

St. Vincent and the Grenadines

44th Anniversary of Independence – 1979 to 2023

"Our Resilience, Our Fortitude, Our People, Our Identity."

**Estate Banquet & Event Centre
430 Nugget Avenue, Scarborough, ON
Saturday, October 28, 2023**

**Under the distinguished patronage of
The Consulate General of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to Toronto**



A view of the bay at Port Elizabeth on Bequia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines (Getty Images)



THE ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC.

P. O. Box 80066 – Don Valley Village P. O., Toronto, ON, M2J 0A1

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Program

Cocktail Hour

Welcome

Emcee: Mr. Kenney Coombs

National Anthem of Canada

National Anthem of St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Invocation

Mr. Dennis Bucchan

DINNER

Remarks &

Presentation to Scholarship Recipients

Mr. Cordel Telfer

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

Greetings

Mr. Fitzgerald Huggins

St. Vincent and the Grenadines Consul General to Toronto

Introduction of Guest Speaker

Hayden Jones

Keynote Address

Professor, Dr. Richard Robertson

Volcanologist

Door Prizes and Cash Draws

Vote of Thanks

Mr. Gideon Exeter

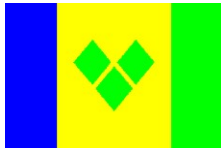
Public Relations Officer, St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto

Dancing to the music of DJ Fusion & DJ Twist

NATIONAL ANTHEMS



O Canada! Our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With growing hearts, we see thee rise,
The True North, strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee!



St. Vincent Land so beautiful
With joyful hearts we pledge to thee
Our loyalty and love and vow
To keep you ever free.

***Whate'er the future brings
Our faith will see us through.
May peace reign from shore to shore
And God bless and keep us true.***

Hairoun! Our fair and blessed Isle
Your mountains high, so clear and green;
Are home to me though I may stray;
A haven calm serene.

Our little sister islands are
Those gems the lovely Grenadines,
Upon their seas and golden sands
The sunshine ever beams.

OUR APPRECIATION

The Organizing Committee, on behalf of the Board of Directors and membership of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. herewith express sincere thanks to all those who in one way or the other assisted in making the celebrations of our activities to commemorate the 44th anniversary of the independence of our country possible.

Special thanks to our guest speaker, Professor Richard Robertson who travelled from the Caribbean to be with us.

We thank our sponsors and advertisers in this Souvenir Brochure; those who donated in kind and coin for the other events; those artistes who donated their time; those who assisted in the sale of tickets and encouraged others to attend our events.

We also thank all those who were able to attend our events. We trust that as we celebrate the accomplishments of yesterday, we are encouraged to embrace the future with the hope that God will guide us to be a nation of blessed people.

Special thanks to the management and staff of the Estate & Event Centre for their hospitality.

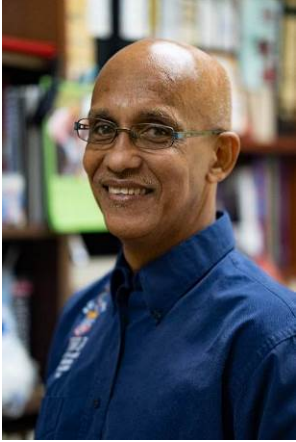
We join all St. Vincent and the Grenadines nationals at home and in the Diaspora in celebrating this anniversary.

Members of the Organizing Committee, 2023 Independence Anniversary Celebrations

The National Pledge of St. Vincent and the Grenadines

*Land of my birth I pledge to thee,
My loyalty and devotion,
In all I think or say or do.*

OUR GUEST SPEAKER



Dr. Richard E. A. Robertson

Born in St Vincent, Dr. Robertson is a Geologist and Volcanologist whose interest in volcanology was inspired by his personal experience in 1979, when he and his family woke to the eruption of the Soufriere volcano, which displaced 14,000 Vincentians one of whom was his grandmother.

He subsequently studied Geology at UWI, Volcanology at the University of Leeds in the UK (M Phil) and completed his PhD in Geology at Mona, Jamaica. His PhD thesis (The Volcanic Geology of pre-Soufriere Rocks in St Vincent) and the Volcanic Hazards Atlas, which he co-edited, are benchmarks in the study of volcanology in the Eastern Caribbean. He joined the staff at the Seismic Research Centre (SRC) in 1993 after serving for six years as Head of the Soufriere Monitoring Unit in St. Vincent.

During the period 1995-1999 he served several tours of duty as Chief Scientist of the Montserrat Volcano Observatory and was its Director from October 1998 - March 1999. He was appointed Head of the Seismic Research Centre in July 2005 and Director of the Seismic Research Centre in July 2008. He has worked in most aspects of the SRC operations but has been most closely associated with the public education, hazards assessment, ground deformation and geothermal monitoring programs. He has a keen interest in the dissemination of scientific information to vulnerable island communities. He is an experienced field researcher as well as an academic and has authored over 35 papers in peer-reviewed scientific journals and books, co-edited 2 books and contributed to numerous technical reports, newspaper articles, radio and television programs. He has assisted with the field supervision and lecturing of undergraduate geoscience students and the supervision of postgraduate students.

His research interests are in physical volcanology (particularly volcanic hazard studies), magma genesis and transport, crisis communications and risk perception of natural hazards. He is much sought after as a consultant on his area of expertise to, inter alia, UNESCO, the Organisation of American States, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and United Nations Development Fund.

In addition to his professional consultancy work, Dr Robertson is also active in public education and public service. He has organized several conferences, short training courses and given numerous lectures throughout the region, and in the US, UK, and China. He provides assistance to the National Emergency Organisation of St Vincent, and serves as an advisor to such organizations in Trinidad & Tobago, Grenada, Montserrat, and other islands. He also maintains membership in several professional societies, including the European and American Geophysical unions, and the Geological Societies of Trinidad & Tobago, London and America.

Dr Robertson has been much recognized and awarded for his work. He has received scholarships from the UNDP and Association of Commonwealth Universities for higher education. He has also received grants from the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 and a Commonwealth Professional Fellowship.

In collaboration with colleagues at the Seismic Research Centre he has secured project grants from the Caribbean Development Bank, USAID, European Union, CCRIF and the Government of Trinidad & Tobago. In 2014, he received the Anthony N. Sabga Caribbean Award for Excellence in the category of Science & Technology. In April 2021 when the La Soufriere Volcano again erupted, Dr. Robertson returned to assist the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to spearhead the monitoring of the eruptions and to provide guidance to the Government in relocating displaced persons. <https://ansacaribbeanawards.com>



Consulate General of St. Vincent and the Grenadines

55 Town Centre Court, Suite 403 Toronto, Ontario M1P 4X4
Tel: 416-398-4277 Fax: 647-438-5312 - E-mail: consulategeneral@rogers.com

INDEPENDENCE DAY MESSAGE 2023: RESILIENCE AND FORTITUDE

**Fitzgerald Huggins
Consul General**



On October 27, 2023, St. Vincent and the Grenadines celebrates and commemorates the forty-fourth independence anniversary of its reclamation from the British under the theme “Our Resilience, Our Fortitude, Our People, Our Identity, Road to 45”.

Objective observers will agree that we have made tremendous strides over the last forty-four years. In fact, we can boast of some achievements that can make every citizen proud: Education Revolution, construction of Argyle International Airport, Agriculture and Fisheries, hotel development, the construction of a modern port, sea and river defenses, school rehabilitation and construction, the building of a modern hospital at Georgetown, the building of polyclinics across the country, improvements in health services, (MRI, CT Scan and dialysis services) housing and community amenities, roads and bridges, renewable energy, telecommunications, water, the creative arts, sports and recreation, strengthening democracy, good governance, the judicial system, regional integration, our election to the United Nations Security Council, just to name a few.

All these achievements and more as a result of good governance and a hard-working people.

Over these years, our advancements were interrupted by several events that tested our Resilience, Our Fortitude, Our People, Our Identity, namely:

September 11, 2001, 2008 great recession, hurricanes and tropical Storms, Covid 19, thirty-two volcanic eruptions that caused the displacement of one fifth of the population from the Red Zones to safe zones, Russia Ukraine war, Israel Palestine war.

Sadly, we have not been spared by the spate of violent crimes affecting our Caribbean Community.

The theme for Independence Day, 2023, focusses on our people’s resilience, fortitude and identity as we move forward to the “Road to 45”. Barring any unforeseen circumstances, the “Road to 45” seems clear for continued growth in the economy with the opening of Sandals Resort, Holiday Inn Express, Modern Kingstown Port, T20 Cricket World Cup, CELAC conference, Independence 2024, of course, Vincy Mas, Nine Mornings and Christmas celebrations.

Our country has come through deep valleys of despair, convulsions and dislocations because of our people’s resilience, fortitude and hard work. We can identify with the best in the region and the world.

Our people in the diaspora have always stepped up when they are called upon to do so and it is with a grateful heart that I thank you for your support always. St. Vincent and the Grenadines is on a path to succeed and we will need all hands-on deck to make their contribution.

The government has recently passed the Second-Generation Citizenship Bill to allow for your grand children who were not born in St. Vincent and the Grenadines to become citizens. I await the announcement of more cultural ambassadors from the Canadian Diaspora to add to the appointment of Julian McIntosh in 2022.

As the words of our national anthem reminds us, “whate’er the future brings, our faith will see us through”.

Fresh Hope!!

Happy 44th Independence St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Message from the President



Dear Members and Supporters,

On behalf of the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto, I extend my warmest greetings to all as we celebrate the 44th Independence of St. Vincent and the Grenadines under the inspiring theme, "Our resilience, our fortitude, our people, our identity."

This occasion marks a proud moment in our history, recognizing the strength and unity of our people. Let us unite, cherishing our heritage, and embracing the future with unwavering determination.

As we reflect on our journey and achievements, may our shared resilience be a source of inspiration for future generations. Together, we honor the values that define our unique identity and the rich tapestry of our nation.

Let us continue to stand as one, celebrating the spirit of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
Happy Independence Day!

Sincerely,

Cordel Telfer

President, St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto

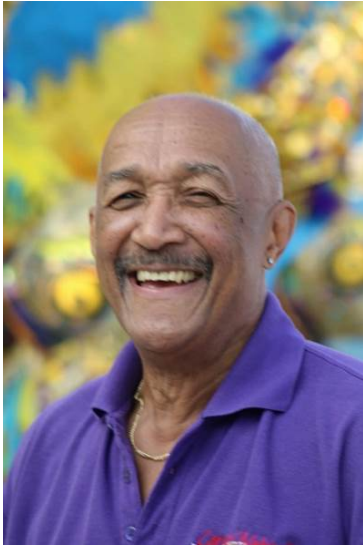
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS – THE ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC.

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	Kenneth Farrell	416-882-3601	
	Selwyn (Jim) Lewis	416-459-2462	

Association's General Email address: svgat@vincytoronto.com

Master of Ceremonies

Mr. Kenney Coombs



1960 -1970: Attended Boy’s Grammar School - Excelled in academics, athletics, football, Cadets.
 1970-1980: Recipient of Rotary Foundation International Award - Allows recipient to attend Post secondary learning in any country of choice (fees paid by Rotary Int’l).
 Seneca College: Major in Accounting - Dean’s honours list.
 1980-1990: York University. B.A. degree in economics, minor in sociology
 1990-2000: Founding member of Toronto Caribbean Connection - a carnival group that was part of Caribana.
 Won band of year honours and other prizes in every category over the years.
 2000-2010: Represented Canada in Hong Kong’s new year’s parade along, with 40 performers featuring costumes, pan, calypso, dance. Did workshops and costume seminars in Belize, Central America.
 Consultant to Ontario Science Centre re: establishing criteria for award in creative design.

Won most individual costume prizes in Toronto carnival history.
 2010 - Present: Cast member of “Becoming a Queen “. This documentary won award for Best Feature Film at Caribbean Tales Film Festival. “Becoming a Queen” opened the St. Vincent film festival in May 2023 at Calliaqua playing field. It won numerous awards around the world.
 Kenney is considered one of Canada’s top costume designers.

Kenney has assisted the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association in the past as an MC and we are thankful that he can be with us again on this important occasion.

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. Membership Registration Form

Name: _____ Tel: _____

Address: (Street) _____ Unit _____

(Town/City): _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

CURRENT MEMBER FOR RENEWAL OR NEW MEMBER? _____
NEW MEMBER OR RENEWAL: (\$20:00 annual subscription); (Student: \$10.00) When application is approved, please make cheque payable to THE ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC. and mail payment to: P. O. Box 80066 – Don Valley Village P. O., Toronto, ON, M2J 0A1

Recognition of Sandra Sutherland



The Board of Directors of the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto (SVGAT) has agreed to publicly recognize Ms. Sandra Sutherland for her service to the St. Vincent and the Grenadines community and the SVGAT for many years.

Sandra Sutherland is a native Vincentian. She donates her time and resources with a view towards serving individuals and community groups. Her extensive efforts, such as her informative column about Immigration Matters in the SVGAT's quarterly newsletter, *Insight*, and our Independence journal for approximately twenty years are just a few examples of her valuable contributions to the community that warrant recognition.

The Board of Directors of the SVGAT strongly believes that her contributions have improved the lives of SVG nationals and other individuals, not just in Toronto but globally through our newsletter distribution. She has been a participant in informative seminars and has been a guest speaker on various radio stations for several years discussing immigration matters. Ms. Sutherland owns and operates Sutherland Immigration & Paralegal Services Inc., in Toronto where she dedicates her resources and passion to help people from all walks of life by representing them in their immigration matters.

Ms. Sutherland has served as a member on various Board of Directors for non-profit organizations for many years, including SVGAT's Board. She also makes valuable contributions to other community organizations such as The Toronto SVG Support Group and CARI-ON SVG Disaster Preparedness via her membership. She was a founding member of the SVG Business and Professional Association. She exhibits a consistent willingness to lend a hand whenever assistance was required.

Her diligent planning of our Thanksgiving Church Services and her participation in the planning of our Independence Galas for over ten years are well appreciated. She served on ad hoc committees over the years in rendering assistance to Vincentians during various times of crises (i.e.: floodings, volcanic eruption). Her name, Sandra, means *helper of mankind*. She endeavours to remain committed to using her knowledge and various gifts in helping others and in giving back to her community.

Thanks Sandra. Our community wishes you God's continued blessings and success in all your endeavours.

IMMIGRATION MATTERS:

FOCUSING ON THE PLIGHT OF IMMIGRANT WORKERS AND DISPLACED REFUGEES

Contributed by: Sandra Sutherland, RCIC-IRB

This year's independence theme, "*Our Resilience, Our Fortitude, Our People, Our Identity*" is quite fitting as we approach what seems to be the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. I can't think of any other group of immigrants who exhibit resilience and fortitude than the workers who migrate here from Mexico and Caribbean countries (including SVG) under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program SAWP (a.k.a. farm workers program) as well as the thousands of undocumented workers who work in the industrial sector (especially factories) and in the healthcare industry (mainly as caregivers).

During the pandemic, essential workers in the healthcare industry were frequently lauded. The media gave little praise, if any, to the migrant farm workers and undocumented workers. These workers placed their health and well-being at risk and worked throughout the pandemic to ensure that we Canadians could have groceries and other essential items available to us. There were reports of COVID outbreaks on some farms and in some factories, yet, they kept on working tirelessly in high-risk situations to bring us our provisions. They exhibited a huge amount of resilience and fortitude as they struggled to provide for themselves, their family and residents of Canada.

These workers contribute to our economy, tax system and society in many ways but after many years of toiling they continually face challenges in acquiring permanent resident status in Canada. Our Federal Government brought in thousands of nationals from Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine who were privy to housing, employment, social assistance, and an array of settlement services. It was reported that various groups and organizations provided added support to these immigrants. While we applaud our leaders and fellow citizens for such compassion, the unresolved issue of undocumented workers could be given similar consideration so that these individuals too can be afforded the opportunity to become permanent residents, perhaps under an amnesty program, and continue to make positive contributions to the Canadian society and to do so legally.

Currently, farm workers in certain industries and in certain occupations, who have accumulated at least 1 year of full-time work experience may apply for permanent residence if they meet the eligibility criteria for the Agri-Food Pilot program, a Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) or the Express Entry system. Information about the Agri-Food Pilot program can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/agri-food-pilot/about.html>. Information about the PNP, Express Entry and other programs can be found at the Government of Canada website at www.canada.gc.ca.

Nationals from countries like Haiti, South Sudan, Somalia, and Myanmar have been facing humanitarian crises in their homeland for many years. They suffer from malnutrition, unhygienic living conditions, abuse and dangerous situations while living in refugee camps. It would be fair if our Federal Government would accept some of these refugees who have been living for years in overcrowded refugee camps. The new Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP) project helps skilled refugees and other displaced people immigrate to Canada by means of this new project or via the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP), a Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) or the Rural and Northern Immigration Program. This project and the other noted programs focus primarily on economic refugees. More information on EMPP, AIP, PNP and the RNIP can be found via this link <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/economic-mobility-pathways-pilot/immigrate/eligibility.html>.

On October 10, 2023 the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship announced that Canada would be initiating permanent resident humanitarian and economic pathway programs that would enable foreign nationals from Colombia, Venezuela and Haiti to apply for permanent resident status. A humanitarian permanent resident pathway is expected to start in the fall of 2023 whereby up to 11,000 eligible foreign nationals from these countries may apply for permanent resident status under this program. In order to apply

they must be the child, grandchild, spouse, common-law partner, parent, grandparent or sibling of a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada. I commend the Federal Government for initiating this program. I am presenting these issues in order to appeal to the minds and hearts of individuals and organizations. Perhaps our Federal Government may open their minds to the humanitarian crises in the refugee camps and open their doors and accept some of these displaced refugees into Canada so that they can raise their standard of living and afford their future generations the opportunity of a better life. It is hoped that we would be encouraged to better appreciate the farm workers and undocumented essential workers and advocate for new programs or pathways so that they can continue to contribute to our economy and social system on a permanent basis.

**HAPPY INDEPENDENCE
TO ALL NATIONALS OF
ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES!**

Sandra Sutherland is a competent authorized immigration representative and counsel who is licensed to represent clients at all divisions of the Immigration and Refugee Board. 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 - IRB (RCIC-IRB). She can be reached at **(416) 431-2829** or via e-mail at ssutherland@suthernimmigration.com. View her advertisement under *Suthern Immigration & Paralegal Services Inc.* in this publication for more information.

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Immigration Practitioner (Honours Certification)
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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


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The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto's Scholarship Program is intended to encourage students of SVG descent to pursue the highest level of education possible and to assist them financially.

Our sincere thanks to all those who have supported this program from inception.

The Adopt-A-Child Program - History of the Program from Inception

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. (SVGAT) began the Adopt-A-Child Program by sponsoring two students from January 2008.

The program is intended to assist children from their second year in primary school in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, who face economic challenges and whom the teachers feel have the potential to succeed if they receive financial assistance to provide meals, clothing and school material. The financial aid is intended to last for five (5) years, at which time, the students will complete their primary school education and transition to secondary school.

The financial aid was determined to be the equivalent of CDN\$50.00 per month or CDN\$600.00 per year in Eastern Caribbean Currency which would be approximately EC\$100.00 per month or EC\$1,200.00 per year. The total for the 5-year period was CDN\$3,000.00.

Students are chosen based on the number of sponsors the Association received and on that number through a random lottery draw where the schools were drawn. The names of all primary schools in St. Vincent and the Grenadines were entered in the draw and were selected based on the number of sponsors. Additionally, if a sponsor wished to sponsor a particular student through the program, the Association would serve as the administrator as if it was done through the usual sponsorship.

The names of schools and the ten (10) students selected over the years were as follows:

2008 – 2013	Spring Village Methodist School Cane End Government School	Donlee Sutherland Kadesha Nicholls
2013 – 2018	Fairhall Government School Tourama Government School	Fredriq John Sherrian Baptiste
2018 – 2023	Bequia Seventh Day Adventist School Buccament Government School Calliaqua Anglican School Dickson Methodist School Lowmans Leeward Anglican School Lodge Village Government School Lauders Primary School Marriaqua Primary School	Victor Henry Compton Xavier Bowens Imari Pauls Winston Saunders* Winston Saunders* Winston Saunders* Clayrice Bruce Nicklon John

* Winston Saunders changed schools several times.

The board of directors has agreed to continue this program for another 5-year cycle (2024 to 2028) and is appealing to persons who would like to support a student to contact any member of the board.

Sponsorship for the new group of students will begin in January 2024, so if you would like to sponsor a student, you are to indicate now so that necessary steps can be taken. Once a sponsor has committed, a school will be selected and informed of its selection, then the school will put a process in place to select the deserving student. Consideration will be given to persons who would like to sponsor a student from any particular area or school.

Interested persons can wholly sponsor a student for CDN\$720.00 per year for five (5) years or join with others to do so. The annual sponsorship fee is paid in advance.

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FORTUNATE ONES IN OUR COMMUNITY:

- The Adopt-A-Child Program
- The Scholarship Program
- The Christmas Hamper Program
- A variety of causes in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

If you would like to contribute to any of the above, please contact a member of the Board of Directors or visit our website: vincytoronto.com.

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc.

Christmas Hamper Outreach

HELP US ASSIST THOSE MEMBERS OF
OUR COMMUNITY WHO ARE LESS
FORTUNATE AND RECOMMEND A
FAMILY OR AN INDIVIDUAL TO MAKE A
DONATION

Please Contact:

Kenneth Farrell @ 416-822-3601,

Erlene Granderson @ 416-788-5163

Bernadette Ryan Phillips @ 416-840-7346

**2023 INDEPENDENCE
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Prudence Morton
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*Sandra Sutherland
Prudence Morton*

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COORDINATOR**

Cordel Telfer

Our sincere thanks to all members of the Committees
for the contribution of their time, talent and efforts.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines
attained Independence from Great
Britain on October 27, 1979.

Happy Independence Anniversary
Greetings to all St. Vincent and the
Grenadines Nationals at home and
in the Diaspora. May God truly
bless our country, its leaders and
people.



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of the Board of Directors.

A Note of Thanks

*The Board of Directors of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto herewith
express thanks to all those who participated in and contributed in one way or the other to the
Independence Thanksgiving Church Service on Sunday, October 22 at Rosewood Church of
the Nazarene, Scarborough as well as all of the other events to commemorate the anniversary.*

MENU

Hors d'Ouevres

Bread & Rolls

Appetizer

Breaded Shrimp, Chicken Tacos, Vegetable Spring Rolls,
Vegetable Samosa, Onion Rings

Main Course

Penne Pasta with Tomato Sauce
Grilled Chicken in Mushroom Sauce, or
Salmon in a Lemon Butter Sauce
Mini Red Roasted Potatoes
Mixed Green Salad
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Dessert

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Wishes the Government and People of St. Vincent and the Grenadines all the best as you celebrate the 44th Anniversary of Independence as well as growth, prosperity and God's blessings in the years ahead.

Congratulations to the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. (SVGAT) for coordinating the events to celebrate the occasion.

As a founding member of the CCAC, thanks to the board of directors and membership of the SVGAT for your continued support.

www.caribbeancouncilcanada.org

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto Scholarship Program

Recipient of a St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Bursary



Sydney Telfer is a first-year student at Queen’s University and is enrolled in the Honours Bachelor of Arts Program. She will be majoring in Sociology with a minor in Black Studies and her goal is to continue on to Teachers College to become the black female teacher she never saw while growing up. Throughout her life Sydney has been driven by a strong desire to create a positive impact within her community. Whether through inspiration, assistance or being a role model, the idea of touching lives beyond her own has fueled her passion and teaching seems to be an avenue through which she can best channel her aspiration.

Sydney pointed out that when she was growing up, Black Female Teachers were few and far between. Students like herself, she says, experienced feelings of isolation and there was a lack of representation. She got involved with children during her high school years by teaching swimming and watching the genuine joy in the eyes of children of colour when they encountered a leader who shared their background.

Sydney is no stranger to the Association. She has been involved in the organization her whole life alongside her father who is a member of The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto (SVGAT). She has participated in many of the events held by the association; The Unity Picnic, Mother’s Day and the Annual Children’s Christmas Party. Sydney says “Through these experiences I am fortunate to have made connections with a variety of people and my heritage.”

Always looking for opportunities to be involved in her community, during the last three years, Sydney has been extremely busy in her neighbourhood. She has volunteered as a Camp Counsellor, was the core leader for Big Brother/Big Sister events, served meals at a Soup Kitchen, helped out with the Feed The Need Program in Durham Region and volunteered at retirement homes in her community.

Sydney believes she can become the mentor and advisor she wished she had during her own upbringing. Her ultimate vision is a future where all classrooms at all levels of education are fully integrated with Black Teachers and students who feel pride in their cultural heritage. She also envisions Black Students Associations, led by black educators, in every school. Sydney says “...I am committed to making a positive impact throughout my life ...to serve as a positive influence and role model for students embracing and celebrating the diversity of cultures I encounter every day.”

The Board of Directors of SVGAT, along with members of the CARI-ON Disaster Preparedness Organization and the Toronto SVG Support Group, congratulate Sydney on her achievements and wish her every success on her academic journey.

Recipient of a St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Bursary



Davisha E. Joseph Davisha is a first-year student at the University of Guelph-Humber where she is enrolled in the Justice Studies Program. This unique program will allow her, later on, to choose either the police foundations pathway or the community and justice pathway. No matter which path she follows, Davisha will earn not only a Bachelor of Science degree but also a diploma in the pathway of her choice. Her goal is to become a Police Officer.

As a police officer, Davisha believes that she will be able to help build trust and respect between the Police and the Black Community. She will actively engage in community policing by opening lines of communication with black community members to help build relationships. Davisha plans to demonstrate that when the police address issues that specifically affect the black community and the black community provides insights and perspectives that may not be apparent to others, this communication would lead to effective policing.

Davisha also says that as a member of the Black Community, and as a police officer, she will play an important role by consistently challenging and addressing any situations of racial profiling, discriminatory practices, carding, etc. to help ensure that members of the black community are treated fairly regardless of the colour of their skin.

Davisha has seen small changes in the justice system however, as a role model and a representative of the Black Community, opening lines of communication between community members and law enforcement, will go a long way towards eradicating the injustices that exist in the black community.

One of Davisha's goals is to not only to eradicate discriminatory practices towards members of the black community but to also inspire, motivate and empower other young black students to enter the police profession and join her in her quest for a more equitable and just society.

The Board of Directors of SVGAT, along with members of the CARI-ON Disaster Preparedness Organization and the Toronto SVG Support Group, congratulate Davisha on her achievements and wish her every success on her academic journey.

Recipient of The Peter Morton Family Bursary



Kenya James is a second-year student at York university pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Law and Society. Kenya finished her first year with a Grade Point Average of 8.0 which placed her in the prestigious Dean's Circle of Student Scholars in the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies. On completion of her B.A. Kenya will be continuing on to Osgoode Law School to earn her Law Degree. Kenya's goal is to advocate for the Vincentian Diaspora as well as the broader West Indian Community in North America.

Kenya's formative years were spent in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and she has also lived in various Caribbean Islands. According to Kenya, the concept of diasporic identity involves a compelling sense of community with those who share cultural and national similarities. She says that the cultural tapestry of St. Vincent and the Grenadines is so distinct from that of other countries like Canada that this distinction makes the role of diasporic communities vital for persons in the diaspora to preserve this culture.

Kenya is passionate about the role that Caribbean communities play here in Canada. She added, "The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto (SVGAT) which was established as a non-profit association in 1968 is committed to preserving Vincentian culture and history, through its commitment to providing an 'anti bias forum for cultural, educational, social and recreational enrichment...as such, SVGAT is demonstrating and advocating for the Vincentian diasporic identity...similarly, at York University, the United Caribbean Islands Club, of which I am a proud member, serves as a sanctuary for Caribbean students, offering a sense of home away from home...communities like the Vincentian and broader West Indian diaspora serve as templates for how successful cultural preservation and community can look...it's not just holding on to our past, it's also about building bridges into our future, especially for generations that will grow up far removed from their ancestral homeland."

Kenya's passion extends to her involvement in life at York as well as to her extra-curricular activities; Floor representative at Tatham Hall, Peer Mentor and Orientation Leader at York University; Co-editor of her high-school newspaper, dancer in modern and Afro-Caribbean genres, Steel Pan Orchestra and Content Creator, YouTube channel.

The Board of Directors of SVGAT, along with members of the CARI-ON Disaster Preparedness Organization and the Toronto SVG Support Group, congratulate Kenya on her many achievements and wish her all the best on her academic journey.

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto Scholarship Program

Recipient of the KLC / Eastern Caribbean Freight Lines Bursary



Taijah Watson is a second-year student at Niagara College who is pursuing a career in Social Work. Taijah chose social work because it is crucial to address the diverse and complex issues that affect many communities. More specifically, she believes social work holds great potential to positively impact the Black Canadian Community which, historically, has faced systemic inequalities and social injustices. Taijah believes that a career in social work will provide her with the opportunity to implement change in what she sees as racial disparities in education, healthcare, criminal justice and socioeconomic opportunities.

Taijah will advocate for change that will address the disparities in drop-out rates, academic achievement and access to quality educational resources that black students often face. One of the ways this can be accomplished would be to identify at-risk students, provide counselling and support and collaborate with educators to develop strategies that address the unique challenges faced by black students. Additionally, she will engage in policy advocacy to promote and educate educational reforms that reduce the systemic biases and discrimination within the Canadian education system.

Taijah has always been a very busy young lady who engaged in community work. Amongst other activities, she has assisted the Emerge Fight The Stigma Media Event in Toronto to raise awareness of mental health and to destigmatize the stereotypes that surround mental illness; She has coordinated and hosted an “I’m Still Healing Event” and coordinated guest speakers at a variety of events for audiences to hear motivational and inspirational testimonies of real-life experiences in mental health.


This exceptional young lady says she gets her inspiration from the resilience and determination of her family, peers and mentors who have shown her the value of education to overcome adversity.

The Board of Directors of SVGAT, along with members of the CARI-ON Disaster Preparedness Organization and the Toronto SVG Support Group, congratulate Taijah on her many achievements and wish her all the best on her academic journey.



**St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Tourism Office**

- 416-630-9292
- svgta.ca@discoversvg.com
- 403 - 55 Town Centre Court
Scarborough, ON M1P 4X4



**THE ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES
ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC.**

Wishes the Government and People of
St. Vincent and the Grenadines

**HAPPY 44th INDEPENDENCE
ANNIVERSARY**



Conducting Active Relief Impacting Our Nation

CARI-ON SVG DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

takes this opportunity to wish the Government and People of St. Vincent and the Grenadines a Happy and Enjoyable 44th anniversary of Independence. We also thank the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. for coordinating the events here in Toronto to celebrate the occasion.

CARI-ON is a Non-Profit Organization dedicated to providing resources and timely relief efforts to help families and communities in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to CARI-ON during and after natural and other disasters.

Working closely with the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) and NGOs, CARI-ON ships needed supplies to help mitigate disasters such as hurricanes, floods and alike as well as the recent eruption of the La Soufrière volcano. CARI-ON is a member of the Canadian Caribbean Disaster Relief Action (CCaDiRA) whose remit is to coordinate disaster preparedness, relief, emergency and response activities between the Caribbean Diaspora in Canada and the Caribbean Region.

CARI-ON Disaster Preparedness
21 Kingham Avenue, Ajax, Ontario, L1Z 1M9
Website: [CARI-ON SVG Disaster Preparedness \(carionsvg.org\)](http://CARI-ON SVG Disaster Preparedness (carionsvg.org))
Email: carion.org@gmail.com



The Toronto SVG Support Group extends congratulations to St. Vincent and the Grenadines on the 44th anniversary of its Independence.

Our Objectives:

- Create a positive image of SVG and its nationals;
- Engage in fundraising activities that are specifically targeted to the Caribbean and Canadian community;
- Promote and facilitate positive interaction among nationals of SVG throughout the diaspora;
- Aid in the socio-economic development of young Vincentians at home and abroad;
- Be non-political in the SVG, Caribbean and Canadian environment;
- Have a willingness to partner with or otherwise support any other Caribbean group or person(s) with similar objectives.

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Top 12 Most Significant Moments in the History of St Vincent and the Grenadines

A country's legacy is built on the struggles and triumphs of its people and here in St Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), we have overcome insurmountable challenges to advance toward social and economic progress.

March 17, 1797: End of the Carib Wars and banishment of the Garifuna

The indigenous people of the island mounted fierce resistance to British colonization. Led by the [Chief of Chiefs, Joseph Chatoyer](#), they [fought in two wars](#) from 1769–1773 and again from 1795–1797. The resistance was eventually quelled by British armed forces. As punishment, the British rounded up over 5,000 Black Caribs and exiled them to the island of Balliceaux then to the island of Roatan where they then went on to settle in Central America. This fight is the foundation of the celebration for [National Heroes Day](#) and is testament to the fierce spirit of Vincentian people.

August 1, 1834: Emancipation Day

Following a 40-year period under the system of chattel slavery in St Vincent and the Grenadines, the Slavery Abolition Act was passed by the British government in 1833 and [came into effect](#) the following year. The Act saw planters in SVG receive compensation for the loss of property. They received payment in the amount of £1.6 million. The over 22,000 ex-slaves, however received no money and were forced to continue labouring under a four-year apprenticeship system.

May 7, 1902: Eruption of La Soufriere

La Soufriere volcano has erupted six times since the 18th century (1718, 1812, 1902, 1971, 1979 and 2021). The most famous of these is [the 1902 eruption](#), which began on May 6, 1902. The rapid onset of the May 1902 eruptions caught many people unaware, and contributed to the high death toll. The majority of the injured and dead were from the Windward coast north of Georgetown. From the available information, residents of the Leeward coast north of Chateaubelair which was also badly affected by the eruptions had either fled or taken refuge before the inundation by pyroclastic flows; and consequently, casualties there were fewer. A total of 2000 lives were lost and the northern part of the island was decimated.

Labour disturbances of October 21 & 22, 1935

During the 1930's, labour uprisings were springing up across the Caribbean. In St Vincent and the Grenadines, [a proposed increase on the price](#) of matches and other commodities was the breaking point that sent working class people to seek an audience with the Governor in the yard of the Court House. By the evening they had grown restless and eventually launched an attack on the senior members of The House. Stores associated with the revenue generating legislation such as Coreas were attacked. By the next day the riots had reached Campden Park and protestors focused their frustration on the business of John DaSouza, which later spread to rioting in Questelles. The event is recognized as the catalyst for social and political development in SVG and the attainment of Universal Suffrage in 1951.

Spiritual Baptist Freedom to Worship – 1965

Spiritual Baptists in St Vincent and the Grenadines regained the legal right to worship in 1965. The Shaker Prohibition Ordinance was passed in St Vincent in November, 1912 which led to the persecution of persons on the island who practiced 'Shakerism', known today as the Spiritual Baptists. The Spiritual Baptist religion emerged out of the slave plantation and the prohibition was an attempt by the colonial authorities to exert control over them. Worshippers came under heavy persecution in the 1920's and 1930's and after the 1935 Labour Disturbances the struggle intensified.

Social and political activist George McIntosh had [championed the cause of the Shakers](#). In 1951, a trial in a Magistrate's Court ended with the acquittal of those who had been charged for offences under the Shakerism Prohibition Ordinance of 1912. That acquittal virtually put an end to prosecutions under the ordinance. After that, Spiritual Baptists worshipped openly. The Prohibition Ordinance was formally repealed in 1965, under the influence of Ebenezer Theodore Joshua. The Spiritual Baptists continue to be a central thread in the fabric of the country's religious landscape.

Carnival in June / July – 1977

From its inception, Carnival in St Vincent and the Grenadines has undergone significant and progressive changes from the early days of celebrating on the Monday and Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. 1977 was a signal point of Vincentian culture, this was when the first July Mas was celebrated and the start of the 10-day festival as we know it today.

October 27, 1979: Independence Day

Almost 150 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, St Vincent and the Grenadines stepped out from under the skirt tail of the Queen to become a fully-independent nation. At midnight on October 27, 1979 at Victoria Park, the Union Jack was lowered and the gold, green and blue flag was raised for the first time.

November 1979 – SVG emerges runners-up in the Caribbean Football Union Championship

St Vincent and the Grenadines, a virtually unknown Caribbean Football Nation at the time [emerged runners-up](#) to Haiti in the Caribbean Football Union (CFU) Championship. They placed ahead of Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. It was then, and still is the biggest achievement in the history of football in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

December 7, 1979: The Union Island Uprising

Dissatisfaction with the social and economic conditions for those living on Union Island [led to the uprising](#) with the goal of removing the Grenadine island from under the control of mainland St Vincent, an event which happened on the heels of the Grenada Revolution. Head instigator, Lennox “Bumba” Charles took over control of government buildings and essential services.

The response from the Cato government was swift and harsh. A dusk to dawn curfew was implemented under a state of emergency and military reinforcements were called in from Barbados. Police were able to regain control of the island and after word spread that Bumba fled the island, the other ‘rebels’ fled their posts and went into hiding. The uprising resulted in the death of one and the arrest of close to 40 persons.

June 3, 1981: Kill the Bills March

On June 3, 1981, thousands of people marched in Kingstown to protest two pieces of legislation the Government intended to pass.

In early 1981, life had become difficult for the Vincentian working people. Cost of living had skyrocketed and there was widespread social and industrial unrest. The SVG Labour Party Government responded to the growing unrest by seeking to pass the ‘Public Safety and Public Order Bill’ and the ‘Essential Services Amendment Bill’, known as [the ‘Dread Bills’](#). On Wednesday June 3, 1981, history was made in SVG with the largest-ever demonstration witnessed in our country. Thousands of people from all walks of life marched in Kingstown to demand the withdrawal of the proposed legislation. So successful was the mass mobilisation that while the Bills were not formally withdrawn, the legislative process itself ensured that they were relegated to the dustbin of history, with no government since then daring to move in that direction. It was certainly the most significant victory for our working people.

2001: Education Revolution

Considered a flagship policy of the Unity Labour Party (ULP) government, the Education Revolution is a move to achieve universal access to quality education for all Vincentians, from preschool to tertiary education. The policy is seen as [mostly successful](#) considering the increase of students pursuing secondary, post-secondary and university education.

February 14, 2017: Opening of the Argyle International Airport

The Argyle International Airport was opened on February 14, 2022

Nine years after the government broke ground for the construction of the nation’s first international airport, the country joined its Caribbean counterparts by [stepping into the future of air access](#). Funded by donations, grants and loans from a number of countries to the tune of approximately \$700 million, the AIA has proven to be an economic boost for tourism and other sectors.

With permission from Searchlight Newspaper, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. *SEARCHLIGHT is grateful to historians Dr. Adrian Fraser, Dr. Garrey Dennie and Dr. Cleve Scott for their assistance in the identification and analysis of these and other significant moments, from which the 12 were chosen.*

Panel Discussion

with

Young Caribbean Entrepreneurs

Hosted by

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc



Panelists:



Andy Lavia

Owner
Fizz Bartending, Staffing & Event
Management



**Moderator
Asha Lapps**

Founder of the Black Queens of Durham



Raquel John-Matuzewski
Owner and Creative Director
Raquel John Events



Marlon Bute

Owner, District Stairs



Ross Cadastre

President
Black Business and Professional Association



Shenise Asman

Owner, Shenzy Beauty



Hilda Crick-McDermott

Founder and CEO
Spahket Natural Luxury
Partner
McDermott Country Meadow

Black Business and Professional Association Head Office

180 Elm Street, Toronto ON

Sunday, October 29, 2023

4:00pm EST

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The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association is now able to accept donations by way of e-transfer to "treasurer@vincytoronto.com"

ABOUT ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

The Island of St. Vincent was formerly known as Hairouna before Christopher Columbus and his crew visited there in 1498. At independence on October 27, 1979, along with its 32 islands and cays the country became known as St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC.

Sunday, November 25
Week of December 17 - 23
Sunday, January 28, 2024

Monthly General Meeting
Christmas Hamper Outreach
Annual General Meeting

Virtually on Zoom
Virtually on Zoom

HAPPY 44TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

**AIR CANADA
Schedule**

From Oct 30th: 3X Weekly

Mondays | Thursdays | Fridays

From Dec 11th: 4X Weekly

Mondays | Tuesdays | Thursdays | Fridays



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