

## 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

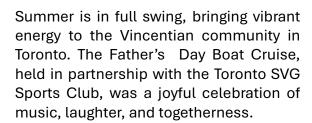
**Quarterly Newsletter** 

**SUMMER ISSUE** 

**JULY 2025** 

## PRESIDENT'S GREETINGS

Dear Members and Friends of SVGAT,



At our June General Meeting, we had an inspiring discussion on diaspora investment in St. Vincent and the Grenadines by Vincentians in the diaspora. The strong turnout and reflect engagement our shared commitment to building connections and making a meaningful impact back home.

Don't forget to join us for the Splash of Blue Boat Cruise on Friday, August 8th, in partnership with the Toronto SVG Support Group. Tickets are on sale now—don't miss out!

And of course, the highlight of the summer, the Vincy Unity Picnic at Crysler Park in Morrisburg is shaping up to be a spectacular event, featuring performances by Fya Empress, Bomani, Black Ebou, and Yellows set to energize the stage and ignite our Vincy pride.



The SVGAT Scholarship Application is now open—let's continue supporting our youth through education. The Annual Walkathon is coming up this September, and every dollar raised goes directly to the scholarship fund — let's walk with purpose!

Looking ahead to the fall, we are excited to celebrate Independence in grand style, but with a major shift this year. Instead of a Saturday evening gala, we will host a more inclusive and family-friendly Independence Luncheon Sunday, October 19th at Parkview Manor. We believe this new format will allow more families — including elders and young children — to participate and celebrate this significant milestone in the history of our beloved St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

As always, thank you for your continued support, your passion, and your commitment to the community. Together, we continue to build a stronger, more connected Vincentian diaspora.

Warmest regards,

Cordel Telfer, President St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc.

## **CORPORATION NEWS**

## CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

President: Cordel Telfer president@vincytoronto.com

Vice President: Terrance Gordon vice-president@vincytoronto.com

Treasurer: Delcina Jardine-Reckley treasurer@vincytoronto.com

Public Relations officer: Cheryl Hazell

pro@vincytoronto.com

Assistant Secretary: Petraun McIntosh

Assistant Treasurer: June Ellis Director: Erline Granderson Director: Kenneth Farrell

The Corporation continues to hold meetings and other presentations virtually on Zoom unless otherwise indicated.

#### GENERAL MEMBERS MEETINGS

Sunday, July 27

Sunday, Sept. 28

Sunday, Nov. 30

#### COMMITTEES

**Public Relations Committee** 

Cheryl Hazell, Gideon Exeter

**Fundraising Committee** 

Delcina Jardine-Reckley - Chair

**Education/Scholarship Committee** 

Terrance Gordon

**Council of Caribbean Associations of** 

Canada

Bernadette Petra Ryan-Phillips,

Erline Granderson

**Vincy Unity Picnic Committee** 

Jim Lewis, Cordel Telfer, Sherma Joe

**Adopt a Child Coordinator** 

Erline Granderson

Independence Gala Chair

Sandra Bobb

**Christmas Hamper Committee** 

Erline Granderson

**COMMUNITY DISCUSSION MEETING** 

Last Sunday of April, June, August, October



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. We wish you God's blessings during your period of grief.

May the souls of the departed Rest In Eternal Teace.



## AIR CANADA FLIGHT SCHEDULE:

- MARCH APRIL 2025
   WEDNESDAYS, THURSDAYS & FRIDAYS
- MAY 7 OCT 22, 2025 WEDNESDAYS
  - FROM OCT 27, 2025
    MONDAYS & FRIDAYS

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## **COMMUNITY NEWS**

#### REPORT ON FATHER'S DAY BOAT CRUISE

On Sunday, June 15, we could not have asked for better weather for a boat cruise around the Toronto harbour. Under bright, abundant sunshine, patrons enjoyed a scenic cruise through areas of the harbourfront many had never seen before.

The Father's Day Boat Cruise was organized in response to requests for more events that cater to individuals including seniors who prefer daytime outings. The event concluded by 5:00 p.m., allowing attendees to return home safely in daylight after enjoying an afternoon of picturesque views, lively entertainment, and the chance to connect and build new friendships.

Unlike in 2024, when cool and windy conditions kept patrons inside the vessel, this year's favourable weather encouraged many to spend more time on the deck taking in the fresh air and beautiful views.

Unfortunately, for the second consecutive year, attendance was significantly lower than anticipated, resulting in a financial loss for the event.

The Board of Directors of the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto (SVGAT) sincerely thanks the SVG Sports Club – Toronto for partnering with us. We are also grateful to all those who supported the event.

#### 2025 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday, July 19 - Vincy Unity Picnic Crysler Park
Friday, Aug. 8 - Toronto Harbour Boat Cruise
September - Walkathon
October 19- independence Luncheon
December - Christmas Hamper, Children's Party,
Membership Appreciation!



### 2025 ANNUAL VINCY BOAT CRUISE

"...a Splash of Blue"

Aboard the Enterprise 2000

Friday August 8, 2025 @ 7:00 PM

Admission: Early Bird: \$60 up to July 21

Regular \$70

**Includes Dinner and Dessert** 

Coordinated by The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto and the Toronto SVG Support Group

Tickets Available from: Cordel: 647-717-9731; Gideon: 416-992-4253; Stuart: 416-707-0125; Dougal: 416-735-7046; Grafton: 647-405-9209; Erline: 416-788-5163

#### 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



the Caribbean you're looking for

### St. Vincent and the Grenadines Tourism Office

416-630-9292

svgta.ca@discoversvg.com

 403 - 55 Town Centre Court Scarborough, ON M1P 4X4

## SUCCESSFUL FOOD DISTRIBUTION EVENT SUPPORTS HUNDREDS IN TORONTO

On Saturday, July 5, three Vincentian organizations in Toronto—SVGAT, the Toronto SVG Support Group, and CARI-ON SVG Disaster Preparedness—collaborated to host a Food Distribution Event at Rosewood Church of the Nazarene in Scarborough. The initiative provided free groceries to around 350 individuals and families.

The day began at 7:00 a.m. as volunteers unloaded a truck from Harvest Hands, filled with food donated by farmers from Southern Ontario. Volunteers sorted and packed the food for distribution by noon.

The event stood out for its unity and community spirit, with volunteers from the SVG groups and Rosewood Church working together to support those in need.

Support came from Durham Community Action Group and Harvest Hands, who helped secure quality food donations.

Thank you to all who contributed, volunteered, or helped spread the word—your efforts made a real difference.











### **UPDATE ON THE ADOPT-A-CHILD PROGRAM**

Just over a month ago, in May, another student was added to the SVGAT's **Adopt-A-Child Program**, bringing the total number of sponsored students in the 2025 – 2029 cycle to 13 across primary schools in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The newest addition is **Micah Charters**, a student from the Layou Government School, sponsored by an anonymous family for a five-year term ending in 2029, as long as the student remains enrolled in primary school. It's important to note that 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.

**Current participating schools and students** in the program include:

- 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

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** 

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.

#### CORPORATION ADDRESS

The Head Office Address of the Corporation is:

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. 501 - 230 Westney Road South Ajax, Ontario, L1S 7J5

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### PROBLEM CHILD WINS!

Shertz "Problem Child" James dominated Vincy Mas 2025's Road March, claiming both first and second place with his electrifying hits *Fraid Horn* (100 points) and *Pong Pong* (97 points), a rare and powerful statement of his musical influence. His tracks weren't just popular—they commanded the carnival, energizing the streets of Saint Vincent with irresistible rhythm and authenticity. Esron "Spielberg" Culzac's *Red Button* took third with 74 points. This back-to-back victory, following his 2024 win with *Carnival Jumbie*, cements Problem Child's reign in soca and sets the stage for a potential triple win in 2026.

### **VINCENTIAN LITERATURE**



The CARICON Prize is an annual literary award honoring exceptional works by Caribbean authors and storytellers across the Caribbean and the diaspora. It celebrates books that exemplify powerful storytelling, cultural relevance, and literary innovation—spotlighting voices that explore the richness, complexity, and evolution of Caribbean identity and experience. Linzey Corridon, a Vincentian-Canadian poet and critic's first book project entitled *West of West Indian* was recently shortlisted for the award.

"West of West Indian is a book of poems rooted in my experiences of island space and time. This book would not exist without my continued exposure to a myriad of complex Vincentian quotidians shaping our worlds on a macro and micro level. And I am grateful to have the renewed opportunity to further platform narratives grounded in my understanding of home."

Linzey's book can be purchased on Amazon and at Indigo.





## **NEWS FROM SVG & THE CARIBBEAN**



The Public Relations Committee that is responsible for producing Insight on behalf of the Corporation is inviting interested persons to submit articles and stories that they feel would be of interest to our readers. Please send by email to "pro@vincytoronto.com"

## Full free movement to be implemented in October

Four CARICOM countries—Barbados, Belize, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Dominica—will implement full free movement of nationals by October 1, 2025, advancing regional integration under the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). This move allows skilled workers, services, capital, and businesses to operate freely across these member states without permits or restrictions. Announced by CARICOM Chairman and Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness at the 49th Heads of Government meeting, the decision reflects a push to accelerate CSME implementation. While Jamaica has faced legislative delays, Holness reaffirmed its commitment and highlighted new skilled categories added to the free movement list, including aviation and maintenance personnel. The initiative, under the 2023 Protocol on Enhanced Cooperation, is a major step toward CARICOM's 2030 integration goals and will be further evaluated at the upcoming CARICOM-Africa Summit in Ethiopia.

## Jamaica signs Afreximbank-CARICOM agreement

Jamaica has become the 13th CARICOM member to join the partnership agreement with the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), unlocking an additional US\$1.5 billion in financing for the Caribbean and bringing the total to US\$3 billion. The agreement, introduced in 2022, aims to strengthen trade and investment ties between Africa and the Caribbean. Signed during the 49th CARICOM Heads of Government meeting, the move was hailed transformative step by Afreximbank officials, who emphasized its potential to support SME growth and deepen financial engagement. Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness stressed the need to move from signing to action by implementing mechanisms such as local currency settlements, regional stock crosslistings, and harmonized trade standards.

### THE SVGAT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The SVGAT is once again providing bursaries to assist students of SVG descent attending trade schools, colleges and universities in Ontario. This year, the organization is offering up to 3 bursaries of \$1,000.00 each, one of which is sponsored by Mr. Ken Chitolie of KLC/Eastern Caribbean Freight Lines. Applications are now open and close on September 15, 2025. To get further details, please visit <a href="https://vincytoronto.com/svgat-scholarship-program">https://vincytoronto.com/svgat-scholarship-program</a>. The SVGAT's scholarship program started in 2005 and has so far assisted 37 students.

Mr. Chitolie and KLC Eastern Caribbean Freight Lines have committed to supporting the program for the next 3 years.

Other bursaries might become available based on sponsorship. The SVGAT is committed to supporting two bursaries from funds raised for that purpose. The board of directors hereby express sincere thanks to Mr. Ken Chitolie and his staff at KLC and others who contribute to assisting our young people pursue their education.







### 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 gexeten@arbormemorial.com







### THE CCAC SCHOLARSHIP & BURSARY PROGRAM

The Council of Caribbean Associations—Canada (CCAC) is offering two full-tuition scholarships in 2025—one each from Seneca Polytechnic and George Brown College—along with five bursaries of \$1,000 each for up to three years, depending on the recipient's remaining time in school. These awards are open to international students residing in Ontario, and the application deadline was June 30.

The CCAC Scholarship Program was launched in 2012, initially awarding two bursaries of \$1,000 to students of Caribbean descent attending trade schools, colleges, and universities in Ontario. Since then, the number of bursaries has varied each year depending on available funds, with a record of 11 bursaries awarded in 2023. To date, 53 students have benefitted from this initiative.

In 2023, CCAC partnered with Seneca Polytechnic to offer its first full scholarship of \$6,000 per year for up to four years, in addition to regular bursaries. In 2024, George Brown College joined the program with a matching offer, providing another \$6,000 annual scholarship for up to four years. That same year, the bursary structure shifted to allow five recipients to receive \$1,000 per year for up to three years, depending on their academic timeline toward a degree or certificate.

To support the program, CCAC will host a **Walk for Education on Saturday, August 16,** where members from each Caribbean association will raise funds through sponsorships. The goal is to raise over \$10,000, some of which will be allocated back to individual organizations' scholarship programs. Community members are encouraged to support by sponsoring a walker or joining the walk themselves. For more information, visit www.caribbeancouncilcanada.org.

WALK FOR
EDUCATION

RAISING FUNDS FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP
AND BURSARY PROGRAMS OF THE
COUNCIL OF CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATIONS – CANADA
AND ITS AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

Saturday, August 16, 2025
REGISTRATION: 9:00 A.M.

PORT UNION VILLAGE COMMON PARK
105 BRIDGEND STREET, SCARBOROUGH, ON, MTC 5GS

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO PARTICIPATE OR BE A WALKER, PLEASE CONTACT:
Ingrid: 416-993-9266; Tornelle: 647-450-3287; Gideon: 416-992-4253

COUNCIL OF Caribbean
ASSOCIATION OR TO PARTICIPATE OR BE A WALKER, PLEASE CONTACT:
Ingrid: 416-993-9266; Tornelle: 647-450-3287; Gideon: 416-992-4253

PO. Box 62518, 85 Ellesmere Road, Toronto, Oly MIR 568
TORONTO

## IMMIGRATION MATTERS

### **BEWARE OF IMMIGRATION SCAMS**

Contributed by: Sandra Sutherland, RCIC-IRB

As the United States appear to become increasingly unwelcoming to immigrants, Canada is viewed as a more desirable destination. This growing demand has made foreign nationals, particularly those desperate to secure permanent resident (PR) status, vulnerable to immigration scams.

Most scams originate from unauthorized individuals posing as legitimate representatives and preying on people's vulnerabilities. Some authorized representatives may have agents in Canada or abroad who masquerade as "consultants," trying to lure potential clients with appealing promises. Though these agents be affiliated with authorized may representatives, they are not necessarily qualified, nor are they accountable for the advice or services they offer. The same caution applies to travel agents offering immigration services.

Over the past several months, I have received numerous calls and emails from individuals trying to verify information they've seen or heard via social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok, or from dubious websites and advertisements. Many of these sources falsely portray the immigration process as fast, simple, and guaranteed. Misleading claims include:

- A work permit will assure permanent residency
- A job or job offer will automatically lead to PR status
- Easy opportunities to study or work in Canada
- That undocumented workers can easily gain permanent residency

- The existence of a regularization program for undocumented persons
- Guaranteed PR for skilled workers
- · Free applications to Canada

Be wary of language that sounds too good to be true such as "guaranteed" or "free." The use of "will" rather than "may" is a red flag. These tactics are designed to seduce vulnerable applicants into making emotional, ill-informed decisions. As the saying goes "If it sounds too good to be true, it usually isn't."

There have been increasing reports of:

- Positive Fraudulent LMIA (Labour Market Impact Assessments) and job offers being sold
- False documents being used to secure entry into Canada
- Individuals applying pressure for quick decisions without a proper retainer/service agreement
- Requests for large upfront payments without any legal documentation or signed retainer/service agreement
- Note: Some websites appear to be official government sources but are actually privately run companies that charge for services. Always ensure you're dealing with legitimate information by starting at Canada's official website: www.canada.ca.

Rumors continue to circulate about a general amnesty for undocumented immigrants in Canada. As of this writing, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has not announced any such policy. There are pilot programs and temporary public policies for certain high-demand sectors (e.g., healthcare, agriculture, construction) to help undocumented workers in certain occupations transition to permanent residency - but these are limited in scope and availability.

The Canadian government has reduced immigration targets for both temporary and permanent residents for 2025 and 2026. With higher competition and lower intake, eligibility requirements will tighten, refusal rates will rise, and unfortunately, scammers will become even more sophisticated.

How to Protect Yourself: Use only authorized immigration representatives. They are trained, regulated, and accountable and can enable a person to make informed decisions regarding their immigration matters. You can verify someone's credentials through the IRCC website: Check if your representative is authorized URL address or copy the https://www.canada.ca/en/immigrationrefugees-citizenship/services/immigrationcitizenship-

representative/choose/authorized.html

About the Author: Sandra Sutherland is a

Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC) and authorized counsel at all divisions of the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB). She is licensed by the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants (CICC) and specializes exclusively in immigration, citizenship, and refugee matters. She can be reached at (416) 431-2829 or via e-mail at

For more details, see the **Suthern Immigration & Paralegal Services Inc. advertisement** in this publication.

ssutherland@suthernimmigration.com.



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.

#### CORPORATION BY-LAWS

On February 2, 2013, The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. enacted the Ontario Non-Profit Corporation By-Law 1 which replaced the constitution by which the Association was governed. Please visit the Corporation's website <a href="http://www.vincytoronto.com">www.vincytoronto.com</a> and click on the About Us page or click on the link <a href="https://styleo.com">St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto - By-Laws (vincytoronto.com</a>) to take you directly to read the by-law and acquaint yourself.

#### APPEAL FOR NEW MEMBERS

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. welcomes new members for its survival. An appeal is being made to younger persons who have an interest in its survival to become members and use your talent to make your contribution.



Rhonda Metelsky B.A (Hons) LL.B

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.

### METELSKY LAW PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

Tel: 905-686-1243; Fax: 905-426-6107 230 Westney Rd. South, Suite 501

Ajax, ON L1S 7J5

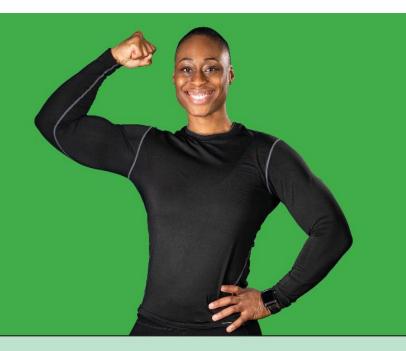
www.metelskylaw.com; Email: rhonda@metelskylaw.com

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## HAIROUNA HERITAGE

New Feature: Exploring Vincentian History & Genealogy

This is a new section dedicated to uncovering the stories of our ancestors and the rich, complex history that shaped St. Vincent and the Grenadines. From family trees to hidden stories preserved in old wills, church records, and migration routes — this space is where memory meets discovery.

Each issue, we'll spotlight pieces of our collective past, share resources for tracing family roots, and feature stories submitted by our community. Your history matters, and we want to help you preserve it.

Have a story, photo, or document to share? We'd love to hear from you.

Africans who were rescued off the coast of Africa after slavery was abolished were relocated to St. Vincent if their families could not be found and they lived and worked on former estates such as Calliaqua, Diamond, and Reform and were baptized in the Anglican church. They were a mix of young and old and were from various west African countries.





# 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