



INSIGHT

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

P. O. Box 80066 – Don Valley Village P. O., Toronto, ON, M2J 0A1 Email: svgat@vincytoronto.com

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY INFORMED THROUGH COMMUNICATION

Quarterly Newsletter

April 2022

President's Bulletin



To the community of Vincentians living in Canada and our beautiful homeland.

It is with great pleasure that I introduce myself to you as the President of The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto (SVGAT). The

SVGAT is a non-profit Ontario Corporation. We are committed to providing assistance and support to groups and institutions in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Ontario, and wherever the Association deems fit. We are also committed to provide an anti-bias forum for Cultural, Educational, Social and Recreational activities.

As the new president, I am committed to work with Vincentians in the diaspora in establishing the SVGAT's objectives. I bring to this position over 10 years of community leadership and experience. In my current management role with one of Canada's largest Non-profit organizations, it allows me to work in many areas including volunteer management, community and senior initiatives development, settlement, advocacy, community grants and awards. One of my greatest accomplishments is the development of a Cookbook "Hot Pot".

Working in various communities helps me to understand the needs of the people in the Community thus allowing me to offer support, programs and referrals in creative ways. I have worked directly with numerous diverse communities including Russians, Ukrainians Syrians, Persian, Arabic, Asian, Black and Spanish. I am very proud that I am able to give back to my Vincentian community by contributing my time for the development of our organization. My father, Mr. Harold King, would be as proud of me, as I am sure my family, friends and fellow Vincentians are today.

My vision is to have many more Vincentians living in Canada come out and take action in contributing their time in supporting initiatives for our fellow Vincentians in the diaspora and in our beautiful homeland of St.

Vincent and the Grenadines. This is a special invitation for all Vincentians to attend our monthly meeting held on the last Sunday each month via Zoom.

Please visit our website for our regular updates and information on all our events and upcoming activities at www.vincytoronto.com. We look forward to your dedication in supporting the more prominent Vincentian Organization in Toronto. Become a member today and help us build our SVGAT brand.

Daffodil Davis
PRESIDENT

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

This issue of Insight marks the resumption of the SVGAT's quarterly newsletter as the last issue was in April 2020. Since then, a lot has happened. The world was eclipsed in the pandemic called COVID-19 which is still continuing. In April 2021, La Soufriere Volcano erupted and caused catastrophic damage to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, a disaster that the country is still reeling with. The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine is affecting us as we anxiously await its end.

During the past two years our community has lost a number of persons in the diaspora and at home in SVG. Let us please take a pause to reflect on how the events of the past two years have affected us and remember our loved ones who are no longer with us.

COVID-19 has changed the way many things are done including how we get together. Many of us have not seen relatives and close friends due to protocols put in place by the authorities. The changes were not all negative as we discovered ways of interacting without physically meeting. Several virtual platforms have been created and enhanced to allow us to have events including meetings. Many of our nationals both in SVG and elsewhere have lost their livelihood due to both the pandemic and the eruption.

For those of us who have survived, let us give thanks to God for sparing our lives and being able to tell the stories of survival. Several persons have found new opportunities and are making the best and are adjusting quite well.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Association's annual general meeting was held on February 27 during which elections were held for vacancies on the board of directors. According to the practice of the Association, the first election was for that of president. **Ms. Daffodil Davis**, who previously served on the board in 2018, was elected unopposed as the new president. Jim Lewis, who served as president from 2019 up to the meeting date, did not run again for president. Other newly elected directors include Elma Gabriel, Kenneth Farrell and Gideon Exeter while Jim Lewis, Dennis Bucchan and Erlene Granderson continued to serve their remaining times. At the end of the meeting there was one board position to be filled as there were only 8 of the 9 positions filled. At the second meeting of the new board, the directors appointed Zakiya Hutchinson to fill the vacant board position.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

President – Daffodil Davis (647-704-8625)

Vice President – Kenneth Farrell (416-822-3601)

Secretary – Zakiya Hutchinson (647-780-7506)

Treasurer – Dennis Bucchan (416-402-1978)

P. R. O – Gideon Exeter (416-992-4253)

COMMITTEES REPRESENTATIVES

The following sub-committees have been decided:

SVG Unity Picnic Committee Representatives – Jim Lewis, Andy Lavia, Corsita Garraway, Sandra Bobb

Unity Picnic Bus Coordinator – Kenneth Farrell

Adopt-A-Child – Gideon Exeter

Representatives to CCAC – Petra Ryan-Phillips, Erlene Granderson, Gideon Exeter

Independence Activities Planning – Sandra Bobb, Chair

Insight – Gideon Exeter, Cordel Telfer, Andy Lavia

BECOME A MEMBER OF SVGAT

The SVGAT needs an influx of young members in order for it to continue to serve the needs of our community for the next 50 years. Please see application form on the last page of this newsletter or visit www.vincytoronto.com to download and complete the application form. Annual fees are just \$20.00. Your subscription can be emailed to: Treasurer@vincytoronto.com or mailed to the Post Office Box address.

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EDUCATION ASSISTANCE OPPORTUNITIES

SVGAT'S SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The SVGAT's Scholarship Program that began in 2005 makes available bursaries of \$1,000.00 each year to students of SVG heritage to assist them with their tuition expenses. In 2021 three bursaries were allotted to:

- Tristan Brackin, a Police Foundations student at Humber College in Toronto, ON received the SVGAT Scholarship sponsored by KLC/Eastern Caribbean Freight Lines.
- Jayde Williams-Priddie, a second year CÉGEP Health Sciences student at Collège Universel in Gatineau, QC received SVGAT Scholarship sponsored by SVGAT Education Fund
- Hasani Rose, a fourth year Sociology student at York University, Glendon Campus in Toronto, ON received the SVGAT Scholarship sponsored by Grace Foods Canada

Congratulations to last year's recipients as we wish them every good in their studies and pursuit of a higher education that could benefit them in the future.

The SVGAT and indeed our SVG community are grateful to the sponsors, KLC/Eastern Caribbean Freight Lines and Grace Foods Canada for their kind assistance in supporting our young people.

CCAC'S SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto is an affiliate of the Council of Caribbean Associations-Canada (CCAC). This organization also offers bursaries for students of Caribbean parentage so students of Caribbean descent are eligible to apply. Please visit the CCAC's website www.caribbeancouncilcanada.org for further details and how you can apply.

SVG TORONTO CONSULATE OFFICE

Consulate of St. Vincent and the Grenadines
55 Town Centre Court, Suite 403
Toronto, Ontario, M1P 4X4

Mr. Fitzgerald Huggins
Consul General

Tel: (416) 398-4277 Fax: (416) 398-4199
Email: consulategeneral@rogers.com



Ready for the Return of
Vincy Unity Picnic??



SAVE THE DATE!
Saturday, July 16, 2022
Crysler Park
13480 County Road 2 | Morrisburg ON K0C 1X0

New Location for this Year only - Brown's Bay under construction!!

NEW SVG UNITY PICNIC VENUE

The location for this year's picnic has been changed to Chrysler Park, Morrisburg, about 80 km east of the usual location. The change is due to work being done at Brown's Bay Provincial Park that would make the location unusable for a period of time. The organizers look forward to seeing you there despite the longer drive.



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

**Monthly General Meeting
Sunday, April 24, 2022 @ 4:00 p.m.**

Join us on the Zoom Platform.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89703227697?pwd=UjRNdzhqL0NybzNhc2VhMGtCL3dwZz09>

Congratulations to the new Board Members who have offered their services to help in advancing the aims and objectives of the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto. Although other SVG organizations in Toronto are performing some of the work that was previously done by SVGAT, the Association continues to do valuable work in the community. Good wishes and God's guidance to you during your tenure.



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MEMBERSHIP IN THE ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC.

According to the by-laws of the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. (SVAGT) the financial year runs from January 1 to December 31 each year. Your membership fee paid in any year is for the period ending on December 31. The by-laws allow a grace period of 30 days , up to March 31 of the following year where a paid (financial) member of the previous year remains a member in good standing. On April 1, persons who did not renew their membership are deemed non-members and therefore need to reapply for membership in the Association. Persons who wish to be members of the SVGAT are encouraged to complete the application form found on the last page of this newsletter.

Membership dues for 2022 are now due. Your paid dues for 2021 expired on March 31, 2022.



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 lost their loved ones in the recent past. We wish you God's blessings during your period of grief.

May the souls of the departed rest in God's Peace.



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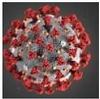
Through **Alliances by Arbor Memorial** members of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community in Ontario who are members of the

**St. Vincent and Grenadines Association
of Toronto Inc.**

that choose to use the services of Arbor Memorial are entitled to special membership discounts at any of Arbor's cemeteries or funeral homes in Ontario.

Through the **Arbor Foundation** the Association also receives funds for its special activities/programs.

For further information, please visit any of the websites listed below, or contact Gideon Exeter (416) 992-4253 or by email gexeter@arbormemorial.com for more details.



COVID-19

We Are Living In Unprecedented And Trying Times. Please Follow The Directions Of The Government And Health Authorities. We Ask That You Keep Listening To The News For Updates Or Check The Public Health Website, www.toronto.ca.





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IMMIGRATION MATTERS:

PURSUING PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS IN CANADA

Contributed by: Sandra Sutherland, RCIC

The most common query I get when someone calls my office for an initial consultation is how permanent resident status may be obtained in Canada. They are either making the query for themselves or on behalf of a family member, relative or friend. Since the eruption of La Soufrière volcano in St. Vincent, queries in relation to Vincentian nationals increased immensely. I thought it necessary to enlighten the community about some of the programs and pathways whereby foreign nationals may apply to obtain permanent resident status in Canada. Some links are provided so that persons may obtain detailed information and eligibility criteria.

Most people are aware of the Sponsorship and the Humanitarian and Compassionate categories for pursuing permanent resident status. Sponsorship entails being sponsored by a spouse, common-law partner, conjugal partner, parent (including an adoptive parent), child, grandchild or other family member of an eligible citizen or permanent resident of Canada. Foreign nationals may also seek to apply for permanent residence via the Express Entry program (<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/express-entry/eligibility.html>), the Provincial Nominee Programs (<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/provincial-nominees/works.html>), or the Business Immigration Program as a Self-employed person (<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/self-employed/eligibility.html>) or under the Start-up Visa Program (<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/start-visa/eligibility.html>).

While many foreign nationals seek to pursue permanent resident status directly via the above paths, few ponder the journey via temporary residency. For those who do not meet the eligibility criteria for any of the permanent resident category or program and are willing to persevere, there are several options to consider. The following are common ways to acquire temporary resident status which, depending on the occupation, may then contribute towards meeting the eligibility criteria of the Express Entry program or a Provincial Nominee Program.

1. **Visitor Visa or Electronic Travel Authorization:** Once in Canada visitors usually have easier opportunities to seek out potential employment. If a valid job offer is obtained, they may be able to apply (usually at a visa office outside Canada) for a work permit. The work permit would then allow them to work and gain valuable Canadian experience. Others may have the opportunity to meet a mate, marry or live in a common-law relationship for at least 12 months and may then be sponsored for permanent resident status under the spouse or common-law partner in Canada class category or the family class category.

2. **Study Permit:** Full-time international students who have completed a degree, diploma or certificate program at an academic, vocational or professional training program (minimum 8 months duration) usually qualify for a post graduate work permit (PGWP) which permits them to legally work in Canada. The pursuit of permanent residency requires a minimum of 1 year full-time Canadian experience. Note: Distance learning does not require a study permit and does not qualify a person for a PGWP.

3. **Work Permit:** Work Permits are usually necessary for most foreign nationals to legally work in Canada. Foreign nationals usually need to have a valid job offer prior as a prerequisite to applying for a work permit. The pursuit of permanent residency requires a minimum of 1 year full-time Canadian experience.

4. **The Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP)** serves as a potential pathway to permanent residency for certain farm workers via the Agri-Food Pilot Program (<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/agri-food-pilot/pr-eligibility.html>), and highly skilled, unique and specialized foreign nationals via the Global Talent Stream category (<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/global-talent/requirements.html#h1>).

The **Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program (AIPP)** allows skilled foreign workers and international students to live and work in one of Canada's four Atlantic provinces (Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island) and subsequently apply for permanent resident status (<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/atlantic-immigration.html>)

A word of caution: Canada.ca is the official government of Canada website where one can find detailed information and eligibility criteria relating to permanent and temporary residency categories and programs. If you happen upon a website that does not have the .ca extension you may find yourself at the mercy of immigration companies vying for gullible clients.

Sandra Sutherland is an authorized immigration representative and counsel. She specializes strictly in immigration and refugee matters and is licensed with the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants (CICC) as a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC). She can be reached at (416) 431-2829 or via e-mail at ssutherland@suthernimmigration.com. View her advertisement under *Suthern Immigration & Paralegal Services Inc.* in this publication for more information.



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SVGAT'S CALENDAR OF EVENTS – 2022	
Board of Directors Meeting	– April 22
Monthly General Meeting	– April 24
SVG Unity Picnic	– July 16
Walk-A-Thon	- To Be Decided
Independence Church Service	- To Be Decided
Independence Gala	- To Be Decided

ANOTHER SHIPMENT FROM TORONTO
During the month of March, CARI-ON SVG Disaster Preparedness shipped another container of goods to the Ministry of Health in St. Vincent. The goods consist of over 65,000 bottles of hand sanitizers and 1,000 COVID-19 Rapid Test Kits which were donated to the SVG Tourism Office in Toronto and a quantity of dialysis equipment donated by Mr. Carlos Charles. This shipment makes it a grand total of 18 containers of a variety of goods shipped since last April and is valued in excess of CDN\$50,000.00.

THE ADOPT-A-CHILD PROGRAM

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto began this program in 2008 by sponsoring needy students in the primary school system in St. Vincent and the Grenadines from about age 6 to help them to build the necessary foundation at the age level in order to function better in future years.

Since then, 3 sets of students have been assisted for five-year periods up to the level where they were completing their primary education. The program began with 2 students, another 2 in 2013 and in 2018, 6 students who are currently in the program.

The current students are at the Buccament Government School, Calliaqua Anglican School, Lauders Primary School, Lowmans Leeward Anglican School, Marriaqua Government School and Bequia Secondary School. The student at BSS is sponsored by an anonymous family that chose him as the family wanted to assist him.

Each year, the Association receives reports from the schools on the progress of the students so there is accountability on how the sponsorship works. Each student receives EC\$100.00 monthly.

Our gratitude goes out to those individuals and organizations who have sponsored these students.

The next cycle of sponsorship begins in 2024 so this is a good time for families and individuals who are interested in being involved in the program to help with the education and development of students in St. Vincent and the Grenadines to begin considering to get involved.

Please reach out to any member of the Board of Directors if you are interested in more details and in sponsoring a student.



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Community Updates

SAVE THE DATE!



Seniors
HEALTH & WELLNESS
SYMPOSIUM

Living with Diabetes

Saturday, April 23, 2022

SVGAT SAYS THANKS

As we reflect on the anniversary of the eruption of La Soufriere in April 2021, the Board of Directors herewith express profound gratitude to the numerous persons from all walks of life who whether solicited or not came out and contributed to the relief efforts.

The SVGAT joined with CARI-ON SVG Disaster Preparedness, the Toronto SVG Support Group and the SVG Consulate General to coordinate the receipt of funds and collection of goods to be shipped to St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Special mention is made of KLC Shipping, Morningside Christian Assembly, Faith Ministry, New Haven Funeral Centre and Twilight Restaurant who opened their doors to receive donations on our behalf.

NEWS FLASH: Ms. Elma Gabriel has resigned as a member of the Board of Directors effective April 4, 2022.

CANADA PENSION PLAN DEATH BENEFIT

The Funeral Service Association of Canada (FSAC) is a group of professionals in the Death Care Industry that stands united in coordinating resources for those communities and survivors who are suffering from the generational trauma and loss, and begin to work through the process of remembering lives lost.

The FSAC points out that the maximum death benefit paid out up to 1998 to families when a Canadian citizen passed was \$3,580.00 but the amount was reduced to \$2,500.00 thereafter. The cost of burials and funerals are constantly increasing and the amount does not cover the cost for a dignified funeral today.

The FSAC recommends us to TAKE ACTION!

The reduced amount predominantly impacts low-income families and seniors.

- The FSAC encourages all Canadians get together to lobby their Members of Federal and Provincial Parliaments;
- Write to your Provincial & Federal Members of Parliament to ask them to have the amount increased.

REFLECTIONS ON THE VOLCANO ERUPTIONS



Following a period of warning, La Soufriere Volcano on the northern portion of St. Vincent erupted on April 9 and continued emitting lava and ashes for a number of days. The eruption caused severe damage to property, agriculture and livestock but there were no direct fatalities. The ashes affected not only St. Vincent and the Grenadines but also caused considerable inconvenience in as far as Barbados where among other things, the Grantley Adams Airport was closed for days.

Within hours of the start of the eruptions the SVG Community in Toronto led by Consul General Fitz Huggins met to discuss how they could assist their

country folks. Two significant developments came out of the first meeting – Mr. Ken Chitolie of KLC Shipping/Eastern Caribbean Freight Lines announced that he would open his warehouse to accept relief supplies to consolidate and ship to St.



Vincent and the Grenadines; and a rather new organization, CARI-ON SVG Disaster Preparedness got the recognition to coordinate the relief efforts. The Toronto SVG Support Group and the SVGAT were instrumental in coordinating the several centres where goods were collected and sorted. Within a month of coordinating the relief efforts, fourteen 40-foot containers of supplies were shipped from KLC's warehouse to NEMO.

On behalf of the Consulate General and the coordinating organizations we say thanks to all who in one way or the other contributed their time and resources to help the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This disaster occurred during a time when the world was reeling with the effects of COVID-19.

The organizations are still continuing to support efforts in St. Vincent and the Grenadines during the recovery process as the country deals with trying to getting back to normal.

EVENTS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

During the past two years some of our fundraising events such as the Vincy Unity Picnic, Children's Christmas Party, Toronto Harbour Boat Cruise and the Independence Anniversary Dinner were cancelled due to the pandemic. As the country and especially Ontario opens up, we are looking forward to the return of some of these events including the Walk-A-Thon.

We ask for your financial contributions to support the work of the Association. You can Etransfer your contributions to: Treasurer@vincytoronto.com. Your membership fee can also be paid by this method.

Thank You.

