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Caystone

The Newsletter of the Lyford Cay Foundations

FROM CHALLENGE TO TRIUMPH

Beneficiaries Share Their Stories of Resilience

For the first time in more than a century, Nassau was significantly impacted by a major natural disaster in the form of Hurricane Matthew. Also devastated were the settlements of North Andros and West End, Grand Bahama.

Although we are in various parts of the country and the world, such tragedies affect us all in some way and tie us together.

When faced with the challenge of rebuilding, we have the choice to give up or to continue despite the odds.

Our beneficiaries always make the choice to continue because they are brave and resilient. They consistently find ways to turn obstacles into opportunities and we are proud to support their determination.

Supporting them is an investment in the resilience of The Bahamas. Your donations to Lyford Cay Foundations secure the futures of those who will build and sustain our community.

Here are their stories:



"While getting ready to take my psychopathology test at school, I found out that my mother and brother were evacuated to a shelter, my Pastor's roof partially caved in and water seeped into the home of close family friends.

Hurricane Matthew was the worst that I've heard about.

Thankfully in the end, everyone I loved was safe and I did well on my test. Surviving Hurricane Matthew made every victory much more meaningful."

Candera Gilbert, Scholar
Master's Degree, Christian Counseling, Oral Roberts University

"Being a part of FOCUS has been a great source of strength and encouragement for me.

Working in Andros away from my family in Nassau, and learning that our family home flooded with over 3 feet of water was devastating.



The anxiety, depression and sense of helplessness has been overwhelming.

We are extremely fortunate to have our lives and that has to mean there is still something left for me to do."

Raynessia Watkins, FOCUS Intern
Teacher at South Andros High School

"For me, we had no electricity, I missed two weeks of school, lost food, sleep and had to move from my home because our roof caved in and it flooded. It was a real wake up call for me, and The Bahamas.

I made a promise that I will never let anything get in the way of my success.

The hurricane won't stop me from meeting my graduation requirements."

Clifford Dean, Cutillas Scholar
C.V. Bethel High School, Class of 2017



"Due to the hurricane, we've been unable to conduct our regular programmes in schools. Additionally, our offices were without electricity and internet for two weeks making daily operations difficult.



In response to the storm we've redesigned this year's programme.

Over the next six months, YME students will engage in a comprehensive study with the University of Miami that will produce suggestions to ensure that our country is better prepared for hurricanes."

Nikita Shiel-Rolle, Scholar, and Grant Recipient
CEO and Founder, Young Marine Explorers

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Update FOCUS

SUMMER REFLECTIONS

Students Share About FOCUS Summer SLAM



Taivan Thompson

*Class of 2024,
Eva Hilton
Primary School*

First FOCUS
Summer

How was your first summer at FOCUS?

It was amazing!

Tell us about your project this summer?

We had a debate on climate change - if it's a frightening future or a non-occurring nightmare.

What was the best thing about your first summer at FOCUS?

Learning about climate change with the best teacher, Ms. Keira.

Taivan and his mom at Family Breakfast this past summer.



Sincere Braynen

*Class of 2020,
H.O. Nash
Junior School*

Fifth FOCUS
Summer



2016 Summer Project Driving Questions:

Grades 5 and 6

Climate Change:
How do we curb the harmful impact of human development on the earth and its climate?



Grades 7 and 8

Forms of Government:
Is democracy the best suited system of government for The Bahamas?



Grade 9

Summer Olympics:
Why should The Bahamas continue to participate in Olympic Games when greater economic priorities exist?



Sincere and her sister at Family Breakfast this past summer.

What was the best thing about your fifth summer at FOCUS?

The best part about this past summer was working in a group to get our presentation done. We had to debate and discuss why we thought what we thought and why our way was better.

What is the most important thing you learned at FOCUS so far?

The most important thing I learned at FOCUS is that without teamwork in a group nothing is going to get done. Everybody in the group must cooperate.

What does FOCUS mean to you?

FOCUS to me is a chance to discover yourself and delve into your own future. Discover what you want to be and learn things you never knew you could do.

ON COURSE TO COLLEGE

Class of 2019 Begins Second Phase of FOCUS

The ultimate goal of FOCUS is that 100% of participants graduate high school and enroll in and complete post-secondary education.

Now, after six summers, our first cohort is one step closer to this achievement!

The Class of 2019 entered tenth grade this past fall, beginning senior high school and the final phase of FOCUS aptly titled, "On Course To College (OCTC)."

Long-time FOCUS counsellor, Karen McCartney became the programme's third full-time team member this past September. Karen is responsible for OCTC.

OCTC moves students away from a project-based learning curriculum to individualised counseling, academic support and career guidance.

At this stage, summer programming changes to allow for students to explore career goals and other extra-curricular interests, while Saturday sessions continue.



Class of 2019 with Programme Director Felicity Humblestone, OCTC Coordinator Karen McCartney and Team Leader Helene DeJong at a recognition ceremony this past September. Photos by CayFocus/Disha Fraser

Class of 2019 reflect on their time at FOCUS so far:

Shanquell Clarke, shares what FOCUS has meant to her over the past five years:

"The best thing about FOCUS is the inspiring people I meet. "When I look at all of the interns and team members, I believe that I have a shot of being like that one day. "I've learned so much about the world here and how I can be better one step at a time."

For **Ishmael Gibson**, his fourth grade dream of being an astronaut has since shifted to being a world famous chef.

"FOCUS is a big opportunity and a life changer. It's one of the best things that has happened to me." Ishmael shared.



Shanquell and Ishmael, grade 10 students at C.R. Walker Secondary School, with OCTC Coordinator, Karen McCartney.

"I want to be proud of myself and positively affect my community."

Ishmael's dad, Demarco Gibson shared his son's view on the impact of FOCUS, "Over the last two years especially we have seen a change in him. He is more focused, and he has improved in Math."

"I appreciate FOCUS for giving him direction and encouragement."

Shanquell, Ishmael, and their classmates have reached a major milestone on their journey to college.

We are proud of their commitment, grateful to our donors and partners for making this possible and look forward to achieving our goal together.

Our Donors Inspire

You help students learn about themselves and discover their destinies.

Spotlight On Our Scholars

TECHNICAL SCHOLARS SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES

2016 New Recipient Stories



Scholar:
Brea Fox
Award:
TK Foundation
Technical Scholarship
College:
Key College, Florida
Class of 2018
Major:
Court Reporting

Ask Brea Fox about her future career plans, and you'll be swept away by her excitement as she

dreams about the possibilities.

"Court reporting will not just be a job for me, it will be my passion. It's my opportunity for a rewarding career and a new lease on life," exclaims Brea.

Grit, determination and a hunger for more have always driven Brea.

After high school, Brea went to work but always fantasized about furthering her education. When offered a position in Exuma, Brea left her hometown of Nassau to seize the opportunity.

Brea soon learned that the field of court reporting could provide the foundation for success that she craved. She also discovered that this underrepresented field, could make an impact on the country she loves.

"I know that court stenography will be an extraordinary profession that will better my quality of life," noted Brea.

"There is a shortage of court reporters in The Bahamas. Once I complete my course of study, I endeavour to promote awareness of my career to other students in The Bahamas."

Our Donors Inspire

You push students to challenge themselves beyond what they thought was possible.

Scholar:
Shawn Minnis
Award:
Technical Scholarship
College:
Holland College, Canada
Class of 2017
Major:
Power Engineering

Shawn Minnis knows that it's never too late to learn.

In 2001, he left high school after 11th grade to work in order to assist his family.

Four years later, he returned to school, receiving his high school diploma before completing certifications and licenses in maritime studies.

Shawn was intrigued at the idea of becoming a Power Engineer, which would enable him to operate and maintain boilers, turbines and refrigeration or air conditioning in commercial and industrial buildings.

He noted that it's a field that is needed in The Bahamas, but not sought after.

Shawn realised that to pursue this field, he'd need to return to the classroom.

"Each year that I got older, I thought I was too old to go back to school," he said. "I had to realise that learning is a never ending process."

Now able to pursue his dream because of this scholarship, Shawn has advice for potential Scholars.

"This means more to me than anything at this point in my life. My advice is to seize the opportunity and do not let it go to waste," shared Shawn.

"I am going to be forever grateful of this opportunity given to me by Lyford Cay Foundations."



ALUM: RETURNING HOME TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Most successful businesses start with a single idea. However, Alum Scholar Carla Gibson's business was born out of a desire to make a difference in The Bahamas and fueled by her love of learning.

"Working with people with special needs is my passion," shares Carla. "It's what I was put here to do."

As a high school student, Carla's love for her cousin with special needs shaped her career plans. To show her support, Carla began volunteering with Stapledon School, a public school in New Providence for students with learning challenges, and fell in love.

After realising that she'd volunteered more than 200 hours, Carla knew that she'd found her dream career.

Carla studied Special Education at The College of The Bahamas and then received a Foundations scholarship to attend University of Georgia, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education.

Spurred by her thirst to learn more, Carla went on to pursue a Master's degree in Applied Behavior Analysis at Columbia University. She was thrilled to once again earn a Foundations scholarship.

"Both the university and New York are very expensive. Without a scholarship, I don't know if I would have been able to go to Columbia."

But the road to graduation took both funding and personal determination. Throughout graduate school, Carla taught full-time daily and then commuted for an hour to take classes.

"It was a wonderful experience," notes Carla. "I learned that there is so much to the world. Being at Columbia showed me that anything is possible."

CUTILLAS SCHOLARS SNAPSHOT

After robust recruitment earlier this year, close to 400 grade 11 public school students throughout The Bahamas registered for the Cutillas Scholars programme.

After completing three rounds of assignments that included interviewing a current college student, and strength and career assessments, **six students were selected as the first Cutillas Scholars.**

We look forward to sharing more details on these Scholars in the months to come.

For the most up to date news, join our monthly e-newsletter at www.lyfordcayfoundation.org



Carla Gibson at her graduation from Columbia University in May 2016.

Carla was excited to bring her expertise back to The Bahamas after graduation this past May.

Her plan was to return home and focus on studying for her certification to become a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. But word quickly got out about Carla's experience.

"Once I returned home, everything just took off," said Carla.

"My days are spent providing services to meet the huge need in our community. I balance my time between providing services at clients' homes, training teachers and working with organisations like REACH (Resources and Education for Autism and Related Challenges)."

In addition to running her business, Carla is studying for her certification and preparing to open a business office in February 2017.

Although she must constantly think of ways to manage her busy schedule, Carla loves what she does, and is thankful for the help of the Foundations throughout her journey.

"I realise that a Lyford Cay Foundations scholarship impacts so many," she reflected. "My return home is already impacting so many kids. I'm glad I came home to make a difference."

For more information about Carla's services, visit www.reneoneilcenter.org or email her at cgibson@reneoneilcenter.org.

Roundup Grants

PROVIDING A SAFE SPACE IN SOUTH ELEUTHERA

Community Library Gets New Roof

Wemyss Bight, located south of Rock Sound Eleuthera, is a small, close-knit community of 300 people.

In 2004, realising that many children in South Eleuthera lacked adequate educational resources and after school activities, the citizens of Wemyss Bight took action.

Together, they transformed a deteriorating old home into a vibrant library that has become the jewel of South Eleuthera.

As the only functional library in the area, it is also used by families in the neighbouring communities of Deep Creek, Waterford, Green Castle, John Miller's and Bannerman Town.

Over the years, the Charles David Thompson Community Library has become more than a place that houses books.

The library provides weekend reading programmes and tutoring sessions for children as well as story time and Spanish lessons.

Computers are available as a resource for those who don't have access to them. Workshops are provided for members of the community on issues such as the importance of continuing education and tips for preventing substance abuse.

The library touches the lives of many - both young and old.

By the beginning of this year, the library's roof, which was a part of the original structure, was so damaged that there was severe leaking every time it rained.

Now, thanks to a \$6,000 grant from the Foundations, the roof is on its way to being repaired so that it can continue being a resource for South Eleutherans.

"Words can't describe how we feel about the Lyford Cay Foundation's commitment to our library," said Clara Williams, the library's Executive Director.

"Without your donation the library wouldn't be possible. Thanks to you, our children have an incentive to read and a place to learn."



ATHLETES PUT MOORE'S ISLAND ON THE MAP

Small Community Produces Track and Field Stars

Any community would be proud to boast that they've produced and trained an Olympic medalist, the second fastest Bahamian sprinter of all time, the Bahamas World Relays Spring Medley champions, and a qualifying athlete for the Beijing World Championships.

But just imagine how proud you would feel if you've been able to accomplish all of this!

Moore's Island, a six square mile island community off the west coast of Abaco, Bahamas with limited resources and a population of just 900, has done just that.

The Moore's Island Student Athlete Program (MISAP) was started informally in 2000 by



Coach Anthony Williams

Coach and local pastor Anthony Williams in an effort to create positive alternatives for neighbourhood children. Since that time, civil engineer, track enthusiast and now MISAP Board Chairman Nick Dean has helped formalise the successful programme that has become a gem of the Bahamian track and field community.

Aware of the significant financial need that families faced, Coach Williams and his family began taking students into their own home.

When the challenge of feeding, educating and training 15 boys on an individual's salary became unmanageable, Nick and a team of volunteers sprang into action.

With their assistance, MISAP became a non-profit organisation in 2015 with the mission of "building a better Bahamas through academics and athletics." This means providing student athletes with a quality education as well as quality athletic training.

A primary goal is for the students to successfully graduate from high school and receive scholarships to college.



The Moore's Island Track and Field team, including Olympian Steven Gardiner. Photos by Nick Dean/MISAP

Critical to MISAP's mission is the creation of a dormitory. The 4,000 square foot dormitory will include bedrooms, bathrooms, a kitchen area, activities centre and study hall with laptops and internet access.



The dorm will be ideally situated across from a new sports complex being built by the Bahamian government.

Construction of the building began this past summer with the assistance of a \$200,000 grant from the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture of The Bahamas and is expected to be finished in early 2017.

Through your generous donations, the Foundations have granted MISAP \$20,000 for appliances and equipment for the dorm.

"The impact of this project will be phenomenal not just for the student athletes but for the entire community," shared Nick Dean.



Nick Dean

"The combination of a dormitory and a new sports complex will lead to better infrastructure on the island, the creation of new roads and even the expansion of the runway to

allow residents from other islands and tourists to come and support the track meets."

For members of the Moore's Island Student Athlete Program, the doors of the world have opened!

Our Donors Inspire
You revitalise small communities throughout The Bahamas.

Our Donors

Inspire

THE LITTLE BIT OF GREATNESS INSIDE EVERYONE

Butch Kerzner Summit Foundation Supports FOCUS

It has been ten years since South African hotelier Howard “Butch” Kerzner passed away.

Known for the Atlantis resort, Butch not only had a keen business sense, but was also passionate about making The Bahamas a better place. He did this through his business decisions and his philanthropy.

Butch felt strongly the young people were the future of The Bahamas, and this belief is what drove the mission of The Butch Kerzner Summit Foundation (BKSF).

Founded in 2006 to honour his memory, BKSF’s mission was to positively impact youth in The Bahamas. With that in mind, BKSF made a major donation to the FOCUS programme.

When thinking back to the catalyst for BKSF, Vanessa Kerzner shared, “It really started when Barrie Farrington persuaded Butch to donate a pool for St. Anne’s School students.

“Butch passed away before it was completed and it was the first project we finished.”

Long before this initial project, Butch and Vanessa had made The Bahamas their permanent home and spent time in the local community to understand the needs of everyday Bahamians.

These experiences helped Vanessa and the Board of BKSF to choose individual sports as an avenue of impacting students throughout the country.



Vanessa Kerzner

“Sports builds teamwork, forces you to set goals and challenges you to achieve them,” she shared.

“It was really about the sense of accomplishment and confidence they would feel from reaching their goals.

BKSF had a onetime vision to build a sports complex for young people but throughout years of planning, this was reconsidered.

Recently, the Board decided to dissolve BKSF and disburse the funds to Bahamian charitable organisations with youth development programmes.

“In considering non-profits who had similar beliefs and served Bahamian youth, Lyford Cay Foundations have a clear track record of executing programmes with positive results,” Vanessa said.

“Our motto was ‘dedicated to the little bit of greatness inside of everyone.’ This was something Butch really believed.

“We are confident that through this gift to the Foundations, Butch’s legacy and hope for a better Bahamas will continue on.”

ABOUT US

Lyford Cay Foundation, Inc. and The Canadian Lyford Cay Foundation are philanthropic organisations that believe that increasing educational attainment across the country is key to the development of a prosperous, healthy and peaceful Bahamas.

Our FOCUS, Scholarships, Cutillas Scholars and Grants programmes aim to provide learning opportunities for Bahamian children, young adults, families, and communities who will benefit the most. More than \$45 million has been invested in The Bahamas over four decades.

Lyford Cay Foundation, Inc. and The Canadian Lyford Cay Foundation are registered non-profit public charities in the USA and Canada.

DONATE TODAY

Generous friends like you help bright young Bahamians in their pursuit of educational excellence and assist with community building.

Without you, these life-changing opportunities would not be possible.

**To make a gift please visit:
www.lyfordcayfoundation.org/help or
call us at 242-362-4910.**

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