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Caystone

The Newsletter of the Lyford Cay Foundations

DR. NICOLA VIRGILL-ROLLE: LEADING THE CHARGE FOR VISION 2040

Scholar Spearheads Solutions for the Future of The Bahamas

How can we use our legacy of social and economic prosperity as a springboard for the future? How can citizens, residents and the government unite to create a roadmap for the future of the country that we all love?

These questions are at the core of Vision 2040, the National Development Plan for The Bahamas.

Dr. Nicola Virgill-Rolle, Lead for the Government on the National Development Plan Vision 2040 Secretariat and a proud Lyford Cay Scholar, was elated to share the goals of the plan and reflect on her experiences as a Scholar.



Dr. Nicola Virgill-Rolle

What is the National Development Plan and why is it important?

We're a country that's done well over the years. But collectively we knew that we could do more to live up to our full potential. In 2015, we started bringing stakeholders together to look toward where we want to be in a generation.

The National Development Plan gives The Bahamas a reform agenda for 4 key areas:

The Economy - Identifying strategies to make the economy resilient, create jobs and promote entrepreneurship.

Governance - Applying best practices for an efficient, transparent and modern nation, ensuring that our democracy works to best serve the interests of all Bahamians.

Social Policy - Creating policies to improve the things our citizens value, like public safety, healthcare, education and social services.

The Environment - Protecting our natural resources from environmental change, while investing in strategic infrastructure projects to build our nation.

What stage is the Plan in currently?

We now have a final product for implementation that includes input from a broad spectrum of residents and citizens, including those living in the Family Islands. Each recommendation is linked to a target of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

What impact will the Plan have on education?

We aim to provide the best educational possibilities starting with prenatal care so that children will be born healthy and ready to learn. Our next recommendation is for universal preschool education. Then we'll strive to make sure that everyone has basic literacy and numeracy skills. Finally, we move on to goals for vocational skills and university access.

How did your own experiences prepare you to lead this initiative?

After I achieved my Associate's Degree at the College of The Bahamas, the College connected me with the Foundations and that broadened my vision of what was possible. As a Scholar, I was able to study Economics at Vassar University. This was a game changer and on my own, it wouldn't have been possible!

I later obtained a graduate degree in Political Economy of Development and a Ph.D. in Public Policy. I interned on Wall Street with my heart focused on how I could use my experiences in The Bahamas. Positions at The Central Bank and the Embassy of the Bahamas in Washington, D.C. further prepared me for this unique role.

What additional thoughts would you like to share with Foundation supporters?

Philanthropy is an important part of life. It creates solutions. The Foundations are making a real impact in this country, and I would like to thank them for the opportunity they provided for me.

Learn more about Vision 2040 at www.vision2040bahamas.org

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Update FOCUS

SUMMER SLAM TACKLES REAL-LIFE CHALLENGES

Project-Based Learning Helps Students Think Critically

Drop by Summer SLAM and you'll be overwhelmed with gleeful laughter; you'll witness energetic, engaging discussions; and you'll see hands on learning in the form of challenges and creative solutions.

What you won't see is rote memorization.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is the hallmark of FOCUS summer learning, and it's grounded in developing solutions to real life problems.

Student experiences have proven that learning through doing fosters the greatest depth of knowledge. FOCUS students want to be challenged and presenting them with a real-life problem to be solved connects them to the learning process more meaningfully.

Each year, the FOCUS leadership team brainstorms project ideas that are developed into project scenarios with driving questions. The intern teams then develop project plans to facilitate student learning based on these driving questions.

For the past two years, students have been a part of the brainstorming process for project ideas. A component of each Summer 2017 project came from student input.

Gradually, FOCUS is moving towards Grade 9 students completely designing their projects to maximize the learning experience.

2017 Summer Project Driving Questions:



Grades 5 and 6

Lego Robotics Challenge: How do we program an autonomous robot to complete an obstacle course related to the theme of a real-life challenges such as waste management or natural disaster management?

Grades 7 and 8

Designing A Game: What makes Math fun and effective for junior high school students?

Grade 9

Designing A School: What are the features we most want to see in a school to learn most effectively?

Summer 2017 Anonymous Student Survey Results

The Most Important Thing I Learned at FOCUS:

- "When building a school, you need a whole lot more things than you think."
- "Waste is not a problem, it's how we dispose of it."
- "...Is That Math Takes You Around The World!"

ON COURSE TO COLLEGE

Summer Programming Prepares Class of 2019 and 2020

For students in the Class of 2019 and 2020, high school graduation is just over the horizon. FOCUS summer programming is helping these students crystallize their dreams of high school graduation and plans for college enrollment.



Members of On Course To College, Classes of 2019 and 2020



This summer, their experiences were tailored to prepare these Grade 10 and 11 students in the second phase of FOCUS, known as On Course To College (OCTC), for the challenges of senior high school and beyond.

"A challenge for many students is that as they enter senior high school, their needs begin to differ significantly from those of younger FOCUS students," noted Karen McCartney, OCTC Coordinator. "OCTC students have to be prepared for the rigors of senior high school and national exams, while also exploring college options and their future careers."

"OCTC's summer programming is an answer to this challenge that allows students to grow independently while being supported and nurtured by the FOCUS team."

Students participated in a variety of personalized activities during the summer designed to be flexible enough to allow them to explore their interests and personal goals.

OCTC activities ranged from summer employment; traveling; academic intervention sessions; volunteering; learning about University of The Bahamas through the UB Mingoos Club; and attending camps that explored areas such as science, technology, art, engineering, math and the maritime industry.

The summer culminated with an intensive four-day Summer Seminar for all Grade 10 and 11 students. Workshop topics included:

- Transitioning from Junior to Senior High School
- Peer Pressure and Relationships
- Character Development
- Determining The Cost of College
- Choosing Your College
- Setting Smart Goals

In September, OCTC students started their first day of school more confident and prepared for their school year.

On Course To College Summer Reflections:



Chriseven Strachan
Grade 11
C.C. Sweeting Senior High School

"On Course To College is challenging but good. When I don't understand certain things, I ask for help."



Sincere Braynen
Grade 10
C.R. Walker Senior High School

"On Course To College is like family. We talk about college experiences. They tell us to make a bucket list about what we want to do when we get to college."

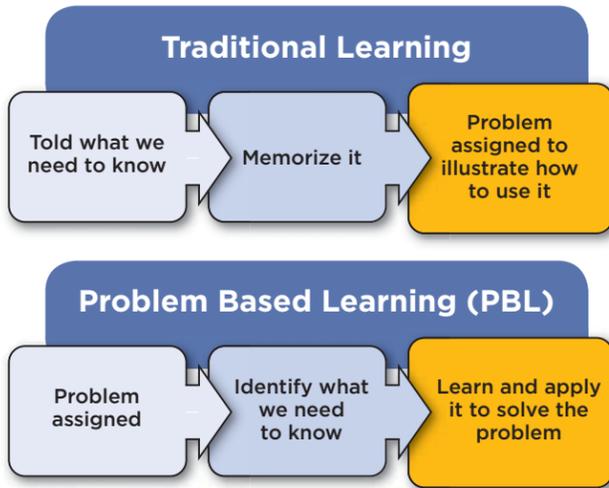


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Our Donors Inspire Solutions

You help students gain the confidence to take on new challenges.

Spotlight On Our Scholars

BUILDING STRONG FUTURES AND COMMUNITIES

2017 New Recipient Stories



Scholar:
Rollajia Cooper
Award:
CLCF Undergraduate
College:
Dalhousie University
Major:
Community Design

As one of her high school's top academic performers, Rollajia had her choice of career paths. However, it was her desire to develop her

community and her country that led her to study architecture.

"I intend to add value to my country," Rollajia shared. "I am overjoyed to know that as an architect, I will be instrumental in building my community."

When Rollajia was accepted into an accredited architecture program, she felt like a world of opportunity was within reach. After Dalhousie, she aspires to pursue a Master's degree in the field.

While Rollajia hopes to contribute to The Bahamas by creating architectural plans for buildings that will help with the challenges that island nations face such as environmental changes, it is the idea of designing community resource buildings that sparks her interest the most.

"As an architect, I will be capable of designing a homeless shelter for Bahamians in need. I would also be able to build recreational centers that will serve as safe spaces for young people to express themselves artistically and athletically."

**2017
Because of You -
31 new scholarship recipients**

- \$988,750 invested
- 94% First generation students
- 39% public school students
- 26% from Family Islands.

Scholar:
Nathaniel Rolle
Award:
TK Foundation Technical
College:
Southern Arkansas
University Tech
Major:
Aviation Maintenance
Technician



"Fast forward five years. . .I'm standing on the tarmac watching a Bahamian-owned twin engine turboprop with a repaired wing take flight. I stand proudly and smile knowing that those passengers can fly assured of their vessel's safety."

Nathaniel has a crystal-clear vision of his future. That's because he spent countless hours in high school researching the aviation maintenance field and planning his career.

His interest goes deeper than just repairing planes. His passion comes from seeing what is possible for The Bahamas by expanding an underdeveloped industry.

"Instead of depending on other countries to always provide qualified professionals in technical areas, I can help cultivate this field," notes Nathaniel.

After college, Nathaniel sees himself returning home as an aviation mechanic, eventually operating his own company and ultimately commandeering an aviation maintenance school in the country.

Today, Nathaniel's feet are firmly planted on the ground as he diligently prepares to meet the requirements for an aviation Inspector Authorization. But he knows that soon, his visions for both his future and The Bahamas will take flight.

DELAYED GRADUATE DREAMS BECOME REALITY

Scholar Finds That It's Never Too Late for College

Sadly, it was just too late.

Or was it?

Shawn Minnis reluctantly left his public high school before he had an opportunity to graduate and receive his diploma. Shawn was a go getter with good grades and big dreams . . . but he was also a realist.

With the death of his father leaving Shawn's mother as a single parent and the sole provider, he had to make a tough decision.

So Shawn put his dreams aside, left school and went to work to assist his family.

But leaving school didn't kill Shawn's dreams. The desire to have a meaningful career kept calling him.

He wondered if it he missed his opportunity to answer the call.

"Each year that I got older, I thought it was too late to go back to school," shared Shawn. "I had to realise that it's never too late and learning is a never-ending process."

After weighing his options, Shawn eventually decided that making the sacrifices necessary to pursue a college degree would be the key to unlocking all of the goals he had for himself and his family.

After four years in the work force, Shawn mustered the strength to return to school. With steadfast resolve, he achieved his high school diploma and then went on to complete numerous certifications and licenses in maritime studies.

But it wasn't enough and Shawn had the desire for more, despite needing help to pay for college. So, he turned to the Foundations and applied for a Scholarship.

Shawn was awarded a Scholarship, and this past May he graduated from Holland College with a certificate in Power Engineering.

Now Shawn is looking forward to a bright future in a field with endless possibilities. With his education, he is able to operate and maintain boilers, turbines, and complex refrigeration and air conditioning units in commercial and industrial buildings. It is an



Shawn Minnis at his graduation from Holland College in May 2017.

untapped field here in The Bahamas, which further positions Shawn for success.

When asked what advice he had for others who dreamed of making college a reality, Shawn said, "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."

**Between Fall 2016 and Spring 2017,
36 new graduates** joined the ranks of the more than 2,500 Scholars!

100% of these graduates studied fields that have equipped them to create innovative solutions for a rapidly evolving Bahamas.

For updates on these Scholars and the most up-to-date news, join our monthly e-newsletter at www.lyfordcayfoundation.org

Our Donors Inspire Solutions
You empower students to create opportunities for themselves and their communities.

Roundup Grants

REVIVING BAHAMIAN HERITAGE

Summer Camp Offers All Things Bahamian

A rich heritage brimming with a vibrant culture . . . it's at the heart of the Bahamian identity. Rhythm N' Youth's annual camp has the goal of ensuring that the next generation develops Bahamian pride and preserves that heritage.

This year, 12 of the 33 children who participated in the weeklong Camp RNY were able to take part due to a grant from the Foundations. The grant covered the cost of registration, programming, t-shirts, field trips and meals.

"Camp RNY is helping to empower our children to sustain themselves and our culture for generations to come."

The grant covered the cost of registration, programming, t-shirts, field trips and meals.

"Today's Bahamian children have the benefit

of seeing a wide array of cultures through the media," noted Nathaniel Adams, a former public school teacher who founded the New Providence-based organisation. "But this means that children become more well-versed in pop culture, and less in the unique legacy of our beautiful islands."

Adams felt compelled to create the camp, which later blossomed into the organisation Rhythm N' Youth, through years of interacting with primary school students.

"I realised that regardless of their ages, many of them could not identify our first prime minister, Sir Lynden Pindling, on the one dollar bill. Just this summer, many of these students didn't even know about how our track and field athletes brought home Olympic medals," shared Adams.

Through Camp RNY, students learned these important facts and much more. This summer, campers trekked through historical sites, giggled as they danced the quadrille, became immersed in Junkanoo and tried their hands at steel pan drums.

However, learning to play traditional Rake N' Scrape music, which Rhythm N' Youth is known throughout the community for promoting, was the most exhilarating



highlight of the camp. Discovering the lost science of island agriculture was a close second!

"It was exciting to see our students eat fresh Bahamian fruits for the first time, plant the seeds from these fruits and just a few days later discover little shoots growing," marveled Adams. This gardening initiative was so successful, that he plans to incorporate it in Rhythm N' Youth's year-round programming.

"Camp RNY is helping to empower our children to sustain themselves and our culture for generations to come."

CULTIVATING INNOVATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS

Students Learn and Advocate for Change

Back in 2012, after twenty days crossing the Pacific Ocean with an environmental group to study the Western Garbage Patch in Japan, Kristal Ambrose found herself staring at a tangled, wet mess full of deadly potential.

As the budding scientist looked at the thick plastic debris and the fish trapped within it struggling to survive, her passion to rid The Bahamas of marine pollution was born.

Today, Kristal, a Scholar who recently graduated with her Bachelor's Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, is the catalyst and founder behind Bahamas Plastic Movement. The vibrant non-profit organisation is based in Eleuthera and works with citizens to research, educate and shape policy around plastic pollution in Bahamian waters.

As a Scholar, Kristal knew first-hand how partnering with the Foundations can impact lives and communities. So as Kristal prepared for Bahamas Plastic Movement's camp this summer, she sought out a Foundation grant for support.



Bahamas Plastic Movement's summer camp provided environmental education for 100 Family Island students.

Through the grant, and with the support of many other community organisations, the tuition-free summer camp provided environmental education for nearly 100 students in South Eleuthera, Harbour Island, Exuma, and Abaco.

Science came alive for the students this summer as they learned to be environmental stewards through activities, classroom lectures, community activism and artistic expression. Students who had never previously given much thought to their environment found themselves on an ocean trawl for surface plastics, heating plastic for biofuel and doing beach plastic surveys.

Campers were able to find their voice by developing a call to action video for the Prime Minister to ban the use of plastic bags in The Bahamas. The culmination of the action-packed camp was a student-led Community Show where students used songs, poems and skits to raise awareness.



"Our programme is grounded in a very real problem we are facing in our environment, but it's rooted deeper in the hopefulness that comes from engaging young people in developing innovative solutions," reflects Kristal.

"The summer camp provided a platform for family island students to tackle issues in an impactful way. We are grateful. Thank you."



Kristal Ambrose

Our Donors Inspire Solutions

You preserve heritage and resources for future generations

Our Donors

Inspire Solutions

KATHERINE A. ELZA

Supporting Young Bahamians And Their Dreams

Katherine A. Elza loves The Bahamas. She loves the picture-perfect weather and the tranquil beauty of the islands. Most of all, Katherine loves the unlimited potential that lies within the Bahamian people.

Her love for The Bahamas, her firm belief in the possibilities that a good education provides and a strong family legacy of philanthropy are a few reasons why Katherine proudly supports the Foundations each year.

Katherine shared her thoughts on investing in Bahamian dreams:

“The importance of education has been ingrained in me since I was a child. Between my grandfather, Godfrey Kelly, who was the first Minister of Education, and my aunt, Nancy Kelly, who has been a Director of the Lyford Cay Foundation since 1996, I was raised to believe that education is the pillar of success.

I am very lucky to have been afforded an education which has given me the opportunity to accomplish everything I set out to do. As a seventh generation Bahamian, I’m grateful that I can live, work and make a difference in the country I love.

If I had my way, every young Bahamian would have the opportunities that I had so they too could follow their dreams and pursue their career choice.

In my opinion, there is a direct correlation between inadequate learning opportunities and the social problems that we face as a nation. There is so much potential for our archipelago and organisations like the Foundations provide hope for our people and their future.

Empowering young people and allowing them to pursue their dreams --this is what the Foundations stand for.

As a young professional, my message to my fellow Bahamians is that goals are achievable and you should not be afraid to strive for success.

Support for the Foundations is synonymous with support for young Bahamians. That is why I donate to the Lyford Cay Foundations.”



Katherine A. Elza

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.

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/ways-to-give/ or call us at 242-362-4910.

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