



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

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www.vincytoronto.com

Quarterly Newsletter

FALL ISSUE

OCTOBER 2025

PRESIDENT'S GREETINGS



Dear Members and Friends of SVGAT,

As we move into the final quarter of 2025, I am pleased to reflect on the vibrant and successful activities we have shared since the last publication of Insight.

This summer was filled with activities that strengthened our bonds as a community. We came together at the Vincy Unity Picnic to celebrate our heritage, friendship, and togetherness. Soon after, the Splash of Blue Boat Cruise provided an unforgettable evening of fun, music, and fellowship on Lake Ontario. In September, our Annual Walkathon saw strong participation, raising not only much-needed funds but also community spirit.

We also reached an important milestone by finalizing the winners of our 20th annual Scholarship Program, a proud tradition that has supported the educational aspirations of our youth for two decades. This year, we are especially pleased to award five bursaries of \$1,000 each, made possible through the generous support of Ken Chitolie of KLC Eastern Caribbean Freight, Wilmot Seaton of Seaton's Funeral and Cremation LLC, Marlon Bute of District Stairs, and Pastor Eric Duncan of Straight Gate Ministries.

Looking ahead, we are preparing for a vibrant Independence celebration this October. This year, we will proudly recognize Mr. Ken Chitolie of KLC Eastern Caribbean Freight for his longstanding support of the Association and his dedicated service to the Vincentian community in Toronto. In addition, we are honoured to appoint Ms. Adina James and Ms. Elma Gabriel as Honorary Life Members, acknowledging their unwavering contributions to the development and progress of the Association.

I encourage you all to take part in our upcoming Independence activities, as they embody the unity, pride, and resilience that define us as Vincentians. Together, let us continue to build a stronger community here in Toronto while keeping our roots firmly tied to the homeland.

With gratitude and best wishes,

Cordel Telfer

President

The 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

Secretary: Jamillah Wyllie
secretary@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.

NEXT GENERAL MEMBERS MEETING

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 Planning Committee 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 Peace.

COMMUNITY NEWS

THE 2025 ANNUAL VINCY BOAT CRUISE

“...a Splash of Blue”

Friday, August 8

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. It was a sold-out success.

THANKSGIVING CHURCH SERVICE

On Sunday, October 5, we gathered at Rosewood Church of the Nazarene for a powerful Thanksgiving Church Service opening up the month towards the 46th Anniversary of St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Independence.

Over 120 people came together in faith, song, and solidarity as we celebrated under the theme:

“Celebrating our Identity, Inspiring Our Future.”

We were honored to have Lasana Andrews, the new Consul General of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in Toronto, who addressed the congregation with uplifting words. We were also privileged to have MPP Andrea Hazell and Toronto Councillor Jamaal Myers in attendance, showing their support for our community.

The service featured beautiful hymns, an inspiring sermon by Pastor Caroline Layne, and moving musical renditions by Kaira Browne-Dixon and Stacey Little. The atmosphere was filled with joy and gratitude.

The refreshments afterward were absolutely delicious and brought everyone together for fellowship.

Let this spirit of unity and gratitude carry us through the rest of the month as we continue the countdown to Independence Day.

NEW CONSULATE GENERAL



We have received official notice from Her Excellency Lou-Anne Gilchrist, High Commissioner, regarding a change in leadership at the Consulate General of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in Toronto.

Miss Lasana Andrews has been appointed to the post of Consul General, succeeding Mr. Fitzgerald Huggins, who served in this role for a number of years. We take this opportunity to thank Mr. Huggins for his years of service to our community and to extend a warm welcome to Miss Andrews as she assumes her new responsibilities.

We look forward to continuing our cooperation with the Consulate General and encourage you, our members, to join us in offering support to Miss Andrews as she undertakes this important role.

SVG TORONTO CONSULATE OFFICE

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

Ms. Lasana Andrews

Consul General

Tel: (416) 398-4277 Fax (416) 398-4199

Email: consulategeneral@rogers.com

2025 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, October 19 – Independence Brunch

Monday, October 27 – Flag Raising at City Hall

Monday, October 27 - Niagara Falls Lighting

December - Christmas Hamper, Children's Party, Membership Appreciation!

ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATION *Brunch*



OCTOBER 19
1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
(Semi-formal)

PARKVIEW MANOR
55 BARBER GREENE RD
(DON MILLS AND EGLINTON)
NORTH YORK, ON M3C 2A1

Early bird (to Oct 5): \$80
Regular : \$90

CONTACT:
SANDRA BOBB: (613) 864-4175
CORDEL TELFER: (647) 717-9731

*"Celebrating Our
Identity, Inspiring
Our Future."*

THE ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES
ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO



NEWS FROM SVG & THE CARIBBEAN

Full free movement for CARICOM nationals

On October 1, 2025, four CARICOM countries—**Barbados, Belize, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Dominica**—implemented full free movement of nationals by 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. The initiative, under the 2023 Protocol on Enhanced Cooperation, is a major step toward CARICOM's 2030 integration goals.

Tourism boom

SVG saw a 17.3 % increase in visitor arrivals in the first half of 2025, making it the second-fastest growing destination in the Caribbean.

Heritage acquisition: Baliceaux

SVG formally purchased Baliceaux Island, an historic site deeply tied to the Garifuna community. The move is widely celebrated as a cultural and symbolic act of restitution.

Sporting representation

SVG sent one athlete to the **2025 World Aquatics Championships** in Singapore, participating in the women's 50 m freestyle and 50 m butterfly.

Political horizon

General elections in SVG are scheduled for November 2025, with the current Unity Labour Party led by PM Ralph Gonsalves seeking another term.

U.S. naval buildup & security tensions

The U.S. has deployed several warships to the Caribbean amid escalating tensions with Venezuela and a stepped-up crackdown on alleged drug trafficking.

Regional human rights milestone

In a landmark ruling, the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court struck down St. Lucia's colonial-era law criminalizing consensual gay sex—marking progress for LGBTQ+ rights in the region.

Cassava-making honored by UNESCO

The traditional practice of making cassava bread was inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List, boosting recognition for rural Caribbean artisans and cultural heritage.

Honorary Life Memberships Presented by St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto (SVGAT)

Elma Gabriel



Elma's leadership extended beyond titles. She was actively involved in:

The **1979 Volcano Relief**

Committee supporting Vincentians after the eruption of La Soufrière.

Coordinating student placements and liaising with Ontario representatives for Vincentian students at George Brown College.

Organizing the first Vincentian picnic at **Browns Bay (1972)**—a tradition that became a historic gathering point for Vincentian immigrants across Canada. Serving as liaison and coordinator for meeting venues, hall rentals, and community events across Toronto.

Her service was not confined to SVGAT alone. Elma was also part of the organizing committee for the **first Montreal Caribbean Carnival**, led by the late Winston Roberts, the internationally recognized bodybuilder and community leader.

In recognition of her outstanding volunteerism, Elma has received several awards, including the prestigious **June Callwood Outstanding Volunteering Award** from the Province of Ontario. Beyond community service, Elma has established herself as an author and poet. She has published three books, including *Standing Tall in Echoes of Destiny*, and twice received the **Editor's Choice Award for Outstanding Achievement in Poetry** from the International Library of Poetry.

Today, Elma Gabriel is celebrated not only for her enduring service to the Vincentian community but also for her literary contributions and as a cultural custodian who has left an indelible mark on the diaspora in Canada.

From her teenage years, Elma Gabriel has been deeply passionate about serving her people and preserving the culture of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG). Her commitment to community life began in Montreal in the late 1960s and continued with great dedication in Toronto from the early 1970s onward. For Elma, volunteering was never just a pastime—it was a calling rooted in patriotism, service, and love for her Vincentian heritage.

Elma officially became a member of the Toronto Vincentian Association (now SVGAT) in November 1972, when she attended her first meeting at *Club Tropics*, then a hub for Vincentians in Toronto. From that moment, she became a steadfast member and an integral part of the association's leadership and activities.

Throughout her decades of service, Elma has held nearly every major leadership role within the organization, including:

President

Vice President

Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

Public Relations Officer (PRO) (multiple terms)

Secretary

Church Service Coordinator

Building Committee Member

Coordinator and Organizer for numerous events, including fundraising drives, recognition ceremonies, community picnics, and cultural celebrations.

Honorary Life Memberships Presented by St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto (SVGAT)

Adina James



Born in the Marriaqua Valley in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Adina James migrated to Canada in 1974. She is the proud wife of Powell James and mother of three children. Adina's greatest passions are helping others, gardening, and baking—especially her famous black cake, which has graced the homes and gatherings of many Vincentians across the diaspora. Known for her generosity and community spirit, Adina has been a dedicated member of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto (SVGAT) since 1987. Over the years, she has given countless hours of service to the Association's activities and events.

Professionally, Adina worked with the Toronto District School Board as a Library Technician for many years. She also contributed her skills and compassion as a support staff member at the San Romanoway Revitalization Association and the Griffin Centre. A devoted Christian, Adina has served her church community in various capacities. Her love for Christ, family, and service to others is both inspiring and unwavering. She is affectionately known as a “professional volunteer,” having dedicated many years to supporting seniors' groups within her community.

Adina lives by her favorite quote: “I shall pass through this world but once; any good therefore or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.” — *Robert Collier*



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 the 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



SPECIAL COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AWARD



The Board of Directors, on behalf of the membership of The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. (SVGAT) express sincere thanks to Mr. Ken L. Chitolie, his family, and his company for their ongoing support and contribution to the St. Vincent and the Grenadines, both here in Canada, and in our homeland.

Since KLC/Eastern Caribbean Freight Lines was established, Mr. Chitolie has been generous to our community, not only supporting the programs and activities of the SVGAT, and the SVG Unity Picnic, but also all other organizations in Toronto, Montreal & Ottawa. KLC has assisted St. Vincent and the Grenadines in several ways by making direct contributions to the government and people of the country. It has provided free shipping of material on behalf of the SVG Consulate General in Toronto and all organizations that requested support. Thanks, Mr. Chitolie and family.

CORPORATION ADDRESS

The Head Office Address of the Corporation is:

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

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IN REMEMBRANCE

Past Presidents of The St. Vincent And Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc.
at funeral service for the late Mr. Glendon Carmichael
Friday, September 5, 2025, Ogden Funeral Home, Scarborough



Left to Right: Jason Jones, Marcia Farrell, Fred Williams, Kenneth Farrell, Malcolm Garraway, Claudius Samuel, Monty Providence, Gideon Exeter, Selwyn "Jim" Lewis

TRIBUTES

It was a pleasure to meet and work alongside a humble and respectful human being. Rest in eternal peace.

-Gideon Exeter

Mr. Carmichael, an unassuming gentleman who contributed without bells and whistles.

-Marcia Farrell

Glendon a true patriot, who in part, sacrificed family and unconditionally dedicated time in building a continuous Vincentian community.

-Claudius Samuel

I remember Glendon, as one who will always say, let's stick to the point. Both in executive and board meetings.

-Kenneth Farrell

Always led the way for us. Still leading.

-Monty Providence

Glen was a true and dear friend - a man of excellent character and superb discipline.

-Fred Williams

Glendon, My brother and my friend; a true patriot who did not compromise his principles.

-Malcolm Garraway

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.

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

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.



Happy Independence Day

**SAINT VINCENT
AND THE
GRENADINES**

**Today, we celebrate the strength, culture, and vibrant spirit
of Vincentians here in Ontario and around the world.
May this Independence Day remind us of our shared
pride, resilience, and unity.**



Andrea Hazell, MPP
Scarborough-Guildwood

ARTS AND CULTURE

Akley Olton is a Vincentian-based filmmaker, visual artist, and storyteller whose work explores Caribbean identity, cultural memory, and decolonial perspectives. A graduate of the University of the West Indies and Cuba's International School of Film and Television, Olton founded **Island Rebel Media** to develop films rooted in local stories and regional aesthetics. His projects, such as *Black Doll* and *Hairouna, Land of the Blessed*, often blend documentary realism with poetic imagery to highlight resistance, heritage, and the survival of cultural traditions.

His recent film, ***Madulu, The Seaman (2023)***, focuses on the coastal town of **Barrouallie, St. Vincent**, known for its traditional whaling culture. The short documentary follows a young person discovering the wisdom in the sea shanty songs of "Tall 12," a legendary whaler. Through these songs, Olton examines how community knowledge, identity, and tradition confront modern pressures from tourism and the lingering effects of colonialism.

Visually lyrical and emotionally grounded, *Madulu, The Seaman* captures the rhythm of a vanishing way of life without romanticizing it. The film has been screened at international festivals, including the **Olympia International Film Festival**, and praised for its intimate storytelling and cultural authenticity. With *Madulu*, Akley Olton reaffirms his place as one of the Caribbean's most compelling new voices in cinema—using film as a vessel for reclaiming history, honoring ancestral wisdom, and redefining how Caribbean stories are seen on the world stage.

You can follow Akley at the links below to see trailers, full movies and to find out more about his filmmaking journey and what he has on the go.

[AkleyOlton - Youtube](#)

[Akley Olton - Instagram](#)



the Caribbean you're looking for

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Tourism Office**



416-630-9292



svgta.ca@discoversvg.com



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





Debra Providence is a Vincentian writer, poet, and academic based at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados. Her creative work—published in *POUI*, *Sable LitMag*, and *Seen and Heard: An Anthology of Vincentian Women Writers*—explores themes of womanhood, belonging, and imagination in Caribbean life.

As a lecturer in Caribbean women's literature and creative writing, Providence encourages new generations of writers while researching intersections of feminism and speculative fiction. She has also participated in the Fresh Milk Barbados artist residency, contributing to regional cultural dialogue. Though she has yet to publish a solo book, Providence's poetry and mentorship have made her a respected literary voice whose work expands how Vincentian and Caribbean women are represented in literature.

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ssutherland@suthernimmigration.com

The Hidden Wounds of Children Left Behind

For many Vincentian families, migration has been a sacrifice. Mothers, especially single mothers, left St. Vincent and the Grenadines for Canada in search of a better life. They sent back remittances, barrels, and hope. However, while migration often improved financial circumstances, it also left invisible scars on the children left behind.

Those children, entrusted to relatives or neighbours, were not always protected. Some endured abuse. Others lived with neglect and the daily ache of missing their mothers. They often felt abandoned, regardless of the number of gifts or phone calls they received. Studies across the Caribbean confirm that children in these “transnational families” are at higher risk of depression, low self-esteem, and school difficulties.

Reuniting with their mothers years later — sometimes after a decade — has not always been the happy ending many imagined. Children who once longed for their mother’s return often struggled with resentment or distrust. Mothers, who believed they were sacrificing for their children’s future, faced confusion when their efforts were met with anger or emotional distance. Research shows that reunification without preparation can reopen wounds instead of healing them.

The trauma of being left behind does not fade into adulthood. Many now-grown Vincentians continue to carry the burden — struggles with trust, fear of abandonment, and fractured relationships. The cycle often repeats in their own parenting, unless support and healing intervene.

So, what can be done? Experts stress the importance of consistent, meaningful communication between migrant parents and their children — not just money or gifts. Communities must strengthen their child protection systems at home, ensuring that caretakers are supported and held accountable. And when reunification becomes possible, families need counselling and preparation on both sides of the ocean.

Migration will remain a reality for Vincentian families. But if we are honest about its human costs, we can do better by our children. Sacrifice should not mean silence about trauma. The goal is not to discourage migration, but to build systems that protect the hearts and minds of the children who are too often left to carry its heaviest weight.

Let’s start a conversation!!

Did You Know?

- “Barrel children” is the term often used for kids whose parents migrated and sent home barrels of goods instead of being physically present.
- Research shows 7–21% of children in some Caribbean countries live apart from at least one parent due to migration.
- Children left behind report higher levels of depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem than those living with both parents.
- Maternal migration has a stronger emotional impact than paternal migration because mothers are usually the primary caregivers.
- Reunification isn’t always smooth: many families struggle with resentment, trust issues, and cultural adjustment after years apart.
- Experts call for consistent communication and counselling to support children before, during, and after migration.

HAIROUNA HERITAGE

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.

DID YOU KNOW....Many of our ancestors in the early 1900s migrated to the United States. Some visited while others stayed permanently. Their passage was either paid by themselves or their parents since many of them were young. Many entered at different ports but the most famous was Ellis Island. The Ellis Island Passenger Search database holds 65 million records of passengers arriving to the Port of New York from 1820 to 1957. Check and see if your ancestor's name comes up. Many Vincentians passed through immigration there especially in the early 1900s!

<https://www.statueofliberty.org/discover/passenger-ship-search/>



CARIBBEAN AIRLINES FLIGHTS TO AIA



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.

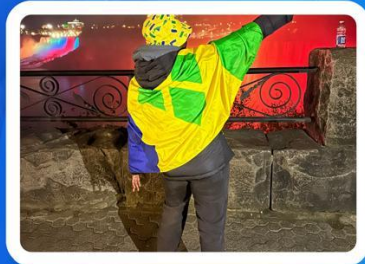
The **PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE** which produces the **INSIGHT** newsletter on behalf of the Corporation encourages interested persons to submit articles and stories that they feel would be of interest to our readers.

Please send by email to pro@vincytoronto.com



VINCY 46TH INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY BUS RIDE TO NIAGARA FALLS

Join us on a special bus trip to Niagara Falls to witness the breathtaking illumination of the Falls in Blue, Gold, and Green, proudly commemorating the Independence of St. Vincent and the Grenadines!



Monday, October 27, 2025

Cost: \$40.00 Return.

DEADLINE October 24th

Pick up: Scarborough (YMCA) 5:30 PM

Jane and Finch Mall 6:30 PM

**Contact: June 647-867-7930
or Petra 647-460-1121**

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.

IMMIGRATION MATTERS

THE ABC'S OF H&C

Contributed by: Sandra Sutherland, RCIC-IRB

Foreign nationals are required to apply for and obtain a Permanent Resident (PR) Visa from outside Canada. In certain cases, however, they may be permitted to apply from within Canada – depending on the immigration program, category, or pathway under which they qualify. Under Section 25(1) of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)*, foreign nationals who are not otherwise eligible to apply for PR from within Canada may do so on Humanitarian and Compassionate (H&C) grounds. This provision allows individuals to request exemptions from certain IRPA requirements or from certain inadmissibility, in order to apply for PR while in Canada. This provision also applies to foreign nationals who are outside Canada, however, it is seldom utilized because the grounds for applicants outside Canada are more stringent and much harder to justify. H&C applications are typically considered a last resort, most often used by individuals who are out of status in Canada.

What Qualifies as a Humanitarian and Compassionate Ground?

To succeed, H&C applicants must demonstrate exceptional personal situation

and circumstances that would persuade the immigration officer assessing the case and that would appeal to the general Canadian common declarations that potential applicants usually tell me during consultations public that they deserve the opportunity to remain in Canada permanently. It's important to note that the reasons that people generally use to stay in Canada permanently such as "*I don't want to go back,*" "*There's nothing to go back to,*" "*There are no jobs,*" or "*I've been here a long time*" are not sufficient on their own. Applicants must clearly establish strong, humanitarian, compassionate, and well-supported grounds for consideration. Some common factors that immigration officers assess include: Strong family ties in Canada

- Negative impacts of separated from family/relatives in Canada
- The degree of establishment and integration into Canadian society
- The degree of unusual, undeserved, or disproportionate hardship that would be faced if required to return home
- Lack of family or community support in the home country
- The degree of integral support to family or community members in Canada
- The best interests of any child(ren) who would be affected by the applicant's departure or continued stay

Employment and Establishment

One key element of establishment in Canada is stable employment.

Interestingly, some immigration officials have cited unauthorized employment as one of their reasons for refusing an applicant. While working without proper authorization is not lawful, it remains important, especially for undocumented applicants to demonstrate that they have been self-supporting, have not relied on social assistance, and shall not likely rely on social assistance once PR status is granted. Nevertheless, applicants should be honest and forthcoming about their work history. Transparency helps immigration officers assess whether the applicant has demonstrated genuine self-sufficiency and good character with integrity.

How Long Must You Be in Canada?

There is no fixed minimum period of residence required before submitting an H&C application. While applicants typically wait for at least three years, each case is assessed on its own unique and exceptional circumstances. For example, an individual who has been in Canada for only seven months may still apply if there are sufficiently compelling H&C factors to justify their request.

Processing Times and Challenges

H&C cases are known to be tedious and challenging. These applications are considered low priority by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and they often take the longest time for IRCC to process in comparison to other PR categories. As of October 9, 2025, the Government of Canada stated an estimated processing time for new and some existing H&C applications of “over 10 years”. This prediction is subject to change at any moment. In my professional experience, most cases have taken between 1 to 3 years to finalize, depending on individual circumstances. Processing delays may be attributed to:

- Changes in family structure (e.g., marriage, separation, or births)
- Criminality or other inadmissibility issues
- Missing or outdated documentation
- Dependents reaching the age of majority

Professional Guidance Recommended

Individuals considering an H&C application should consult a competent, authorized immigration representative for guidance. Applicants must be clear about:

1. Which exemptions they are requesting under IRPA
2. Their rationale for seeking those exemptions
3. The compelling reasons that justify being granted PR status in Canada

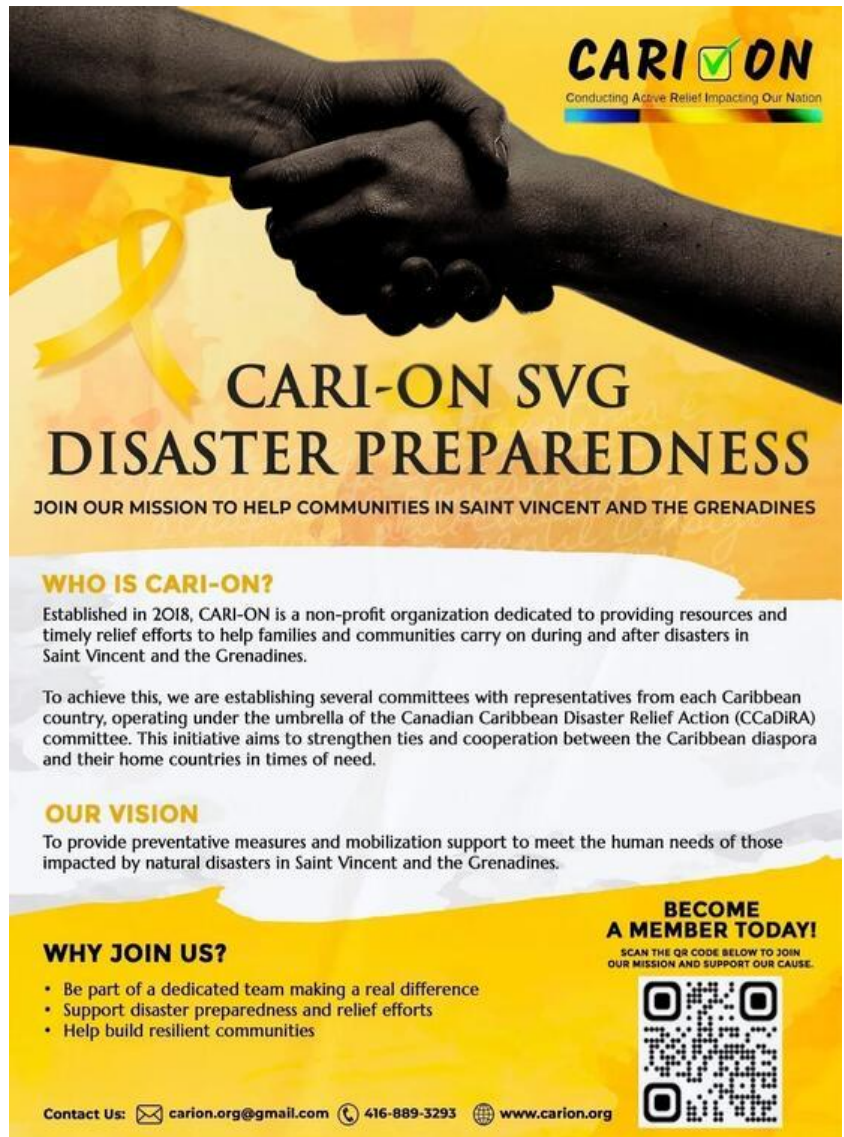
No two H&C cases are to be treated the same as each individual's situation and circumstances are quite unique. Proper preparation and professional advice can make a significant difference in ensuring that applications are complete, persuasive, and compliant with IRCC requirements.

About the Author: Sandra

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



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