

# CAYSTONE

## Lyford Cay Foundations leading the way in learning recovery in The Bahamas

By NICOLA VIRGILL-ROLLE, PhD  
*Executive Director*

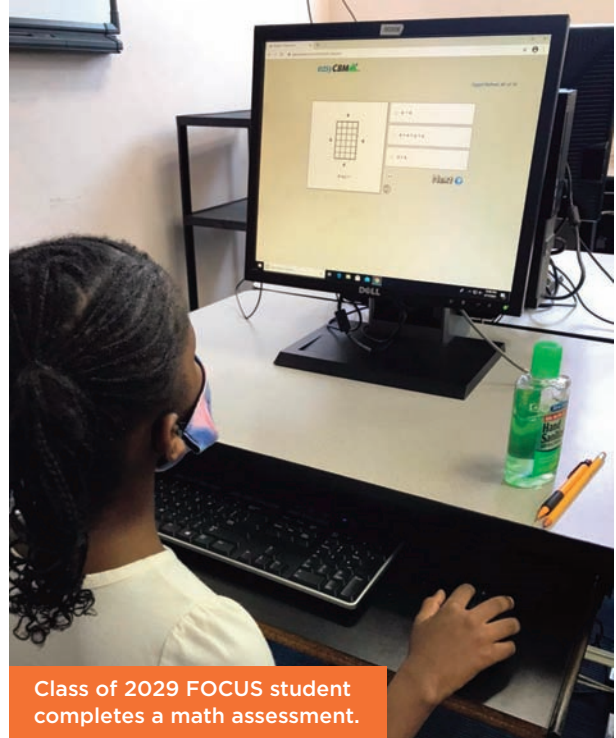
**W**hen the COVID-19 pandemic shut down schools across the country in March 2020, learning was disrupted for thousands of students. While the precise learning losses are not yet known, at Lyford Cay Foundations (LCF), we are doing our part to assist in learning recovery in The Bahamas.

LCF has intensified its FOCUS programme, a dynamic eight-year academic enrichment initiative that works to keep selected students on track to become the first in their families to attend a post-secondary institution.

FOCUS recruits 4th graders from six public schools in New Providence: Albury Sayle Primary, T. G. Glover Primary, Eva Hilton Primary, Gambier Primary, Woodcock Primary and Stephen Dillet Primary. Instructors are committed to working with students and their parents or guardians until they graduate from high school.



Nicola Virgill-Rolle



Class of 2029 FOCUS student completes a math assessment.

LCF has done its best to help our FOCUS students address their disrupted learning from their regular school experiences.

After getting advice from experienced educators, we first ensured that students had access to education diagnostic services so that we understood what additional assistance they needed.

LCF looked at what the best schools in The Bahamas and the world were doing, studied advice from international organizations on learning loss recovery, and adapted those approaches for FOCUS students.

*[Continued on page 2]*

***“FOCUS is a model for learning loss recovery in The Bahamas.”***



FOCUS STUDENTS



Due to the generosity of our donors, we were able to obtain licences for certain learning and diagnostic programmes for every FOCUS student. We provided MiFi devices and tablets to our students, and our FOCUS team followed up with parents to ensure that students continued to participate.

Over the last six months, our students have collectively answered more than 418,000 questions and mastered over 6,600 skills in English and Mathematics, particularly in areas where they had the most need.

Before COVID-19, students met at the University of The Bahamas campus over 30 days in the summer and 15 Saturdays throughout the school year.

Between March 2020 and March 2022, students met virtually, and, while the COVID-19 environment has changed some things for FOCUS, the core philosophy and approaches remain stable, and the students and their parents remain committed to the programme.

Our students show up to class and are excited to learn—even as we intensify their learning to make up for the learning loss experienced during

this very difficult time in Bahamian education history.

On 15 January 2022, more than 200 FOCUS students eagerly logged on to their devices to begin the first of the LCF's 'Saturday SLAM' FOCUS sessions for the year and in March 2022, we were thrilled to have them return to UB for face-to-face sessions. (See pg. 3).

LCF invests a substantial amount in each student, inclusive of instruction costs, teacher training, meals, supplies and transportation to and from

their homes during face-to-face sessions.

Instructors are drawn from teacher education students enrolled at the University of The Bahamas and experienced teachers from both private and public schools. The programme also provides the services of an experienced guidance counsellor and college and career specialists.

FOCUS is a model for learning loss recovery in The Bahamas. We are grateful to our generous donors who enable us to carry out these services for so many students. To learn more about the FOCUS programme, visit [www.lyfordcayfoundations.org/our-programme-focus/](http://www.lyfordcayfoundations.org/our-programme-focus/) •

***“Our students show up to class and are excited to learn...”***



## WELCOME BACK!

### FOCUS students return to face-to-face sessions

**A**fter two years of virtual sessions, FOCUS students were excited to return to the University of The Bahamas (UB) Oakes Field campus on 19 March 2022 for their first face-to-face SLAM Saturday session since 2020.

The day started with an energetic All-School Rally where students received a rousing welcome back from FOCUS teachers and team leaders, with a special appearance by Blu, the UB Mingoos mascot.

Students also received a special visit from Minister of Education and Technical and Vocational Training, Hon. Glenys Hanna-Martin; Chair of the UB Board of Trustees, Mrs. Allyson Maynard-Gibson; Chair, Lyford Cay Foundation (LCF), Inc., Mr. Basil Goulandris; LCF Board Director, Mrs. Sarah Farrington; Executive Director, Lyford Cay Foundations, Dr. Nicola Virgill-Rolle; senior UB



officials; and Esther Blair, a long-time supporter of FOCUS through major programme sponsor, TK Foundation.

The return to the UB campus marked a milestone for the programme following extended virtual learning sessions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the virtual sessions, FOCUS continued to grow and adapt to meet the holistic needs of the students. FOCUS helped students overcome learning disruptions brought on by the pandemic through a diagnostic programme that provided targeted academic support and individualized tutoring. We also provided MiFi devices and tablets to improve remote learning and access.

At Lyford Cay Foundations our goal is to invest in learning opportunities for Bahamian children, families, young adults and communities who benefit from them the most.

*[Continued on page 4]*







FOCUS – one of LCF’s signature programmes – is an eight-year out-of-school-time tuition-free enrichment programme that provides college readiness and access support to public school students of demonstrated need and potential.

LCF believes that every child has a fundamental right to education and that ensuring access to quality education is the path towards building a more sustainable future and peaceful society.

To learn more about the FOCUS programme, please visit [www.lyfordcayfoundations.org](http://www.lyfordcayfoundations.org) •







## LCF launches new scholarship programme for grad and tech studies in Canada

**A**t Lyford Cay Foundations (LCF) we are always looking for new ways to get more scholarships into the hands of those who need them.

This year, LCF is offering up to eight new graduate and technical scholarships for study in Canada. Up to four new scholarships will be offered to graduates of the University of The Bahamas (UB) to pursue graduate studies for up to two years; and an additional four scholarships will be offered to students of the Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute (BTVI) to complete a bachelor's degree.

These new higher education opportunities are part of the 'Resilience and Excellence Bahamas' scholarship programme that, over a four-year

period, will provide for a total of 10 graduate and 10 technical scholarships to study in Canada.

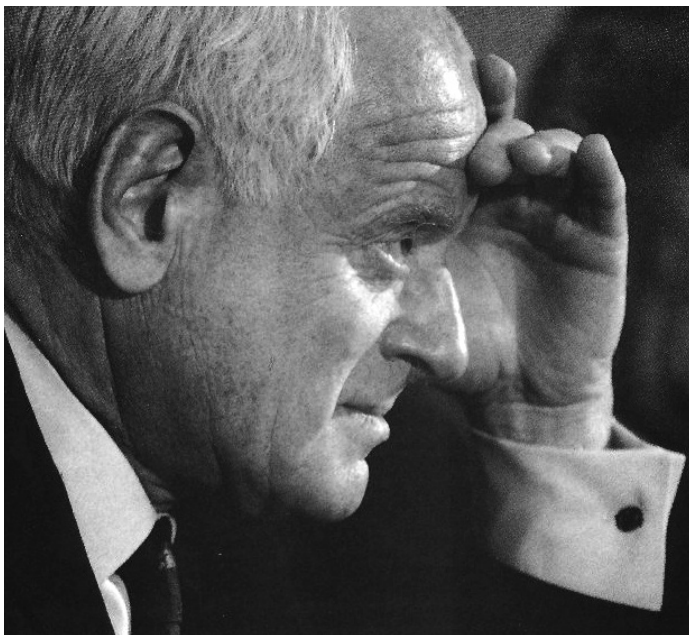
The programme will also provide support for scholarships at the LJM Maritime Academy in Nassau and LCF's FOCUS programme.

"These additional scholarships will allow us to positively impact the lives of even more students from The Bahamas who wish to study abroad," said Mr. Tim Unwin, Chair, Canadian Lyford Cay Foundation.

The usual criteria to qualify for a Lyford Cay Foundations scholarship will apply to the new Resilience and Excellence scholarships; however, applicants also must have either graduated from UB and are looking to pursue a master's degree or have attended BTVI and are seeking a bachelor's degree.

"Lyford Cay Foundations has been extremely supportive of the University of The Bahamas over the years. We were proud to support its development into a strong university along with the introduction of an excellent library facility named after our former Chairman, Harry C. Moore," said Dr. Nicola Virgill-Rolle, Executive Director, Lyford Cay Foundations. "We are now building a close working relationship with BTVI to further support technical and vocational training in The Bahamas."

The Scholarship Portal for 2022 opened 1st February. The first stage of the application process closed 15th March. The deadline for the second and final stage for those approved to move on, is 15th April. LCF provides scholarships for undergraduate, graduate, and technical and vocational study. To learn more about our scholarship programmes, visit [www.lyfordcayfoundations.org](http://www.lyfordcayfoundations.org). •



## New Scholarship Spotlight: Peter Munk Scholarship for Public Sector Excellence

In keeping with the belief that increasing educational attainment across the country is key to the development of a prosperous, healthy, and peaceful Bahamas, Lyford Cay Foundations has introduced a new specialty scholarship award focused on public sector excellence.

The Peter Munk Scholarship for Public Sector Excellence is a full scholarship award to support an applicant pursuing graduate studies at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto.

Eligible degrees include:

- Master of Global Affairs;
- Master of Public Policy;
- Dual degree in London with the London School of Economics and Political Science (MPA);
- PhD in any programme offered at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy.

The award is open to a public officer with at least three years of experience in The Bahamas public sector and acceptance into one of the approved programmes at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy.

“This scholarship will provide an opportunity for a high-potential public officer in the Government of The Bahamas to pursue graduate studies at one of the top learning institutions in Canada,” said Dr. Nicola Virgill-Rolle, Executive Director, Lyford Cay Foundations. “This is a tremendous opportunity, and we are so pleased to be able to offer this award in memory of Peter Munk.”

Peter Munk (1927–2018) was one of Canada’s most successful entrepreneurs, notably as founder and builder of Barrick Gold Corporation, and an exceptionally generous philanthropist. After arriving in Canada in 1948 on a student visa, a few years after a narrow escape from Nazi-occupied Hungary, he earned a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from the University of Toronto. Many of the same forces that shaped Peter’s extraordinary life – energetic curiosity, deep engagement, a drive for excellence – animate the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, the school that he and his wife, Melanie, made possible with a landmark gift to the University of Toronto.

*The Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto is a leader in interdisciplinary research, teaching, and global engagement. Established in 2010 through a foundational gift by Peter and Melanie Munk, the School is home to academic centres, research labs and teaching programmes, including the Asian Institute; the Centre for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies; the Centre for the Study of Global Japan; the Centre for the Study of the United States; the Trudeau Centre for Peace, Conflict and Justice and the Citizen Lab.<sup>1</sup>*

The Lyford Cay Foundations will be awarding the new scholarship in 2023, with information campaigns continuing for the rest of this year. To learn more about the Peter Munk Scholarship for Public Sector Excellence Programme award or other scholarship opportunities, visit [lyfordcayfoundations.org](http://lyfordcayfoundations.org). •

<sup>1</sup> See About the Munk School – Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy ([utoronto.ca](http://utoronto.ca))

# SPECIAL SCHOLAR PROFILE

## **ZION VIRGIL:** First FOCUS Scholar awarded competitive LCF undergraduate scholarship

**T**he first time Zion Virgil heard about FOCUS, a group from Lyford Cay Foundations was explaining the programme to his 4th grade class at Oakes Field Primary, describing how it would prepare you for college.

“I didn’t know exactly what college was, but I knew it was something you did after high school and it sounded good to me, so I signed up,” says Virgil.

He was one of 25 who passed the qualifying exam, out of more than 100 who applied, and for the next eight years, the kid who wasn’t exactly sure what college meant spent every other Saturday and five days a week during summer vacation getting ready for it.

Recently, Virgil became the first FOCUS Lyford Cay Foundations Scholar with a resumé packed with a record of achievements and community service. He was accepted to three colleges and is now attending Florida Southern College in Lakeland, Florida.

Virgil scored all As and Bs while passing eight BGCSEs. The team he was a part of won 1st place in the Laws of Life Video Competition; scored 10 Golds and 15 Silvers in the World Scholar’s Cup Tournament of Champions; was voted Best Debater in the Senior Division of the World Scholars Cup Regional Round; placed 3rd in the Inter-House Speech Competition, the AIDS/HIV Video Competition and in Build-A-Bridge for Aesthetics and the National High School Soccer Tournament.

Virgil has been a regular volunteer at Bahamas Red Cross, Hands for Hunger and Bahamas National Trust; served on the Student Council; par-



ticipated in the Governor General’s Youth Award, developed leadership values in the Gentlemen’s Club and through Male Mentoring; was a member of the UNESCO Eco-club and the Technical Cadets; cleaned beaches; volunteered with the Bahamas Association for the Physically Disabled and calls learning to speak Spanish one of his hobbies.

Every year between January and February, FOCUS representatives visit every fourth-grade class in six western New Providence public schools that are part of the programme, chosen because they are in largely underserved communities.

Between 100 and 140 students apply each year. Thirty-six are chosen, evenly divided between boys and girls. They begin their FOCUS training the summer after fourth grade and continue until the end of high school, with sessions taught mostly by interns from University of The Bahamas and professionals who donate their time and services.

“Zion Virgil is a great example of exactly why we created the programme called FOCUS,” explains Dr. Nicola Virgill-Rolle, Executive Director, Lyford Cay Foundations. “He benefitted from eight years of being mentored, taught, inspired, tested and, at the end of that time, he showed the ability to be innovative and a creative thinker and doer.” •



## ABOUT US

Lyford Cay Foundations is a philanthropic organization that, since 1969, has disbursed more than \$50 million through programmes designed to offer learning opportunities for the Bahamian community. It is a partnership of two distinct legal entities: Lyford Cay Foundation, Inc. and The Canadian Lyford Cay Foundation, registered public charities in the United States and Canada, respectively.

**VISION //** Every Bahamian is empowered to reach his or her full potential.

**MISSION //** Investing in learning opportunities for Bahamian children, families, young adults and communities who will benefit from them the most.

**OUR BELIEF //** We believe that increasing attainment of higher education across the country is key to the development of a prosperous, healthy and peaceful Bahamas.

## OUR PROGRAMMES

Our programmes are designed to yield palpable, long-term results. Each programme is aimed at providing learning opportunities for Bahamian children, young adults, families and communities who will benefit from them the most.

**FOCUS //** An out-of-school-time academic enrichment programme aimed at preparing motivated primary school students to become college graduates. Students are recruited at the end of grade 4 from primary schools in New Providence.

**SCHOLARSHIPS //** Awards offered to qualified Bahamians seeking post-secondary study internationally. Awards are for undergraduate, graduate and technical and vocational study and average \$15,000 annually.

**CUTILLAS //** This programme provides academic resources, guidance and scholarships to public school students to attain post-secondary education.

**GRANTS //** Financial assistance for Bahamian non-profits that provide educational opportunities.

- Grants are reviewed 3 times per year • Formal applications must be made online.

## OUR IMPACT

**3,000**



**Scholarships**

\*55 in 2021

**396**



**FOCUS Students**

\*230 in 2021

**11**



**Cutillas Scholars**

\*9 in 2021

**250**



**Community Grants**



**DONATE**

To support Lyford Cay Foundations, please donate online:  
**[www.lyfordcayfoundations.org/give](http://www.lyfordcayfoundations.org/give)**

## CONTACT US



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