



# INSIGHT

**THE ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC. (SVGAT)**

P. O. Box 80066 – Don Valley Village P. O., Toronto, ON, M2J 0A1 Email: [svgat@vincytoronto.com](mailto:svgat@vincytoronto.com)

**KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY INFORMED THROUGH COMMUNICATION**

Quarterly Newsletter

**INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY ISSUE**

*October 2022*

## CONSUL GENERAL'S MESSAGE

CONSULATE GENERAL OF

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

403 - 55 Town Centre Court, Toronto, Ontario M1P 4X4

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On behalf of the government of St Vincent and the Grenadines, the office of the Consulate General and my family, I wish our country St Vincent and the Grenadines, HAPPY 43<sup>rd</sup> INDEPENDENCE!

St. Vincent and the Grenadines celebrates its 43<sup>rd</sup> Independence from Britain on October 27<sup>th</sup> under the theme “Our Resilience, Our Fortitude, Our People”.

To commemorate our Independence, the office of the Consulate General will host the following events:

- October 23<sup>rd</sup>: Independence Church Service at Rose Wood Church of the Nazarene 657 Milner Ave. Scarborough ON M1B 2K4. @4pm.
- October 26<sup>th</sup>, Flag Raising at City of Brampton’s Community Pole, Ken Whillan Square @ 12pm.
- October 27<sup>th</sup>: Annual Independence Flag Raising ceremony at 12:00 pm at Nathan Phillip Square on the Podium Roof, City Hall.

This year is very special because it is the first time since 2019 that we have an opportunity to meet at church and at our ceremonial flag raising ceremonies to celebrate and sing our wonderful anthem lustily.

“What e'er the future brings, OUR faith will see us through” are my personal favourite lines of our National Anthem. Indeed, it was our faith that saw us through the last two years of the COVID19 pandemic, thirty-two (32) volcanic eruption of our beloved La Soufriere volcano, tropical storm Elsa and many other weather systems, Russia-Ukraine war and the ever-increasing cost of living as a result of war that have challenged our resolve in the last two years. In the end we seem to have survived the worst and heading into safer waters, save and except the threats and escalation of tensions between Russia and Ukraine, China and Taiwan. We must pray for peace to reign from shore to shore and for God’s blessings to keep us true.

It would be remiss of me if I didn’t ask that we say a prayer for our loved ones who have left us during COVID19. I also want to pay special tribute and THANKS to our diaspora community who responded so admirably to the calls for assistance during the lockdown over the last two years and especially your response to help during the 32 eruptions of the volcano. It was your outpouring of love and material response that assisted in a great way to our relief efforts and our road to full recovery.

We should not forget the persons who are still in the “Red Zone” in the North Eastern corridor who are still facing challenges since their farms were damaged significantly. We also see the impact of the rainfalls on the barren slopes of the volcano and the flows of lahars that continue to pose transportation problems for commuters. I raise these issues since they are a combination of climate change issues coupled with the remanence of the eruptions that will continue to plague us for a while if we don’t take measures to mitigate these challenges. I urge you to remind your representatives here to assist the small island developing states to address this climate change matter. Our survival depends on it.

These last two years have really shown Our People to be Fortified with Resilience which is a very appropriate theme to celebrate our 43<sup>rd</sup> Independence Anniversary.

Happy 43<sup>rd</sup> Independence SVG!!!!

Fitzgerald Huggins

### SVG TORONTO CONSULATE OFFICE

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

**Mr. Fitzgerald Huggins**

Consul General

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

Email: [consulategeneral@rogers.com](mailto:consulategeneral@rogers.com)

# ASSOCIATION NEWS

## Changes to Board of Directors

Since the Annual General Meeting held on February 27, 2022 there have been several changes to the Board. In March Zakiya Hutchinson joined the Board as Director and Secretary; On April 4, Elma Gabriel resigned as a director; On June 6, Dennis Bucchan resigned as Director & Treasurer; On June 8, Delcina Jardine-Reckley joined the Board as a director and on June 17 accepted the position of Treasurer; On September 16, Daffodil Davis resigned as Director and President.

## SVGAT Board of Directors and Officers

**Director & VP.:** Kenneth Farrell (416-822-3601)

Email: president@vincytoronto.com

**Director & Secretary:** Zakiya Hutchinson

(647-780-7506) Email: secretary@vincytoronto.com

**Director & PRO:** Gideon Exeter (416-992-4253)

Email: pro@vincytoronto.com

**Director & Treasurer:** Delcina Jardine- Reckley

(647-464-3355) Email: treasurer@vincytoronto.com

**Director & Assist. Secretary:** Francine Burke

(647-772-3683)

**Director:** Erline Granderson (416-788-5163)

**Director:** Andy Lavia (416-840-7346)

**Director:** Selwyn "Jim" Lewis (416-459-2462)

## 2022 Vincy Unity Picnic - Our Sincere Thanks

After a two year break due to COVID-19 the annual Vincy Unity Picnic resumed on Saturday, July 16 at Crysler Park in Morrisburg approximately 100km east of the old location, Brown's Bay Provincial Park, Mallorytown .

The board of directors of SVGAT on behalf of the SVG Unity Picnic Committee, the organizers of the annual event herewith express sincere thanks to all those individuals and companies that supported this year's event. Although the crowd was smaller than in previous years, those who attended enjoyed themselves and gave a thumbs up for the location. Many are recommending that the Unity Picnic Committee considers continuing the event at

## Participation in 2022 Walk for Education

The Association once again teamed up with the Toronto SVG Support Group to host a walk-a-thon

to raise funds for their respective education related projects in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The walk was held mostly virtually from Toronto to Halifax, Nova Scotia from August 28 and ended physically on September 18 at Beltline Trail, Toronto near to Eglinton & Don Valley.

Sincere thanks to the organizing committee, members of both organizations and the many persons who supported the walkers/participants by sponsoring them. The funds raised will be used to support the education of children in SVG.

## HELP A LESS FORTUNATE PERSON THIS CHRISTMAS

Make a donation to the Association to assist a needy person or family this Christmas Season through the Christmas Hamper Project.

Call Gideon @ 416-992-4253,

Prudence @ 416-254-3774



## THANKSGIVING CHURCH SERVICE

Sunday, October 23 from 4:00 p.m.

**Rosewood Church of the Nazarene**

657 Milner Avenue west of Morningside Avenue,  
Scarborough

MASK WEARING IS MANDATORY DURING SERVICE

## SENIORS COMMITTEE

The Association needs a special committee to deal with matters relating to seniors.

If you have an interest in being involved in serving your community in this area, please contact any member of the Board to get such a committee established.

## CONTENT NEEDED

If you have an article that you would like to share with the community in future issue of Insight, kindly forward it to pro@vincytoronto.com.

***Our Resilience, Our Fortitude, Our People.***

**ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**



Celebrates its 43rd year of Independence in 2022.

Please join the SVGAT for the following events:

Oct. 23, 2022 – **Thanksgiving Church Service**,  
Rosewood Church of the Nazarene,  
657 Milner Avenue west of Morningside,  
Scarborough starting at 4:00 p.m.

Oct. 26, 2022 – **Flag Raising Ceremony**,  
Brampton City Hall, 2 Wellington Street West,  
Brampton, @ 12:00 noon.

Oct. 27, 2022 – **Flag Raising Ceremony**, Toronto  
City Hall, 100 Queen St. West, Toronto @ 11:00 a.m.

**COMMITTEES OF THE ASSOCIATION**

**Public Relations Committee:**

Gideon Exeter, Cordel Telfer, Dennis Bucchan &  
Andy Lavia

**Independence Church Service Planning  
Committee:**

Prudence Morton, Sandra Sutherland, Kenneth  
Farrell

**SVG Unity Picnic Committee Representatives:**

Jim Lewis, Corsita Lewis, Andy Lavia

**Representatives to Council of Caribbean  
Associations -Canada:**

Bernadette Ryan-Phillips, Erline Granderson,  
Gideon Exeter

**Christmas Hamper Project**

Prudence Morton – Coordinator

**Adopt-A-Child Program Coordinator**

Gideon Exeter

**ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO INC.  
TENTATIVE CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2022**

Sunday, October 23	Independence Thanksgiving Service	Rosewood Church of the Nazarene, 657 Milner Ave
Thursday, October 27	Flag Raising Ceremony	Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West, Toronto
Sunday, October 30	Monthly General Meeting	Virtually by Zoom
Sunday, November 27	Monthly General Meeting	Virtually by Zoom
December 18 to 23	Christmas Hamper Outreach Project	Across the GTA
Sunday, January 27, 2023	Annual General Meeting	Virtually by Zoom

**Addresses & Directions:**

Rosewood Church of the Nazarene, 657 Milner Avenue between Markham Road & Morningside Avenue,



**Tourism Authority**

**Mrs. Shelley John**

Director of Sales - Canada  
403 - 55 Town Centre Court  
Toronto, Ontario, M1P 4X4  
Tel : 416-630-9292  
Email : sjohn@discoversvg.com

***Our Condolences***

*The Board of Directors on behalf of all members of the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. herewith express condolences to all persons in our community who have lost loved ones. We pray that you would find comfort in knowing that they have gone to join their Maker, our Creator, Almighty God.*

## DOES SVGAT NEED INSURANCE FOR ITS DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

Submitted by: Dennis Bucchan  
October 09, 2022

During this year (2022), the question has been raised about whether the Association needs insurance for the protection of its Directors and Officers.

I will attempt to answer the question by referring to the SVGAT's By Law #1, the By Law that the Association uses as its guide for its operations. On page 15 of By Law #1, it is stated:

**“FOR THE PROTECTION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS”**

Clause 51. For the Protection of Directors and Officers. This clause promises to protect the Directors and Officers from loss that may occur in the performance of their duties, unless the loss happens by or through the director's or officer's own willful neglect or fault.

Clause 52. Director and Officer Indemnity. This clause promises to indemnify (to compensate or take care of the costs) Directors and Officers against loss in carrying out their duties for SVGAT, unless the loss happens by or through the director's or officer's own willful neglect or fault.

Clause 53. Insurance. Because of the perceived insufficiency of funds in SVGAT to cover the potential liability for the Directors and Officers, the SVGAT has promised to carry liability insurance to cover its Directors and Officers.

In the course of carrying out their duties, the Directors and Officers of SVGAT routinely sign contracts and agreements on behalf of SVGAT with third parties. For example, contracts and agreements are usually signed by Directors and Officers for the Boat Cruise and food suppliers, for banquet hall for independence function etc. In the event that something should go wrong, SVGAT as well as the contracting Director or Officer, could be sued jointly and severally.

SVGAT has had experience of having litigation brought against it.

The Association recognized the risks that its Directors and Officers take on when they act on its behalf in signing contracts.

As a result, when the Association adopted By Law #1 as its operating guide, it consciously included clauses 51, 52 and 53. In Summary, insurance coverage is deemed necessary to fulfill the promise made in clauses #51, 52 and 53 which can be found in the by-laws by clicking on or copying and pasting this link in your browser. [By-Law No 1.pdf \(clixtercanada.com\)](#).

### CG Huggins Expresses Thanks to GlobalMedic

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the members of the SVGAT and Toronto SVG Support Group who came out on September 23rd to assist in packing food at the GlobalMedic facility in Oakville.



We were able to break a record and packed 595 buckets of food in a space of 3 hours. This was a gigantic effort by the members of the associations who showed up.

The container of food buckets will be shipped this week to SVG and will be distributed nationwide to persons in need.

GlobalMedic continues to be our treasured partner in our times of need and I want to express thanks again for their continued support. This project started after the eruptions of La Soufriere and they have so far spent over CAN\$1.4M in food and purchasing of local produce from farmers on the ground in SVG.

Fitzgerald Huggins, Consul General

# IMMIGRATION MATTERS

## IMMIGRATION MATTERS: CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP VS PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS

Contributed by: Sandra Sutherland, RCIC

Having legal immigration status in Canada has many benefits. Permanent residents and citizens of Canada share numerous privileges; however, the volume and significance of the privileges as a Canadian citizen outweigh those of a permanent resident.

Permanent resident (PR) status permits a person to dwell “permanently” in Canada with certain limitations and obligations. Once a foreign national obtains PR status and has resided in Canada (generally for a total of at least 1095 days within a 5-year period) she/he may become eligible to apply for Canadian citizenship as a naturalized Canadian. Why would a permanent resident want to progress towards Canadian citizenship? Citizenship offers much more significant privileges than permanent residency does.

Only Canadian citizens are entitled to hold a **Canadian passport**: This privilege permits ease of travel to visit many countries (including the U.S.A) without the need for a visa. Depending on their nationality and/or country of citizenship most permanent residents may be required to obtain a visa to enter other countries.

Canadian citizens do not have to comply with any Canadian **residency obligations** and could reside outside Canada for prolonged durations without losing citizenship status. They have the right to return to Canada at any time. On the other hand, permanent residents could face the **loss of PR status** and risk forfeiting their right to return if they are found to breach their residency obligation of physically residing in Canada for at least 730 days during the past 5 years. Permanent residents may also lose their status if convicted of serious crimes. There are few rare and severe circumstances under which Citizens may lose their status (i.e.: if obtained fraudulently or by misrepresenting material facts and/or circumstances, committing security, human rights, or international rights violations).

As a Canadian citizen, one can benefit from the **ease of re-entry** into Canada without facing restrictions from airlines or immigration officials regarding their immigration status. Permanent residents must have a valid PR card or travel document along with their passport in order to be allowed to board the plane or for an immigration official to allow them re-entry. Most PR cards are usually issued with a five-year validity and requires renewal for travel purposes. Canadian citizenship is permanent so there is no need for any renewal of citizenship. Passports, however, have expiration dates and need to be renewed in order to ensure validity for travel purposes.

When abroad and facing certain emergency situations (i.e.: natural disasters, civil unrest, arrest/detentions, child abduction, kidnappings, hostage taking, death, etc.) Canadian citizens who are in need of **emergency consular assistance** may seek help by contacting the nearest Canadian embassy or consulate. Alternate means of contact could be via email ([sos@international.gc.ca](mailto:sos@international.gc.ca)),



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[ssutherland@southernimmigration.com](mailto:ssutherland@southernimmigration.com)

Telephone (1-613-996-8885) or WhatsApp (1-613-909-8881). Canadians may sign up for the registration of Canadians abroad service (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration>) if they are planning to leave Canada or are already outside Canada. This service enables Canadians to receive important information before or during a natural disaster or civil unrest. Such services and assistance are not available to permanent residents.

Canadian citizens have the **right to vote** at all elections and are entitled to run for political office. Additionally, citizens are entitled to apply for certain **government jobs** and certain jobs that require high security clearance. Permanent residents are barred from these entitlements.

In order to **apply for Canadian citizenship** a permanent resident, along with demonstrating that she/he has lived in Canada for 3 out of the last 5 years, must also demonstrate that she/he has filed tax returns, must prove satisfactory language skills in English or French, and demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of Canada (this is applicable to applicants between the ages of 18 and 54). Some additional requirements, waivers and prohibitions may apply depending on certain situations and circumstances. Canada accepts **dual or multiple citizenship** (having Canadian citizenship while maintaining citizenship of another country) but some countries do not. It is possible that, by obtaining Canadian citizenship, citizens of some countries that do not recognize dual or multiple citizenship may forfeit their citizenship of that country. It is noteworthy to mention that Canadians with dual citizenship cannot travel to or transit through Canada by air with a non-Canadian passport.

A Canadian citizen who is the legal (biological or non-biological) parent of a child born outside Canada could **pass down Canadian citizenship** to that child, provided that the parent was already a Canadian citizen at the time of the child's birth. A child born outside Canada to a permanent resident would need to obtain PR status in order to be eligible for Canadian citizenship at a later time. PR status cannot be passed down.

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Permanent residents of Canada need to weigh the pros and cons of being a Canadian citizen prior to making the life-changing decision for or against Canadian citizenship. I strongly recommend that permanent residents apply for Canadian citizenship, once they are eligible, if they may have qualms about returning to their country of citizenship should their PR status be at risk.

**Sandra Sutherland is an authorized immigration representative and counsel.** She specializes strictly in immigration and refugee matters and is licensed with the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants (CICC) as a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC). She can be reached at (416) 431-2829 or via e-mail at [ssutherland@suthernimmigration.com](mailto:ssutherland@suthernimmigration.com). See Page 5 for her advertisement under *Suthern Immigration & Paralegal Services Inc.* in this publication for more information.

**If you are a Landed Immigrant living here in Canada,  
please take the next step and become a Canadian Citizen.**

# NEWS FROM SVG

(Courtesy of I-Witness News, ANN & News 784)

## Citizenship Path to Open Soon for Second-Generation Vincentians

Second-generation Vincentians living in the diaspora could soon have a pathway to citizenship of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves on Tuesday 4 October said there has been a discussion surrounding the matter, which is a big policy issue for his government.

“It’s not a widespread discussion in the country, but there has been some discussion by some informed persons in the country and, of course, in the diaspora about second-generation Vincentians having a pathway to citizenship of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Not automatically as for a Vincentian born overseas of a Vincentian parent but for a Vincentian born overseas of a grandparent, but not automatic, but not for the five or seven-year period but different categories to become citizens of the country through that process of naturalization.

But for them to be to apply and they will have the right to be registered as a citizen, this doesn’t mean the right would be automatic, but they will have the right to apply to be registered as a citizen”.

Gonsalves said before he left for the UNGA meeting the cabinet had discussed the various options as presented by the Attorney General’s chambers.

“We reflected on those options and gave instructions in relation to a particular option, so I’m hopeful that before the end of this year we can have the legislation drafted to take to Parliament, if not, it would be early in the new year”, Gonsalves said.

*Happy Independence to all nationals of St. Vincent and the Grenadines as we celebrate the 43<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of Nationhood under the theme, Our Resilience, Our Fortitude, Our People.*



**Direct flights to Argyle International Airport on Air Canada Rouge begin in early November. Check with your travel agent to book your ticket.**

## ID Cards for Vincentian Nationals Soon

Plans are afoot for the introduction of the multi-purpose ID in 2023 even though no precise date was provided, but it will be the second attempt to launch the MP-ID after it had been introduced in 2016 but was tabled.

According to Camillo Gonsalves, Minister of Finance while speaking on radio on September 25 said, that plans then to introduce the ID had to be put on hold then members of the opposition New Democratic Party (NDP) took issue with the move right after the 2015 general elections.

But Gonsalves made the point that what is presently referred to as an ID card was in fact not a national ID, but a voter’s ID. “So, everybody cannot get it,” he said.

But the idea was to give everyone a unique number in the same way that a Social Security number is issued to citizens of the United States from birth.

A lot of data can then be connected to that number, he said, and it was the intention to provide one to every Vincentian from birth.

Much of the groundwork had already been done in preparation of the introduction of the MP-ID a few years ago, so this time around they were building on the information already gathered, Gonsalves said.

"We will be doing a lot more sensitization in advance so that people do not think that I am trying to rig an election," the finance minister said.

The hardware was already in place, and they were working on formulating the software to facilitate all the unique information that will be attributed to each MP-ID holder.

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## **Category of People to Own Land in SVG is Amended**

St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) has amended its land holding law to narrow the categories of people who can own land in the 150-square-mile archipelago without needing to obtain a license. The amendment to the Aliens (Land Holding Regulations) (Amendment) Bill, 2022 deletes two of the classes of persons who were prescribed as belonging to the country under that law.

The changes, which Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves presented to Parliament, deleted a section of the law that said that for the purpose of the act, a person shall be regarded as belonging to SVG, if he is a Commonwealth citizen who is domiciled in SVG and has been ordinarily resident therein for not less than seven years. With the amendment, such a person has to apply for an alien landholding license. The revised law also said that a child, stepchild, or adopted child of a Commonwealth citizen or the spouse of a Commonwealth citizen will have to apply for an alien land holding license.

However, the child, stepchild or adopted child of a Vincentian citizen would not have to apply. "What we're doing here, in effect, is to narrow the range of exemptions so that you will have to have an alien landholding license if you want to hold property," the prime minister said. He noted that the Alien Landholding Regulation Declaration of Commonwealth Caribbean Territories Order of 2004 said the Governor General declares that persons who belong to the territories listed in the schedule will not be aliens for the purposes of the Alien Land Holding Regulation Act, provided there is reciprocity between the territory and SVG.

"... we consider that the category the Commonwealth citizen, who is domiciled here and resident in St. Vincent for seven years, that if that person wants to take advantage of the alien land holding license exemption that they become a citizen of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, simple," he said.

The prime minister said the provision remains for children of citizens of SVG, once the child is less than 18 years old, even if the child was born elsewhere. "At birth, you're a citizen of St. Vincent and Grenadines, once you're a national of St. Vincent and the Grenadines who was born a citizen," the prime minister said.

The prime minister spoke of the contribution of Alien Landholding Licenses to the national coffers. He said in 2022, the government collected close to EC\$100 million in alien land holding license and stamp duty transfers on property. In 2020, the figure was EC\$22.6 million.

"It's a significant revenue earner," he said, noting that his government has increased the cost of an alien land holding license twice since coming to office in March 2001, "so that the effect at the high end is about 7%". The prime minister said he believes that the amendments "hold the support of the people of this country. I sense that I know this instinctively.

"And this doesn't have anything deleterious to our economic development. On the contrary, it allows us to have a closer handle on those who will buy large properties, who are not nationals of our country and seek to speculate on them." Gonsalves noted that the country does not have capital gains tax, adding that under the old law, a Commonwealth citizen could have speculated on property.

"We need to protect our limited land. And while we offer it to persons who are not Vincentians it should be on terms and conditions where they develop that land in accordance with the provisions of the license."

Meanwhile, in his contribution to the debate, Opposition Leader Godwin Friday, a lawyer, said that he used to practice in the area quite a bit. "I was very familiar with the legislation and all the

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changes that have taken place changes that have taken place, and that were taking place after that...” Friday said, adding that the rates that were charged on the license and so forth had been adjusted and various arguments were made. “And I expect the same will continue depending on policy priorities of the government of the day. And certainly, the changes that are made here, create more work for lawyers, and possibly more revenue for the government,” he said.

**Who or What is GlobalMedic**

GlobalMedic, is a registered Canadian charity that has provided disaster relief and life-saving humanitarian aid since 2002. We were founded based on the idea that aid could be delivered more effectively and efficiently. GlobalMedic’s goal has always been to get the right aid to the right people at the right time. Professional emergency workers along with other professional and skilled volunteers help deliver our programs to the people who need it most.

**CONTRIBUTED**

**LOVE**

*We as humans, have two duties with regard to universal love. The first is to love ourselves so we can love others. The other is to cultivate tolerance, for although it may not be possible to love everyone, it is imperative not to hate anyone.*

Submitted by Kenneth Farrell

**INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS DAY 2022**

by Malcolm Garraway

I recall a speaker at a Caribbean Union of Teachers conference many decades ago, a keynote speaker used the following quote to define education:

Education is the all-useful information accumulated by one on his life passage through this world from the cradle to the grave.

This quote has stuck with me ever since. As a teacher I saw myself as preparing my students for this ever-changing journey. We receive our

education formally and informally. However, beyond the shadow of a doubt our teachers play the greatest role in our education and indeed the shaping the education our nations receive. In the effort to prepare their students teachers often take on a confrontational role with policy makers, often leading to industrial action in the effort to improve the standard of education. Such is the reality of life on the education frontline.

Moreover, teachers have to face the challenge of adapting to new methods and technologies in order that their students can maximize the time allotted to them. The last few years of the covid pandemic has been such a challenge but internationally, teachers rose to the occasion.

As for myself on International Teachers Day I reflect on how privilege I have been to be nurtured by some of the best teachers in the world. I give thanks for them- their commitment and dedication, their love and their motivating skills. This day, I salute and honour them. On this day I also reflect on my own life as a teacher and still assess myself on what I could have done better. Oh, how I hope my many students are doing fine.

On this day I also think of those who are now on the education frontline facing the daily battles. The brothers and sisters of the St. Vincent Union of Teachers who are facing extreme difficulties related to mandatory vaccine dismissals and other hardships, I stand with you. I challenge all of us to keep on supporting them in whatever way we can. Let us salute and honour them, and like all great teachers let us continue to teach and learn.



**Court of Arms of St. Vincent and the Grenadines**

## Interesting and Important Facts About St. Vincent and the Grenadines

(A repeat article from a previous issue of Insight)

- There are over 32 islands and cays that make up St Vincent and the Grenadines; of these, nine are inhabited.
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines became officially independent on October 27, 1979 and adopted their constitution on the same day while choosing to follow a democratic form of government.
- There are more than 400 arches to be found in Kingstown – “The City of Arches” – which is the capital of St Vincent and the Grenadines.
- There are five Airports in St Vincent & The Grenadines – Argyle International Airport on St Vincent, J.F Mitchell on Bequia, as well as one each on Canouan, Union Island and Mustique.
- There is an active volcano on St Vincent (La Soufriere). The volcano rises to 4,048 feet. It is the largest of the 3 craters that are present at the summit of the volcano, the other 2, the Somma and the 1812 crater, both presently dormant.
- The oldest Botanic Gardens in the Western Hemisphere is located in St Vincent & The Grenadines, having been founded in 1765.
- Fort Charlotte is an historic fort with spectacular views overlooking Kingstown. It is located just to the west of Kingstown and perched at 600 feet overlooking the bay – a short drive from Kingstown.
- Some of the most fertile soil in the world can be found in the Mesopotamia Valley in St Vincent and the Grenadines. Often referred to as St Vincent’s breadbasket, this broad, fertile valley is brimming with farmlands growing root crops, fruits, vegetables and spices.
- The seven Ports of Entry in the country are located in Wallilabou (yachts only), Kingstown, Bequia, Canouan, Mustique, Union Island and Chateaubelair.
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines is the only Caribbean country in which petroglyphs, recording our ancestors’ presence are found. These can be found in Yambou, Buccament, Layou and Barrouallie.
- The movies filmed in St. Vincent & the Grenadines are White Squall, Pirates of the Caribbean I, II and III.
- The airport destination code for St. Vincent & the Grenadines is ‘SVD’ (St. Vincent Diamond); because

the first airport in St. Vincent was located at Diamond, on the south east coast of St. Vincent.

- Two of the popular local drinks found in St. Vincent and the Grenadines are Hairoun beer and Sunset rum. Sunset rum is quite ludicrously potent rum from St. Vincent, Sunset Very Strong should never be taken neat, but heavily diluted with a mixer or as a float for cocktails.
- In 1793 Captain Bligh (of “Mutiny on the Bounty” fame) brought 630 breadfruit plants to St Vincent. The sucker from one of those plants can be found in the Botanic Gardens.
- There are at least 25 varieties of breadfruit in St. Vincent & the Grenadines such as Butter heart, Captain Bligh, Coco bread, Creole, Creole Black, Creole Common.

In 1813 the Byrea Hill Tunnel was cut through Mt. Young (1/4 mile from Georgetown) to facilitate communication with the north of the island.

- The King’s Hill Reserve, established in 1791 is one of the oldest Forest Reserves in the Western Hemisphere. With an elevation of 600 feet, it provides a habitat for protected wildlife, and a home for more than 26 identified species of tropical trees and shrubs.

## THE SVGAT’S ADOPT-A-CHILD PROGRAM



In 2008 the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto began the program of assisting children in primary schools in SVG by

providing financial support to ensure that they get the necessary foundation to prepare them for successful completion of their primary school education. The period of support lasts for five (5) years at which time the students move on to secondary school. One student each from the Spring Village Methodist School and the Evesham Methodist School were the first recipients. In 2013 another two students, one each from Tourama Government School and Fairhall Government School were the second recipients. Then, in 2018 six (6) students were sponsored by some concerned persons who saw the value of the program and reached out to the Association to assist.

2023 will be the final year for the current set of students. Five of them are attending the Calliaqua Anglican School, Lowman Anglican School, Buccament Government School, Marriqua Government School, Lauders Primary School and the sixth student from Bequia who is sponsored by an anonymous family is already in secondary school.

The funds for each student are sent directly to the school which has a committee (trustees) in place to monitor the performance of the student and liaise with the parent to dispense the funds on a monthly basis for the benefit of the student. Reports on the students' progress are sent to the Association.

An appeal is herewith made to persons who are interested in seeing this program continued to reach out to the leadership of the Association to indicate your interest in sponsoring a child.

### SVGAO INDEPENDENCE ACTIVITIES

This year has been a late start given post COVID-19 protocols, to have face-to-face events. As such, with the time for this year, we will be celebrating our main Independence Celebration virtually. Given good health, in 2023 we will resume face-to-face celebration. Save the dates for our activities. We will provide the updated details shortly.



### WHAT IS THE COUNCIL OF CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATIONS-CANADA (CCAC)?



The Council of Caribbean Associations-Canada is an organization registered in 2009 made up of the national organizations of 14 Caribbean communities in the Greater Toronto Area. Today, only 7 of those organizations are participating in the affairs of the CCAC.

The participating organizations are the Antigua & Barbuda Association of Toronto Inc. (ABAT), Alliance of Guyanese Community Organizations (AGCO), Barbados Association Canada (BCA), Commonwealth of Dominica Ontario Association (CDOA), Grenada Association Toronto (GAT), St. Lucia Toronto Association (SLTA) and St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. Each member organization is entitled to have three representatives on the Council from which one representative is chosen as a board member to serve on the CCAC Board of Directors. An executive committee consisting of a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and public relations officer is elected from the board members while the other board members serve as assistants to the secretary, treasurer and public relations officer.

Board members are elected for a two-year term. The current board consists of:  
 Director & President – Gideon Exeter (SVGAT)  
 Director & Vice President – Andria Alexander-Lewis (CDOA)  
 Director & Secretary – Ingrid King (AGCO)  
 Director & Assist. Secretary – Sandra Pierre (GAT)  
 Director & Treasurer – Ruby Maynard (BCA)  
 Director & Assistant Treasurer – Uhana Charles-Obaizamomwan (STLA)  
 Director & Public Relations Officer – Eric Delfish (ABAT)

To read about the Organization's Mission, Goals & Objectives and Aims please click on this link: [About \(caribbeancouncilcanada.org\)](http://caribbeancouncilcanada.org)

As it relates to youths, in order to achieve its aims,

the CCAC established a scholarship/bursary program through which it assists students of Caribbean descent residing in Ontario annually with a one-time bursary of \$1,000.00 each to assist with the cost of their college, university or trade school expenses. Since 2012 when the program was established over \$28,000.00 in bursaries were paid out to students and for 2022 there will be another \$11,000.00 paid out to eleven students.

To raise funds for the bursaries, the CCAC has over the years held walk-a-thons but has been able to get sponsorship from individuals and companies. The Loved Ones Bursary Program was introduced in 2020 allowing persons to name a bursary in honour of a loved one. Grace Foods Canada is sponsoring 6 bursaries, one each from Pine Ridge Memorial Gardens and New Haven Funeral Home and 3 from the Loved Ones Bursary Program.

For seniors, the CCAC conducts educational sessions to provide them with information relating to health, finances, security and services that are available to seniors in our community. Prior to COVID-19, those sessions were held in person but since then they have been held virtually.

The three representatives on Council for SVGAT are Bernadette Ryan-Phillips, Erlene Granderson and Gideon Exeter.

### **The Benefits to Member Organizations**

- To work as an entity to promote unity among organizations in the Caribbean Community;
- To collaborate with organizations with similar aims and objectives to better serve our community;
- To position our community to work together to realize more from large organizations and the various levels of government in Canada;
- To form bonds with large companies to get discounts for their members off the products and services provided by these companies. For example, members of affiliated organizations are able to get discounted prices off products and services from certain

cemetery and funeral homes;

- The CCAC is becoming affiliated with the Black Business and Professional Association which will allow small business persons from member organizations to benefit from grants and loans offered by the BBPA.
- Individual organizations arranging and promoting seminars place a heavier work load on resources and time in a smaller organization.
- Bringing persons together from different organizations presents opportunities to share knowledge and skills and build on the experiences and successes of each individual organization.

To learn more about the CCAC, please visit its website at [www.caribbeancouncilcanada.org](http://www.caribbeancouncilcanada.org).

### **LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES WITHIN THE SVGAT**

The year 2022 has been quite an unusual year in the life of the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto (SVGAT) for varying reasons.

The AGM was delayed from its customary January to February which means that the life of the board of directors was automatically shortened. At the AGM four members from the previous board remained to serve out their remaining terms while there were elections for new board members to fill 5 vacant positions. Only four new directors were elected so according to the corporation's by-laws, the Board of Directors was left to recruit someone. At the second meeting of the new board the ninth position was filled by Zakiya Hutchinson who became the secretary.

During the months that followed there were three resignations in Elma Gabriel as director, Dennis Bucchan as treasurer and Daffodil Davis as president. However, at the May and June board meetings new directors in Francine Burke and Delcina Jardine-Reckley were recruited to replace the first and second resignations respectively. Delcina Jardine-Reckley became the new treasurer.

Since the president resigned in early September there has not been any elections called to fill the vacant board position.

The wider membership and community may have wondered about the functionality of the board but with not many months left in the year the Corporation might be better served by allowing things to remain as they are. New elections are due in January and the membership should do everything in its control to ensure that elections are held on time.

All was not doom and gloom as the SVGAT participated in the annual Vincy Unity Picnic, the annual walk-a-thon with the Toronto SVG Support Group, revamped the website and produced two issues of Insight. Also, the Corporation is spearheading the 43<sup>rd</sup> Independence Anniversary celebrations for St. Vincent and the Grenadines and is planning the also annual Christmas Hamper Project. Throughout the year, the monthly general meetings were held virtually and it is quite likely that this may be the new norm.

As we all know, persons serving on boards similar to the SVGAT's are all volunteers but it is expected that when one takes on the responsibility of serving or volunteering, they should give their best. Quite often, as happens in many organizations persons get on the board or executive committees and do not pull their weight. This results in either overworking others or makes everyone else look incompetent.

Times have changed and volunteerism is not what it used to be. Persons who are capable of performing well are refusing to take up leadership positions for varying reasons and it is extremely difficult to recruit younger persons.

The SVGAT is over 50 years in operation and has gone through many ups and downs. Our community Our community can boast of the many stalwarts who, over the years, have kept the organizations going. However, it needs fresh blood to move it along. Our strength is our people. We believe we have the human resources to build a strong organization to be a legacy in our

community. We welcome your membership, your expertise, and volunteered commitment to enhance our leadership support. The state of SVGAT will be strong... Please give some thought in volunteering to make a difference.

The production of Insight and maintenance and upkeep of the Corporation's website, [www.vincytoronto.com](http://www.vincytoronto.com) are the responsibility of the Public Relations Committee of the Corporation.

### **DUTY FREE CONCESSIONS FOR RETURNING NATIONALS**

If you are a Vincentian National living in the Diaspora and wish to return to live in St. Vincent and the Grenadines you should be aware that there are duty free concessions available to you.

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Customs & Excise Department has made available on its website a list of conditions that you should be aware of and to prepare yourself before leaving your adopted place of residence.

Answers to the following questions are provided on the Department's website:

[returning-natl-application.pdf \(svgcustoms.net\)](http://returning-natl-application.pdf(svgcustoms.net))

**Who Qualifies?**

**What can be imported?**

**What is the Concession?**

**What are the Conditions?**

**How do I apply?**

Applications should be made in writing on the form provided and send to the Comptroller of Customs & Excise at the following address:-

Mr. Selwyn Da Silva, Comptroller of Customs & Excise (Ag.), Customs House, Upper Bay Street, Kingstown,

St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Telephone number: (784) 457-2421/ (784) 457-2711

**What happens then?**

Your application will be considered by the Comptroller and you will be informed of his decision. You may be called to attend an interview. If you are called for an interview, it is in your interest to bring with you documents that will support your case.

