

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

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Quarterly Newsletter

SUMMER ISSUE

JULY 2026

PRESIDENT'S GREETINGS

Dear Members, Friends, and Supporters of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto (SVGAT),

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto, I extend warm greetings to you all. I hope you and your families are enjoying a safe, healthy summer.

Our community's strength, generosity, and unity continue to shine. Thank you to everyone who supported our Community Food Drive in May — a joint effort with **The Toronto SVG Support Group, CARI-ON SVG Disaster Preparedness, and Faith Ministry** that made a real difference for many families.

We were also glad to see strong turnout at the **Invest SVG** event, reflecting growing interest in supporting the development of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and strengthening our diaspora ties.

Excitement is building for the **Vincy Unity Picnic Canada on Saturday, July 18, 2026** — the largest Vincentian gathering in Canada, drawing families from across Ontario, Quebec, and beyond.

This year's lineup includes **Keith Currency, L Plank, and Stacey Little**, plus outstanding DJs, cultural performances, family activities, and Vincentian cuisine, under the theme "**One People. One Love. One SVG.**"

Next up is our **Splash of Blue Boat Cruise on Friday, August 7, 2026**, which we will be co-hosting with **The Toronto SVG Support Group**. Tickets are selling fast — grab yours soon to avoid disappointment.



Later in the year, we look forward to celebrating our homeland's Independence with a **Church Service on Sunday, October 18** and an **Independence Luncheon on Sunday, November 1**.

As President, I remain committed — alongside our Board — to building a stronger, more inclusive SVGAT where every Vincentian and friend of St. Vincent and the Grenadines feel they belong. None of this is possible without our volunteers, sponsors, members, and supporters — thank you for your continued time, talent, and trust.

Enjoy the rest of your summer, and I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events. God bless you, our community, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

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, July 26, 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, Erline Granderson, Mahalia

Spann, Andrew McIntosh

Adopt a Child Coordinator

Erline Granderson

Independence Planning Committee Chair

Sandra Bobb

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.

COMMUNITY NEWS

NEW CONSUL GENERAL TO TORONTO



Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Foreign Investment and Diaspora Affairs, Hon. Fitzgerald Bramble announced the appointment of two new diplomats by the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines on May 16.

Dr. Roderick McKree, a community college lecturer, has been named Consul General for Toronto, while Laverne Phillips, a community activist and broadcaster, will serve as Deputy Consul General.

The Consul General's future office operations will be part of a new overseas mission and diaspora engagement strategic restructuring under the new administration. This will include the addition of an Investment Officer and Diaspora Officer.



2026 TORONTO HARBOUR BOAT CRUISE

This annual popular cruise will be held on Friday, August 7, 2026. Early bird tickets are almost gone so get yours as soon as possible. The Enterprise 2000 will once again play host to this much anticipated event. Early bird tickets are \$60

COMMITTEE CORNER

A quick look at what our committees have been up to this quarter:

- the Vincy Unity Picnic Committee has wrapped up it's planning and we look forward to a unified family outing at Crysler Marina Park.
- the Fundraising Committee is turning its attention to the August Boat Cruise as its next major event; and
- the Independence Planning Committee, chaired by Sandra Bobb, is beginning early preparations for our October celebrations.

The Board thanks everyone who volunteered this quarter. Our Association runs on volunteer energy, and we don't take that for granted.



COMMUNITY NEWS

FROM A TEACHER TO A PREACHER A TRIBUTE TO REV. DR. CHESTER SEARLES

Presented at his funeral service, June 6, 2026, by Malcolm Garraway

Mrs. Searles, distinguished members of the clergy, other distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is for me a great honour to stand before you on this very solemn occasion on behalf of President Terrance Gordon, the Board of Directors and membership of The St Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto.

Indeed, the packed program allows for a very short tribute which I have entitled, "From a Teacher to a Preacher". I have chosen this title since it encapsulates the life of our valiant but humble brother. I have had the honour of working with Rev. Searles in three different organizations. As the title implies, he was a teacher in our homeland of St Vincent and The Grenadines, and therefore we were committed members of the St Vincent and The Grenadines Teachers Union, working to uplift our students and communities.

In our early years in Toronto, we were members of Toronto Action Group Supporting Yulimo (TAGSY). This was out of our deep concern for progress at home.

Most of our community work together, however, was in the SVGAT, where he served as Assistant Treasurer as well as on several committees. He always spoke softly and slowly and always had much to contribute. He never liked loose ends. Everything must be wrapped up.

I can recall an independence committee meeting we were moving on, not knowing who was going to be the leadoff singer of the national anthems. Our dear brother announced, "My wife Janice can sing, you know." That closed the matter. Of course, I was wondering about the possibility of our dear sister saying no.

I am happy to report that I can still recall the silken, melodious voice of sister Janice leading us in a proud rendition of St Vincent, Land So Beautiful.

Reverend Searles toiled on in his love for people and found his true calling as pastor of the BME Church, putting all his energies into that community. Oh yes, from a teacher to a preacher. It must also be said that the BME Church, on at least two occasions, graciously hosted the SVGAT for our annual independence church service.

Ladies and gentlemen, permit me to backtrack a bit to a time before BME when he conferred on me the title of campaign manager in his bid to serve on city council. We did not win, but I have decided to mention it here because the experience always reminded me of the selflessness of his character. He used to always say, "Comrade, think of all the people we could help when we win."

In our last conversations, there seemed to be an established pattern:

- Our health challenges, which always concluded with how blessed we were to be still here
- My social life, he having officiated at my marriage
- What is going on back home
- Then the association. He wanted to know everything, board members and all

Our dear brother lived to serve people, and he did it well. It is for these reasons that we are proud of him and loved him. So today we join in mourning his loss but salute him as a loyal member and a patriotic son. May he rest peacefully.

COMMUNITY NEWS

VINCY UNITY PICNIC CANADA

18 SATURDAY JULY 2026

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AT THE GATE \$55
ONLINE \$65

One People, One Love, One SVG

Kids Village and Vincy Marketplace

NO ALCOHOL ALLOWED IN THE PARK

TIME: 8AM - 6PM

GATE CLOSES AT 4:30PM

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Vincy Unity Picnic: The Drive is Long, the Memories are Better!

Calling all Vincentians and friends! We're heading to **Crysler Park (Morrisburg, ON)** for a day of pure Vincy vibes, music, food, and community along the St. Lawrence River.

PARKING

- **Online:** \$55
- **Gate:** \$65

WHY YOU CAN'T MISS IT:

- **Vincy Culture:** Music, games, entertainment, and delicious food.
- **Family Fun:** A beautiful riverside setting perfect for all ages.
- **The Adventure:** Pack the cooler, carpool with friends, and enjoy the road trip!

GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY:

West End: Terry Gordon | 416-970-8210

East End: Cordel Telfer | 647-717-9731

One People, One Love, One SVG!

MAKE IT A WEEKEND: LOCAL GEMS

[Upper Canada Village](#) (Morrisburg) – A massive 1860s living-history site with wagon rides and fresh artisan bread and accommodations

Prehistoric World (Morrisburg) – Walk a forest trail with 50+ life-sized dinosaurs. *Note: Cash only!*

NEARBY STAYS (AIRBNB) – In Prescott, Iroquois, and Morrisburg

COMMUNITY NEWS

PREVENTION, REHABILITATION, AND HOPE FOR VISION LOSS

By Roxanne Hazell-Blackman, Certified Low Vision Therapist (CLVT), BScN
Vision Loss Rehabilitation Ontario (VLRO)

Low vision means something different to each individual, but one fact remains constant: it cannot be fully corrected with eyeglasses, contact lenses, medication, or surgery. It is often misunderstood by society because it involves significant visual impairment without total blindness. As a result, people living with low vision have varying degrees of functional sight — a reality that others don't always recognize or understand.

PREVENTION

Regular Eye Exams — A visit to an optometrist or ophthalmologist every 1–2 years can detect early signs of conditions like cataracts, macular degeneration, and glaucoma. **Afro-Caribbean populations** frequently develop POAG (Primary Open Angle Glaucoma) due to genetic factors, thinner corneas, and higher Intraocular Pressure (IOP). Our community often goes undiagnosed until the disease has advanced, so early detection is crucial.

Eye-Healthy Diet — Foods rich in Omega-3 fatty acids, zinc, lutein, and other minerals can protect your vision. To name a few: fatty fish such as tuna and salmon, and dark leafy greens such as spinach and kale can protect your vision, lower the risk of eye disease, and maintain retinal health.

Avoid Smoking – Smoking significantly increases the risk of developing age-related eye conditions such as macular degeneration and cataracts. Tobacco smoke harms eyes by depriving them of vital oxygen, releasing harmful free radicals, and narrowing blood vessels.

Manage your Health - Keep your blood pressure and cholesterol under control. Left unmanaged, high blood pressure and diabetes can lead to permanent vision damage.

Sun Protection - Wear UV blocking or polarized sunglasses. Polarized sunglasses are especially beneficial for reflective surfaces such as water. Sun protective hats, caps, and visors are also helpful to protect your eyes from the sun's harmful rays, even on cloudy days.

The 20-20-20 Rule – To reduce digital eye strain, look away from your phone, tablet or computer screen every 20 minutes and focus on an object at least 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

LOW VISION REHABILITATION TREATMENT

With the exception of cataract surgery in most cases, there is no cure for vision loss. Low vision rehabilitation therapists can help with customized goals that provide optical aids, technology, and lifestyle modifications tailored to specific daily needs. They focus on maximizing a person's remaining sight to help them live independently.

WHERE TO FIND HELP

1. Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada - VLRC
2. Canadian National Institute for the Blind - CNIB
3. Canadian Council of the Blind - CCB
4. Fighting Blindness Canada

To find out more about Vision Loss Rehabilitation Ontario and our services:

- Phone: 1-844-887-8572
- Visit: visionlossrehab.ca
- Email: info@vlrehab.ca

COMMUNITY NEWS



The St. Vincent and
Grenadines
Association of
Toronto

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM 2026

ROOTED IN CULTURE,
RISING IN EDUCATION



LAUNCH DATE

JUNE 15

DEADLINE

SEPT 15

QUALIFICATIONS

- Vincentian descent
- Pursuing post secondary education
- Ontario resident

LEARN MORE



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Students must attend a university, college, or trade school **ANYWHERE IN CANADA** in order to qualify for this year's \$1,000 bursary.

<https://vincytoronto.com/svgat-scholarship-program>



MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS REWARDS

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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. 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



CARIBBEAN AIRLINES FLIGHTS TO ALA

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 ALA 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.

IMMIGRATION MATTERS

NAVIGATING THE VISITOR VISA, PERMANENT RESIDENT VISA AND CITIZENSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS

Contributed by: Sandra Sutherland, RCIC-IRB

VISITOR VISA PROCESS

Foreign nationals (FNs) seeking to travel to Canada as a visitor should ascertain the nature of their visit and determine whether a visa or electronic travel document (eTA) for travel. Applying for an eTA is a straightforward online application process which includes basic personal and passport information. The requirements for a visitor visa vary depending on the duration and nature of the visit. If a FN has a host (inviter) in Canada, it is imperative to obtain a well-crafted invitation letter from the host. A valid passport, visa application photo, immigration processing fee, and biometrics fee (if applicable) are mandatory in order for immigration officials to commence processing. Passports should be valid for the entire duration of the planned visit. All required and relevant information and documents that are customary to the applicant's and host's specific situation and circumstances should be submitted for processing. Once the visa application is approved the applicant will need to submit their passport for the inclusion of a counterfoil visa. A valid visa or approved eTA allows a FN to travel to Canada but does not guarantee entry into Canada.

PERMANENT RESIDENT VISA PROCESS

This is the most intricate application process. The degree of thoroughness and processing timelines vary depending on the category or program which the applicant is applying under and whether the applicant is applying from inside or outside of Canada. It is very critical that applicants, including any accompanying dependents, meet **all** eligibility criteria, specific to the category or program being applied under, and ensures that they are met during the processing of the application up to and including when a decision is rendered and, if approved, up to and including the time of landing.

A valid passport (an exception may be made depending on the applicant's circumstance), PR photo, immigration processing fee, and biometrics fee (if applicable) are mandatory in order for immigration officials to commence processing of the application. Applicants 18 or older must provide a police certificate from each country s/he lived in for 6 months or longer since the age of 18. This should convey that have no criminal proceedings or convictions. Documents which prove that eligibility criteria are met and which supports the application in other ways should be provided. If immigration officials have concerns, they may return the application, refuse the application or provide a letter requesting further information and/or documentation. Interviews may be requested if warranted. Applicants who receives a negation decision may, if applicable, appeal the decision, request a reconsideration of the decision, or reapply.

CITIZENSHIP PROCESS

Adult permanent residents of Canada may apply for Canadian citizenship if they have lawfully resided in Canada for at least 1095 days (3 years) within the past 5 years preceding the date of their application and have filed personal income tax (if required to do so) for at least 3 years within the 5-year period. The requirements for minors are similar to that of adults but differs if the minor has a Canadian parent or a parent who is applying for citizenship at the same time. Citizenship photo, Identity documents and documents showing proof of PR status, citizenship application and citizenship grant fees must be submitted with the application package. Applicants between the age of 18 and 54, need to prove English or French language proficiency and will be required to pass a test to assess their knowledge of Canada.

IMMIGRATION MATTERS

NAVIGATING THE VISITOR VISA, PERMANENT RESIDENT VISA AND CITIZENSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS

Contributed by: Sandra Sutherland, RCIC-IRB

Police certificates should be provided if, since turning 18, an applicant spent 183 consecutive days or more in a foreign country within the 4 years immediately preceding the citizenship application date.

Persons claiming Canadian citizenship by descent need to apply for a citizenship certificate. Persons who are permanent residents of Canada must submit an application for Canadian citizenship. Once Canadian citizenship is confirmed or granted, a Canadian passport can then be obtained.

Whether applying for a visitor visa, permanent resident visa or citizenship, applicants should expect to submit their application online via a portal. Security screening is carried out on all applicants (including minors) so as to ensure that they are not inadmissible and do not pose a threat to the health, safety or security of Canadians.

If applicants plan to self-represent and prepare and submit any of these, or types of application themselves, it is important that they obtain accurate and reliable information and application forms via the government of Canada's website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/immigration-on-citizenship.html>

Sandra Sutherland is a competent authorized immigration representative and counsel who can represent clients at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), CBSA, and at all divisions of the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB). She specializes strictly in immigration, citizenship and refugee matters and is licensed with the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants (CICC) as a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant/Counsel at the IRB (RCIC-IRB). She can be reached at **(416) 431-2829** or via e-mail at ssutherland@southernimmigration.com View her advertisement under **Southern Immigration & Paralegal Services Inc.** in this publication for more information.

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MARY CARRUTH
Senior Travel Consultant

SVG & THE CARIBBEAN

VINCY MAS 2026

Vincy Mas 2026 has come and gone under the theme "The Great Escape," which ran from June 26 to July 7 with calypso and soca competitions, steel pan, the Junior Carnival, and the traditional J'ouvert and Mardi Gras street parades closing out the festival.

Vincy Mas 2026 culminated with Chanique Bailey named National Calypso Monarch for ***Lift Me Up***, Jasper "Jasper YMC" Alexander dethroned Fireman Hooper and took home the Power Soca Monarch crown for ***Rum Island***, and Tyrique "D'Fusion" Thomas captured the Ragga Soca title with ***Here to Stay***.

NEW CEO FOR THE SVG TOURISM AUTHORITY



Entrepreneur and businesswoman Shafia London was appointed the new **Chief Executive Officer of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Tourism Authority** on July 1. Her home community has celebrated the announcement, and many in the tourism sector are watching closely as she sets her early priorities.

BARBADOS

Prime Minister Mia Mottley has pushed back against suggestions by UK lawmakers that the Caribbean islands should repay Britain for slavery and other of their historical investments.

SVG COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRADUATES NEARLY 1,000 STUDENTS

More than 900 students graduated across the various divisions of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College in its 2026 cycle — a milestone worth celebrating for a country the size of ours. Graduates were challenged by ceremony speakers to embrace resilience and responsibility as they step into their working life, a message that resonates just as much for our diaspora youth here in Toronto.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION PUSH FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines is moving ahead with a digital transformation agenda aimed at making public services faster and more accessible — welcome news for diaspora members who've experienced the friction of processing passports, birth certificates, or other documents from abroad. Some of the centralized digital systems to be rolled out are: a national unique ID and civil registry, tax information management system, e-payment system, and a unified land information system to handle.

AGRICULTURE SECTOR EYES NEW MARKETS

Minister of Agriculture Israel Bruce has announced new export arrangements and financing initiatives intended to secure better prices and new markets for Vincentian farmers, alongside efforts to push several agriculture and food-system projects toward regional investment. This is a hopeful sign for a sector that has long been central to the island's economy and identity.

MARTINIQUE AND FRENCH GUIANA

Martinique and French Guiana have both joined CARICOM as Associate Members and were officially welcomed during the recent 51st Regular Meeting of the Conference Heads of Government of CARICOM in St. Lucia

SVG & THE CARIBBEAN



3 Vincentians Among 10 Figures Replacing Late Queen on EC Banknotes

Three prominent Vincentians are among 10 people chosen to replace the late Queen Elizabeth II's likeness on new Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) banknotes: the late **Robert Milton Cato**, SVG's first prime minister; the late **John Compton**, former St. Lucia PM born in SVG; and the late **Sir K. Dwight Venner**, former ECCB governor.

The ECCB unveiled the redesigned \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100 notes on Thursday, July 9, honouring national heroes from its eight member countries. Circulation begins in late 2027.

The New Designs

- \$5:** Robert Milton Cato and Sir Kirani James (the only living honouree)
- \$10:** William Henry Bramble and James Ronald Webster
- \$20:** Sir Vere Cornwall Bird Sr. and Dame Mary Eugenia Charles (the only woman featured)
- \$50:** Dwight Venner and Sir Robert Llewellyn Bradshaw
- \$100:** Sir William Arthur Lewis (Nobel laureate) and John Compton

The Monetary Council approved removing the Queen's image in July 2023, after which public consultations showed strong support for featuring regional heroes. ECCB Governor Timothy Antoine called it a historic step that "honours the cultural diversity and enduring legacy" of the region while preserving the currency's security and integrity.

ARTS AND CULTURE



Vibrating Skaes Honoured at Dimanche Gras

Kenneth Alleyne, known as "Vibrating Skaes," is a calypso veteran whose career spans over four decades, dating back to the mid-1970s. He got his start as a teacher at Richmond Hill Primary School in 1970, though he was rarely without his guitar — a hobby that grew into his musical calling.

His breakthrough came in 1979 with "Our Nation is Born," released for St. Vincent and the Grenadines' independence. The song remains a hallmark of Independence celebrations.

Skaes has claimed the Calypso Monarch crown three times, most notably in 1994. His songs have consistently tackled serious social themes — from exploitation of women and children to violence and national unity. Now in his 50th-plus year in the art form, Skaes remains active — he performed "Havana" and later "Revolution Fail" in the 2026 Calypso Semi-Finals with the On Tour tent.

In recognition of his decades-long contribution to calypso, the SVG Calypsonians Association honoured him at this year's Dimanche Gras show.

His advice to the next generation says it all: aspiring calypsonians shouldn't wait for genius to strike — they need to become geniuses in their own right.



A New Mural Tells an Old Story

In May, a striking new public mural titled "**We Are Calliaqua**" painted by artists **Carlique Craigg, Christine Browne, Julaé Ross** and **Kristopher Simmons** was unveiled at the Calliaqua Playing Field — a work measuring nearly 4.85 feet high by 395 feet wide, celebrating SVG's cultural heroes, athletes and national icons.

Minister of Culture Laverne Gibson-Velox conceived the project and served as the public-sector partner, playing a central role in artist selection and community engagement, while Shanique Stewart, Visual Arts Development Officer in the Ministry of Culture, co-led a capacity-building workshop for emerging local artists covering mural design and technique.

This creative placemaking project was commissioned by Rainforest Caribbean and implemented in partnership with Kingston Creative from Jamaica. This serves as a reminder that our island's creative talent isn't just performing on stage — it's shaping public spaces too.

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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HAIROUNA HERITAGE

Exploring Vincentian History & Genealogy

The Estate Names Behind Our Towns

On January 22, 1498, Christopher Columbus came within sight of Hairouna and named it for the Spanish feast day of Saint Vincent of Saragossa who had been martyred over 1000 years earlier. Although he never disembarked and touched the soil, or even recorded the event in his journals, the name stuck and was copied down by generations of European mapmakers thereafter. But long before any European encounters, our island was called Hairouna "Land of the Blessed" by the Kalinago. They also named islands to the south of the mainland to describe how they saw them: Becouya, "Island of Clouds," (Bequia) and Cannouan, "Island of Turtles," (Canouan).

Just over two hundred years later, first the French and then British planters settled onto and carved the island into tobacco, cotton, indigo and sugar estates and named them, not out of any real connection to the land but, to flatter a patron or honour a distant hometown. The French presence is still visible across the nation: Barrouallie, the mainland's first European settlement in 1719 by the French, is actually an indigenous Kalinago name — recorded in colonial documents as 'Barouli' or 'Barrowli.' — that survived the area's French and British occupation, while Questelles was named for an enslaver, Jean-Baptiste Questel, who owned land in that area.

Well known residential and tourist areas today such as Argyle, Villa, Mount Bentinck, Peruvian Vale on the mainland were British-owned estates, as were Friendship, Paget Farm, Mt. Pleasant and Industry in the Grenadines. What our enslaved ancestors inherited after the apprenticeship period concluded was not an enslaver's surname, but the place — the name stamped onto the land they worked without pay or claim. We now carry that inheritance by proudly claiming ancestral villages and towns such as Layout, Pembroke, Colonarie, South Rivers, Calder and Union island that evolved with our culture and traditions.





Rhonda Metelsky
B.A (Hons) LL.B

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