INSIGHT

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. (SVGAT)

P. O. Box 80066 – Don Valley Village P. O., Toronto, ON, M2J 0A1

svgat@vincytoronto.com www.vincytoronto.com

Quarterly Newsletter FALL ISSUE OCTOBER 2026

PRESIDENT'S GREETINGS



Dear members, friends, and supporters of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto (SVGAT)

Fall has arrived, bringing a natural moment to reflect on all that our community accomplished together this summer, a season rich with culture, connection, and Vincy pride. That spirit was evident from the outset with our annual **Vincy Unity Picnic on July 18th**. Despite the rain, our community spirit prevailed, and your support made the day a memorable one. Thank you to the committee, volunteers, sponsors, vendors, and performers who contributed to its success.

The momentum continued on August 7th, when we set sail on Lake Ontario for our **Splash of Blue Boat Cruise** hosted as a joint initiative with the Toronto SVG Support Group (TTSVGSG). This lively evening cruise featured excellent food, music, and entertainment provided by Lpank.

This energy carried into September with our **Walkathon**, held from September 12th through October 3rd. Four teams - Windward, Leeward, Central, and Grenadines - participated in support of education. The event reflected the strength of friendly competition, along with the generous support of our sponsors and volunteers, reaffirming that when SVGAT comes together, we do so with purpose.

Looking ahead, October holds special significance as we celebrate the **47th anniversary of St. Vincent and the Grenadines' independence**. Festivities include our **Independence Church Service on October 18th** at the Church of St. Stephen, the **Flag Raising at Toronto City Hall**, and the **Lighting of Niagara Falls** in our national colours.

The festivities will close with our **Independence Luncheon on November 1st**. Under the theme "Hand in Hand, Uplifting Our Nation," we invite you to celebrate our heritage and share an afternoon with your community.

Our younger members will also have something special to look forward to, with the **Kids' Christmas Party on December 12th** bringing the year to a joyful close.

To our members, volunteers, partners, sponsors, and wider community: thank you. Your continued support remains a driving force behind SVGAT's growth and resilience. Our ongoing commitment has sustained our organization and brought us closer together. As we celebrate our independence and look to the future, let us build on this momentum by standing and serving together as one community.

With warm regards,
Terrance Gordon
President
The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association
of Toronto, Inc.

CORPORATION NEWS

CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

President: Terrance Gordon
Vice President: Petraun McIntosh
president@vincytoronto.com

Secretary: Kelly-Ann Lewis
secretary@vincytoronto.com

Treasurer: Delcina Jardine-Reckley
treasurer@vincytoronto.com

Public Relations Officer: Cheryl Hazell
pro@vincytoronto.com

Assistant Secretary: Kayann Saunders
Assistant Treasurer: Cordel Telfer
Director: Erline Granderson
Director: June Ellis

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION MEETING
Last Sunday of April, June, August, October

NEXT GENERAL MEMBERS MEETING
Sunday, November 29, 2026

All members are encouraged to attend, whether in person or via Zoom, as the Board shares updates on committee activities and priorities for the remainder of the year. Details on time and location (or Zoom link) will be circulated closer to the date.

COMMITTEES

Public Relations Committee
Cheryl Hazell, Gideon Exeter

Fundraising Committee
Delcina Jardine-Reckley - Chair

Education/Scholarship Committee
Terrance Gordon

Council of Caribbean Associations - Canada
June Ellis
Bernadette Petra Ryan-Phillips
Erline Granderson

Vincy Unity Picnic Committee
Terrance Gordon, Jim Lewis, Cordel Telfer, Andrew McIntosh

Adopt a Child Coordinator
Erline Granderson

Independence Planning Committee Chair
Kafita Gonsalves

Christmas Hamper and Kids Christmas Party Committee
Erline Granderson, Kayann Saunders, Petra Ryan Phillips, Kenneth Farrell

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



May the souls of the departed Rest in Eternal Peace.

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto, Inc.
S.V.G.A.T.

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
47th INDEPENDENCE
SAVE THE DATES
Calendar

SUNDAY OCTOBER 18 2026

CHURCH SERVICE
- 4:00 PM
- **The Church of St Stephens**
  2259 Jane St,
  North York, ON M3M 1A6

SATURDAY OCTOBER 24 2026

BUS RIDE TO NIAGARA
LIGHTING OF THE FALLS
- 6:00 PM Departure
- Niagara Falls, ON

MONDAY OCTOBER 26 2026

FLAG RAISING CEREMONY
- 12:00 NOON
- **Toronto City Hall**
  100 Queen St W,
  Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 1 2026

47th INDEPENDENCE LUNCHEON
- 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM
- **Parkview Manor**
  55 Barber Greene Rd,
  North York, ON

In Memory of a Servant Leader: Fred Williams, SVGAT President, 1985

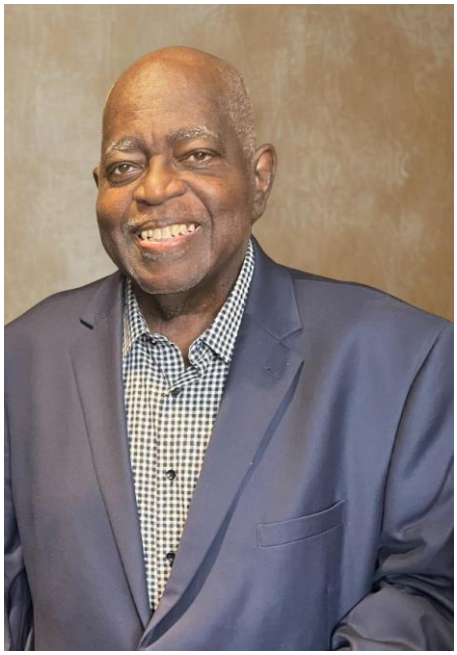
[EXCERPT]

On the last Sunday of January 1985, members of the Vincentian community gathered for the Annual General Meeting of the St. Vincent & The Grenadines Association of Toronto, Inc. (SVGAT), hoping for new leadership. Fred Williams, sitting at the back in quiet conversation, was nominated for President, and nominations were closed before he could decline. He had not campaigned, but he won the vote.

Fred named 1985 a year of Reform and Momentum. Reform meant improving the Association's administration, operations and structure, with member inclusion a must. Momentum meant growth and raising the bar. His unprepared acceptance speech promised greater recognition for SVGAT, a growing membership, more member value and broad community support, grounded in good governance. A true servant leader, he mentored his team, gave every Executive member a seat, a voice and a vote, and put the team's needs first.

The 1985 Executive: Fred Williams, President; Larry Daisley, Vice President; Eddie Bernard, Executive Secretary; Hedda Charles, General Secretary; Gideon Exeter, Treasurer; Caroline Layne, Assistant Treasurer; Calvert Allick, PRO; Sam Warner, Past President; Committee Members Veronica Williams, Barbara Toney, Glendon Carmichael and Selwyn Lewis. Three resignations during the year were filled immediately, bringing in Monty Providence as Vice President, with Claudius Samuel and Ken Farrell as Committee Members. A full slate was kept all year.

Fred called it one of SVGAT's strongest executives. Seven of its members later became President, which he saw as reform creating a pathway for leadership succession. His action plan spanned business connections, training, sports and recreation, membership, fundraising, building, and relief efforts. Unfinished projects were documented and passed to the next administration, and his 1985 Annual Report became a model to follow.



December 19, 1948 - January 31, 2026

Highlights of the year:
Visible support at community and sporting events, including Mother's and Father's Day, a "Life Saver" first aid course, a children's trip to Pioneer Village, netball, cricket and soccer
Strong relationships with the business community, other SVG and Caribbean groups, the SVG Consulate, and local and provincial government

March 27: Town Hall with Prime Minister James F. Mitchell of SVG, chaired by Fred

November 2: Sixth Independence Anniversary celebration, attended by Ontario Lieutenant Governor Lincoln Alexander and SVG ministerial representative Jerry Scott, Fred's boyhood friend and schoolmate

An air excursion (BWIA/LIAT) to SVG and a donation to St. Benedict's Day Nursery in Georgetown

Fred served the Association in various roles for years after his presidency. His servant leadership became a blueprint for SVGAT, and he lived to see the fruits of his labour.


The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc.
S.V.G.A.T.
The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc.
The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc.
PRESENTS
KIDS
CHRISTMAS
PARTY
Open to Kids Ages 1 – 13
Saturday, December 12th
3:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Church of St. Stephen Downsview
2259 Jane St, North York, ON M3M 1A6
MUST REGISTER TO ATTEND
Erline 416-788-5163
Kayann 647-618-7890

IMMIGRATION MATTERS

STUDYING IN CANADA AS A FOREIGN NATIONAL

Contributed by: Sandra Sutherland, RCIC-IRB

STUDY PERMITS

Foreign nationals (FNs) seeking to pursue their studies in Canada should first check to see if they require a study permit. The policies and procedures regarding studying in Canada vary depending on the FNs immigration status, place of residency, level of studies, duration of the study program, and the age of the FN. If the program's duration is 6 months or less and the FN has valid visitor status in Canada, a study permit may not be required. Although a study permit may not be required, obtaining one could be beneficial for other purposes (i.e: to enable access to social services - depending on the province or territory where the student is studying, and to enable secondary school students to obtain a co-op work permit).

International students seeking to study in Canada should generally obtain a study permit. They would need to have a letter of acceptance from a designated learning institution (DLI) as well as a provincial or territorial attestation letter (PAL or TAL) from the DLI prior to applying for a study permit. They would also need to convince immigration officials of their intent to return to their country at the end of their studies and demonstrate that they have sufficient funds to cover tuition, living expenses, and return airfare to their country. The standard medical and criminal security checks are applicable.

ABILITY TO WORK WHILE STUDYING & AFTER GRADUATION

Working while studying or after graduation normally entails having a work permit; however, full-time students who are enrolled in a post-secondary program and have a social insurance number (SIN) may work on campus without a work permit. Students working remotely for an employer outside Canada also do not need a work permit.

In order to work off campus without a work permit, the study permit should state a condition that the FN is allowed to work off campus. Students must have started their full-time studies in a post-secondary program at a DLI in a program of at least 6 months which leads to a certificate, diploma or degree. It is also mandatory that they have a social insurance number (SIN). International students may also work without a work permit if they are enrolled in a co-op or internship program at the post-secondary level.

Certain graduates could apply for a post-graduation work permit (PGWP), which would allow them to work and gain valuable experience that could help them to subsequently qualify for permanent residence.

STUDYING AS A MINOR

The criteria for foreign nationals who are minor children are different from the common international student. In some situations, school fees may apply even if the minor will be attending a public school.

A study permit **is required** if the minor:

- Is in Canada or will be coming to Canada with a parent who has or will have temporary resident status as a visitor
- Is coming to Canada accompanied by a parent who holds a valid study or work permit
- Is coming to Canada without the accompaniment of a parent

IMMIGRATION MATTERS

STUDYING IN CANADA AS A FOREIGN NATIONAL

Contributed by: Sandra Sutherland, RCIC-IRB

A study permit **is not required** if:

- The minor is accompanied or will be accompanied by a parent who is a citizen or permanent resident of Canada.
- The minor or his/her parent is a refugee or a refugee claimant
- The minor is in Canada with a parent who has a study or work permit
- The minor is in Canada without either parent
- The minor is in Canada without status

Undocumented minor children sometimes face challenges in getting registered for school. Years ago, a "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" rule was supposedly adopted in Ontario to safeguard against the reporting or sharing of information re students' undocumented status. School boards were not expected to ask about children's immigration status nor deny them access to education based on their parents' undocumented status in Canada. Section 49.1 of the Ontario Education Act states "A person who is otherwise entitled to be admitted to a school and who is less than eighteen years of age shall not be refused admission because the person or the person's parent or guardian is unlawfully in Canada."

To obtain more detailed information about any of these topics visit the government of Canada's website at https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada.html.

Sandra Sutherland is a licensed immigration representative and counsel with the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants (CICC) who can represent clients at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), CBSA, and at all divisions of the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB). She practices in many immigration and citizenship matters and has a specialized designation to represent clients with their immigration appeals, refugee claims, refugee appeals, detention reviews and admissibility hearings. She is passionate about helping people from all walks of life. 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.





MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Meet **Kelly-Ann Lewis**, our Board Secretary!

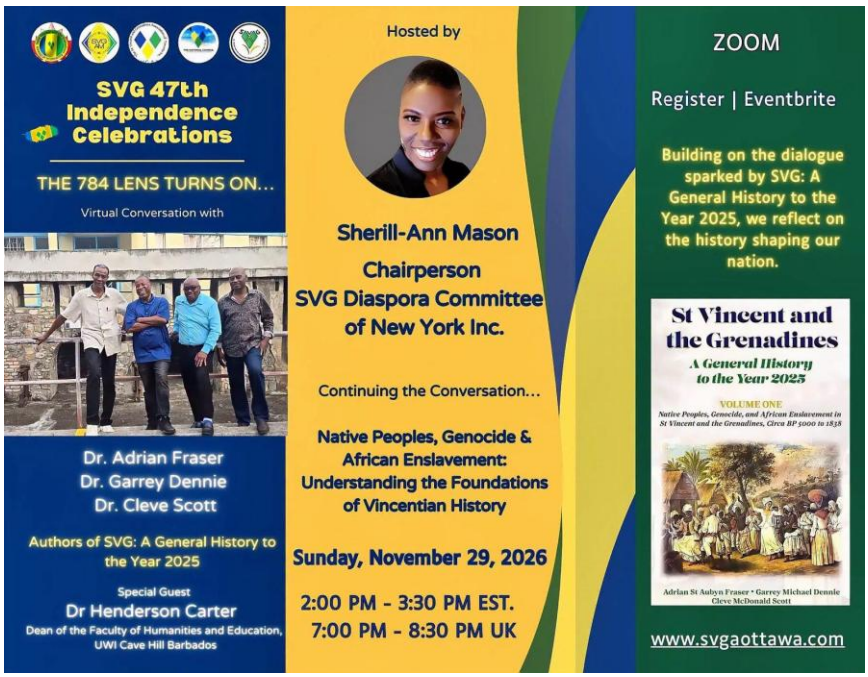
By day, Kelly-Ann serves as a Foreign Investment Officer with the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, right here in Toronto.

Off duty, she is an avid reader with five bookshelves holding some 440 books, a collector of about 30 teacups, and an unapologetic Christmas enthusiast.

Her wish for SVGAT's future: "That we keep growing hand in hand, a community where every Vincentian who lands in Toronto finds a home, and our young people carry our culture proudly into the future."



CULTURAL DIALOGUE



SVG & THE CARIBBEAN

PM FRIDAY'S UN DEBUT: Prime Minister Godwin Friday used his first UN General Assembly address to call for sweeping reforms of the global system. He also told a UN meeting on sea-level rise that investing in resilience now costs less than paying for loss later.

The Prime Minister also met Honduran President Nasry Asfura on the sidelines of the UN meetings, where their shared Garifuna heritage was in focus. St. Vincent and the Grenadines now has new friends in Togo as diplomatic relations with the west African country were established.

INDEPENDENCE IN THE REGION

Independence season is fast approaching. The region is gearing up for a run of celebrations. St. Vincent and the Grenadines marks its Independence Day on October 27, and Antigua and Barbuda (November 1) and Dominica (November 3) follow within days. Barbados caps the season on November 30, a milestone 60th anniversary of independence. Flags out, Caribbean.

MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS REWARDS
Arbor Memorial Inc.
is a proud sponsor of the
Council of Caribbean Associations-Canada
(CCAC) and its member affiliates including
St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. (SVGAT)

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. who choose to use the services of Arbor Memorial at any of its cemeteries or funeral homes are entitled to special discounts off products and services.

Through **Arbor Foundation**, the CCAC and its affiliates receive special funding for its programs and activities.
For further information, please visit any of the websites listed below or contact Gideon Exeter at 416-992-4253 or by email at gexeter@arbormemorial.com

Arbor Memorial · Alliances by Arbor Memorial · PlanToday.ca by Arbor Memorial

CARICOM ENHANCED COOPERATION IN FREE MOVEMENT

The pilot program has completed a successful first year, allowing indefinite movement and work without permits between Barbados, Belize, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Dominica. Regional immigration data shows Barbados welcomed 1,696 inbound citizens, Belize accepted 146 CARICOM nationals, and 14 Belizean citizens relocated to partner islands. At the 50th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government in February 2026 and subsequent mid-year updates, leaders reviewed the phased rollout and expanded categories for wider skilled nationals (such as aviation personnel) while encouraging other CARICOM member states to join the enhanced cooperation framework as domestic readiness allows.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The Botanic Gardens began small. The gardens were commissioned in 1765 on six acres, started with around 52 plant species, and were never funded by the British. Most people know the gardens are old, but few know how modest the start was.

No UNESCO World Heritage Site. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has no UNESCO World Heritage Site, despite its Botanic Gardens, volcano and fort.

Vincentians celebrate breadfruit every August. The country holds an annual Breadfruit Festival each year. It's a fitting tribute to a plant whose story on the island goes back to the 1790s.

CHRISTMAS with THE BOWMANS & Friends



Karaoke Competition

Robyn & Riley-Rose



Nine Morning Activities

A Caribbean Christmas Vibe

AN ALL INCLUSIVE AFFAIR

NOVEMBER 14TH, 2026
DOOR OPENS 6PM | DINNER 7-8:30PM

AN EVENING OF DINNER, KARAOKE, SHOW AND DANCE



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513 WESTNEY RD S. AJAX, ONTARIO
(REAR ENTRANCE)

HAIROUNA HERITAGE

Exploring Vincentian History & Genealogy

THE ONES WHO LEFT

How Generations of Caribbean People Crossed the Water in the Early 1900s and Changed the Places They Landed

At the turn of the 20th century, life in much of the British Caribbean was shaped by a hard fact: the sugar economy was shrinking, wages were low, and land was scarce. For many families, the question wasn't whether someone would leave. It was who would go first.



For St. Vincent, the push had another cause. On May 7, 1902, La Soufrière erupted, killing well over a thousand people and devastating the northern part of the island. The disaster uprooted families and farmland at the same moment that opportunities abroad were opening. Vincentians left for Trinidad, Panama, and America, building a pattern of departure that would continue for decades.

Ellis Island had been processing arrivals since 1892, and Caribbean immigrants came through it in growing numbers. Many settled in Harlem. By around 1930, roughly a quarter of Harlem's Black residents were foreign-born, most of them from the West Indies. They opened businesses, formed benevolent societies, and filled the pulpits, printing presses and political meeting halls.

Vincentians have lived in the New York area since the 1900s, many after working on the Panama Canal. By 2011, there were 21, 552 Vincentian-born residents in America with New York City having the largest concentration of them.

In 1917 the US introduced a literacy test, and the Immigration Act of 1924 sharply limited arrivals from British colonies. Later, the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act capped each colony at just 100 visas a year. The next major opening didn't come until 1965.

Today the impact continues to be felt: in the barrels packed with food and gifts, the money orders sent home, the Caribbean festivals on New York streets and parks, and the family trees that stretch across oceans. The ones who left carried sweet SVG in their hearts and memories wherever they went.

CARIBBEAN AIRLINES FLIGHTS TO AIA

Caribbean Airlines

The only direct flights that Caribbean Airlines provides from North America to Argyle International Airport, SVG are from New York on Wednesdays and Saturdays. All other flights to AIA go through the airline's hub in Port of Spain.

For information on Caribbean Airlines flights to SVG, please check the airline's website, www.caribbean-airlines.com or your travel agent.

ADOPT-A-CHILD PROGRAM

The SVGAT's **Adopt-A-Child Program** has a total number of 13 sponsored students in the 2025 – 2029 cycle across primary schools in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The program selects recipients based on need, not academic performance. A key expectation for each student is punctual and regular attendance, giving them the best opportunity to benefit from the education and guidance offered.

Since its inception in 2008, schools have been selected in five-year sponsorship cycles. The current cycle, 2025–2029, has the highest number of sponsored students to date. Unless a sponsor specifies a particular student or school, primary schools are chosen via a lottery system

Current participating schools and students in the program are:

- **Barrouallie Anglican** – Alexis Solomon
- **Belmont Government** – Kaylee Baptiste
- **Bequia Anglican** – Markel Harris
- **Evesham Methodist** – Akira Browne
- **Fitz Hughes Government** – Koice Castello
- **Georgetown Government** – Keranique Ryan
- **Kingstown Anglican** – Imaga Toney
- **Layou Government** – Micah Charters
- **Lowmans Windward Anglican** – Olivia Phillips
- **Mary Hutchinson Primary** - Kaidon Laborde
- **Owia Government** – Deron Medica
- **Rose Hall Government** – Zanner Williams
- **School for Children with Special Needs** - **Kingstown** – Glendeen Douglas

All publicly funded primary schools are entered into the draw according to their district. Once selected, a school is not eligible for the next cycle until all 66 public primary schools have had an opportunity. Please note that private schools are excluded from the draw.

When a school is selected, its principal is contacted and asked to form a school/community-based committee. This committee identifies a suitable student based on need, oversees the administration of monthly support, and reports back to the SVGAT on the student's progress throughout the sponsorship period.

The cost to sponsor a student for five years is CAD $720.00 annually, totaling CAD $3,600.00. Those interested in sponsoring a student are encouraged to contact the Association's executive by email at **secretary@vincytoronto.com**.

The board of directors and members of the Association herewith takes the opportunity to once again sincerely thank all sponsors for helping the selected students to prepare for their future.

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Tel: 416-431-2829 Fax 416-431-4036
ssutherland@suthernimmigration.com



Metelsky Law is a boutique law firm serving the Greater Toronto Area and specializes in criminal law, family law, wills and estate administration. We continue to provide community service by providing legal services to various community organizations and mentor high school, college and university students interested in pursuing a career in law. We understand that corporate involvement isn't just an activity: we are genuinely committed to improving our communities, investing our time and expertise to facilitate those improvements throughout the year.

Rhonda Metelsky
B.A (Hons) LL.B

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REPRESENTATIVES OF SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
OVERSEAS DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS AND CONSULATES

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Phone: 416-398-4277
Fax: 416-398-4199
Email: consulategeneral@rogers.com

SVG CONSULATE GENERAL - NEW YORK/USA
CONSUL GENERAL: Mr. Roland Matthews
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New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.
Telephone: 1 212 687 4490/4491/4494
Fax: 1 212 949 5946
Email: vinsof@svgconsulateny.org; mail784@svgconsulateny.org

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AMBASSADOR: H.E. Ms. Lou-Anne Gilchrist
MINISTER CONSELLOR: Mr. Omari Williams
COUNSELLOR: Ms. Akeila Samuel
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1629 K Street NW., Suite 704, Washington, DC, 20006, U.S.A.
Telephone: 01 202 364 6730
Fax: 01 202 364 6736
Email: mail@embsvg.com

SVG PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS - NEW YORK
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DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE: H.E. Nedra Miguel
MINISTER COUNSELLOR: Ms. Janeel Drayton
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685 Third Avenue, Suite 1108, New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.
Telephone: 01 212 599 0950/0955
Fax: 01-212 599 1020
Email: svgunmission@gmail.com

SVG EMBASSY – CUBA
Embajada de San Vicente y las Granadinas
AMBASSADOR: H.E. Ms. Angella Ideisha Jackson
Address: Centro de Negocios Miramar, Edificio Jerusaleń, Oficina 403, 4to Piso
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Telephone: 011 537 206 9783
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Email: embsvghav@gmail.com

REPRESENTATIVES OF SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
OVERSEAS DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS AND CONSULATES

SVG EMBASSY –VENEZUELA
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COUNSELLOR: Maala Theobalds
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Altamira, Municipio Chacao, Caracas
Telephone: 011 58 212 263 8223 (Office)/ 2636025;
Fax: 011 58 212 263 0857
Email: embasvgven@gmail.com

SVG EMBASSY – REPUBLIC OF CHINA (TAIWAN)
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MINISTER COUNSELLOR: Mr. Elroy Wilson
COUNSELLOR: Ms. Shebby-Ann Dennie
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Taipei 11157
Telephone: 886 228 771 609
Residence: 886 228 771 619
Fax: 886 228 771 611
Email: svgembassy.tw@gmail.com

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MINISTER COUNSELLOR: Ms. Jinelle Adams
COUNSELLOR: Ms. Caroline De Freitas
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10 Kensington Court, London W8 5DL, ENGLAND
Telephone: 0 44 207 565 2874/2884/2885
Fax: 0 44 207 937 6040/207 937 7397
Email: office@svghighcom.co.uk

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16 Glen Road, Comber, Co. Down, BT23 5EL, Northern Ireland, UNITED KINGDOM
Telephone: 0 44 28 9187 4697
Fax: 0 44 28 9187 0792
Email: Office: cg@svgconsulate.vc
Direct: stangecg@svgconsulate.vc
Website: www.svgconsulate.vc



The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc.
Membership Registration Form



NAME: _____

ADDRESS: (Street) _____

(City/Town) _____ (Province): _____ (Postal Code): _____

TELEPHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

NEW MEMBER OR RENEWAL: ($20:00 annual subscription); (Student: $10.00) When application is approved, please e-transfer the amount to **treasurer@vincytoronto.com** or make cheque payable to THE ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC. and mail payment to:

THE ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC.
P. O. Box 80066 – Don Valley Village P. O., Toronto, ON, M2J 0A1