment the Hon. Luke Browne as he addressed the official opening ceremony on Tuesday. Minister Browne said the new facility would improve access to a wider range of health care services for residents in the surrounding communities. The Levi Latham health complex is a collaborative effort between the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the European Union.

### **New Buccament Polyclinic**

This was the fourth health facility to be opened in three weeks, as the Ministry of Health continues to roll out its

modernization of the health sector programme. The official opening ceremony took place on April 15. The facility is located in close proximity to the Buccament Bay Secondary School. It is the second polyclinic to be built using funds from the European Union, with the first being the one in Marriagua at the Levi Latham Health Complex.

### **Chateaubelair Smart Hospital Officially Open**

[News784 National](#)

Residents of North Leeward are now better able to access health care services as the Chateaubelair Smart Hospital and Clinic was officially opened on March 26th, 2019. Sister Morander Matthews described the new building as beneficial to patients and clients and health care workers. Matthews referred to the previous facility and noted that “comfort was a big issue, especially, for our pediatric and antenatal and postnatal clients/patients”. DFID Representative, Richard Carter, also in February highlighted that “living in the Caribbean, we know we are hit by natural disasters every year and in the event of an emergency, health care facilities to treat the sick and injured are absolutely critical”.

There is a need for smarter health care facilities around the region, Carter stressed. He noted that St. Vincent and the Grenadines is leading the way under the Smart Hospitals Project across the Caribbean. He said the building has received a complete makeover and has a resilient design that will enable it to function during and in the aftermath of natural disasters.

The completion of the facility is part of the Smart Health Care Facilities in the Caribbean Project-Phase II. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) Department of Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief implemented the project in partnership with the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment. The United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) provided donor support. The aim of the project is not just to provide health and rehabilitative care but to provide a safer, greener health facility to deliver care in times of disasters.

### **CAL Now Offering Non-Stop St Vincent / New York**

Vincentians and visitors travelling in and out of St Vincent now have the option to travel on Wednesdays or Saturdays during the summer period. This as Caribbean Airlines has announced a non-stop Saturday flight from Argyle Airport (AIA) to John F Kennedy in New York. As of April 8th, the flights were available for bookings. Using its Boeing 737-800 aircraft the flight will depart at 7.45 p.m. and arrive in New York at 12.35 a.m.

## **We Remember** by Samantha Lewis

The year 1979 would forever be a memorable year in the history of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. On Good Friday, April 13, La Soufriere, the country's only volcano had its last major eruption. Later in the year, the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Football Federation was formed and on October 27 the country became an independent nation.

Considered an active volcano, Soufriere (French for Sulphur outlet) had erupted just eight years prior with the eruption forming an island in the middle of the crater. The eruption caused major inconvenience and unsettled the lives of Vincentians at home and abroad. Soufriere has also been featured in numerous works of art including movies, paintings and literature. The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association (SVGAT) used the occasion as a chance to give back to its homeland. SVGAT created a relief fund compiling clothing, food and monetary contributions to help provide physical relief and aid to SVG. While the amount of support can never be quantified, the effect the organization had on ensuring that SVG had the aid it needed was crucial. This year the anniversary of the La Soufriere eruption coincides with the 50th anniversary of SVGAT.

Football, known then as "The Game of the People", got new life with the formation of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Football Federation and entrance to FIFA. It was in 1979 that the country realized its highest ranking in world football by being runners up in the Caribbean Football Union.

On October 27, St. Vincent and the Grenadines raised its first flag as it attained its independence from Great Britain.

In the year of the 40th anniversary of the above, let us reflect and celebrate the accomplishments and contributions made by Vincentians at home and in the diaspora to help our country. The contributions made by members of the SVGAT over the years helped to establish the organization and is a legacy that continues on today.

To end, here is a poetic contribution to the legacy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines by "Shake" Keane. Entitled *Soufriere*, the poem captures the essence of what the eruption meant to St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

### **Soufriere** by E. McG. "Shake" Keane

The thing split Good Friday in two  
and that good new morning groaned  
and snapped like breaking an old habit

Within minutes people  
who had always been leaving nowhere  
began arriving nowhere. Entire lives stuffed in pillow-cases  
and used plastic bags  
naked children suddenly transformed  
into citizens

'Ologists with their guilty little instruments  
were already oozing about the mountainsides  
bravely and by radio

(As a prelude to resurrection and brotherly love  
you can't beat ructions and eruptions)

Flies ran away from the scene of the crime  
and crouched like Pilate in the secret places of my hours wash-  
ing their hands

Thirty grains of Sulphur  
panicked off the phone when it rang

Mysterious people ordered other mysterious people  
to go to mysterious places 'immediately'

I wondered about the old woman  
who had walked back to hell  
to wash her Sunday clothes

All the grey-long day  
music credible and incredibly beautiful  
came over the radio  
while the mountain refreshed itself

Someone who lives inside a microphone  
kept things in order

Three children in unspectacular rags  
a single bowl of grey dust between them  
tried to manure the future  
round a young plum tree

The island put a white mask  
over its face coughed cool as history  
and fell in love with itself

A bus traveling heavy  
cramped as Calvary  
thrust its panic into the side of a hovel  
and then the evening's blanket  
sent like some strange gift from abroad  
was rent by lightning.

—E. McG. 'Shake' Keane

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# NEWS FROM SVG

## SVG Using Alternative Sources of Energy

### Richmond Vale Academy Transitioning to 100% Renewable Energy by May

The Richmond Vale Academy (RVA), an academic institution in St. Vincent and the Grenadines that focuses heavily on sustainable living will have 100 per cent of its electricity generated from renewable energy by May this year. The move falls under its 10-year program, the St. Vincent Climate Compliance (CCCP) 2012 to 2021. Established in 2002, RVA is a registered non-profit research and training institution situated in the Chateaubelair area. Since opening, students from this country and from around the world have participated in courses centered on poverty reduction, environmental conservation and climate change awareness. RVA consists of three buildings on a 30-acre property. Two of the buildings are connected to an off-grid solar system with 72 panels and 120 batteries.

Under the programme, the institution has trained hundreds of students to take action as well as inform thousands of people globally on the effects of global warming and climate change. The programme was launched after a drought at the beginning of 2010 followed by Hurricane Tomas later that year and flash floods in 2011. Stina Herberg, director of RVA, says that having the school transition to the use of 100 per cent renewable energy aligns with the energy policy for the government of SVG, which is pivoting to more renewable energy. “The new solar system at RVA will make a big difference as we become a model of a 100 per cent sustainable school in terms of electricity production,” Herberg said. All the energy RVA’s solar voltaic system produces is sold to the national grid for EC\$0.45 per kilowatt-hour. RVA buys electricity from the national grid at EC\$1.02 per kilowatt-hour.

*From Searchlight Newspaper, SVG*

### Equipment For Geothermal Project Now In St Vincent - [News784 National 0](#)

Ships containing around 90, 40ft containers and drilling rigs recently docked at Port Kingstown to offload equipment destined for the Rabacca Geothermal Project. The Geothermal project aims to deliver a 10MW geothermal power plant transforming its energy sector, reducing its dependency on imported diesel, and providing a new sustainable and affordable source of energy based on an indigenous resource.

### Registration of Canadians Aboard

The Government of Canada through its Consular Division is inviting Canadians living in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to register online through the Canadian Government website at <https://travel.gc.ca/register>.

Registration of Canadians Abroad is a free service that allows the Government of Canada to notify Canadians in case of an emergency abroad or a personal emergency in Canada. The service also enables Canadians to receive important information before or during a natural disaster or civil unrest.

Once operational, the plant will supply substantially all of the country’s baseload power and bring renewable energy sources to ~73% of total power generation, well in excess of SVG’s Energy Action Plan target of 60% by 2020.

### Union Island powered solely by solar for 6 hours

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2019 was an historic day on Union Island and for the St Vincent Electricity Services Limited (VINLEC). On that day, the island was powered for approximately six hours solely by solar photovoltaic (PV) and batteries despite less than ideal solar conditions.

The historic event was possible after “the successful completion of the Union Island Solar PV and Battery Energy Storage project last month. Over the past weeks, we have been testing the system to ensure the process runs smoothly. The Company is pleased with the outcome in this noteworthy project,” a post on VINLEC’s Facebook page said.

“In the near future, the solar PV farm will generate electricity on the island during the day to supply to the grid. We anticipate that on sunny days, the solar plant will generate excess electricity than is required to supply the average daytime load on the island. The excess electricity will be stored in batteries. The expected annual energy output is approximately 32 per cent of the electricity generated in Union Island in 2018.”

VINLEC’s CEO, Dr. Thornley Myers said that it is a first for a utility company in the English-speaking Caribbean and if all goes according to plan, a similar solar PV and battery energy storage system on Mayreau should become operational by August. The Solar Panel Plant displaces 320,000 litres of diesel fuel per year at savings of EC\$500,000.

# SAVE THE DATE

## VINCY UNITY PICNIC 2019

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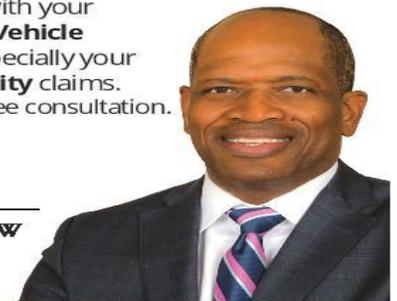
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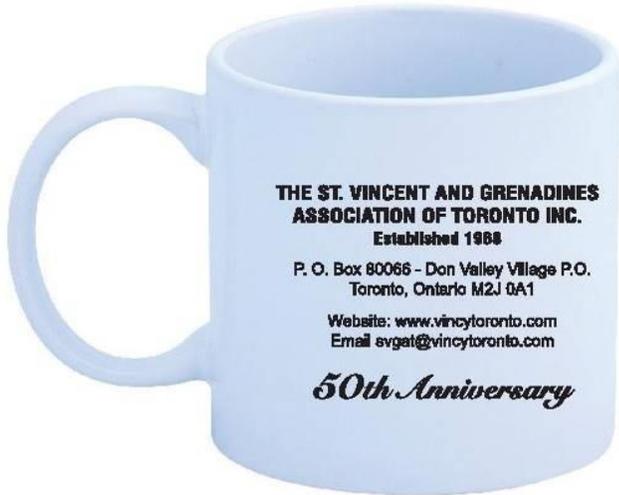
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**COMMEMORATIVE COFFEE MUGS**

With co-sponsorship from Metelsky Professional Law, the Association produced a number of coffee mugs to coincide with the 39<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the independence of St. Vincent and the founding of the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto. Attendees at the Independence Gala received a complimentary mug and a number are available for purchase from the Association for \$5.00 each. Please contact any member of the board of directors if you would like to get one of these mugs.



*The Board of Directors and Members of the St. Vincent and Grenadines of Toronto Inc. herewith offer sincere condolences to all those members of our community who have recently lost their loved ones. We wish you God's blessings during your period of grief.*

*May the souls of the departed Rest in Peace.*

All persons wishing to become members of or to renew their membership in the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto are required to complete an application form that can be found on the back of this publication. Please forward completed form with the required fee to the Secretary.

Join members of the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. as we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Association with a number of activities which started in October 2018 and continues to late in 2019.

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### ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC. TENTATIVE CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2019

Sunday, April 28	50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Church Service	Wesley Chapel Free Methodist Church, 2385 Warden Ave.
Sunday, May 27	Monthly General Meeting	St. Cyprian's Anglican Church, 1080 Finch Ave. E. @ Leslie
Sunday, June 23	Walk A Thon & Local Picnic	Walk starts at Jane/Finch Mall and Picnic at Northwood Park
Sunday, June 30	Town Hall Discussions	Scarborough Civic Centre, Committee Rooms #1 and #2.
Saturday, July 20	Vincy Unity Picnic	Brown's Bay Provincial Park, 1000 Islands, Ontario
Sunday, July 28	Monthly General Meeting	St. Cyprian's Anglican Church, 1080 Finch Ave. E. @ Leslie
Friday, August 9	Toronto Harbour Boat Cruise	Toronto Harbour
Sunday, August 25	Monthly General Meeting	St. Cyprian's Anglican Church, 1080 Finch Ave. E. @ Leslie
Sunday, September 29	Monthly General Meeting	St. Cyprian's Anglican Church, 1080 Finch Ave. E. @ Leslie
Friday, October 25	Flag Raising Ceremony	Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West, Toronto
Sunday, October 27	Independence Church Service	Wesley Chapel Free Methodist Church, 2385 Warden Ave.
Saturday, November 2	Independence & 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniv. Gala	Estate Banquet & Event Centre, 230 Nugget Ave., Scarboro
Sunday, November 24	Monthly General Meeting	St. Cyprian's Anglican Church, 1080 Finch Ave. E. @ Leslie
Sunday, December 15	Children's Christmas Party	Venue To be Determined
Monday, December 23	Christmas Hamper Distribution	Across the GTA
Sunday, January 26	Annual General Meeting	St. Cyprian's Anglican Church, 1080 Finch Ave. E. @ Leslie




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**Membership Registration Form**



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