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Caystone

The Newsletter of Lyford Cay Foundations

Oceans: A GATEWAY TO BAHAMIAN OPPORTUNITY

Influencing generations and impacting our planet through education

“Throwing plastic in the sea can kill sea mammals. We should reduce our carbon footprint by riding bikes instead of driving cars and clean up after ourselves by picking up trash off the ground.”

- Antheriah Smith, 5th grade FOCUS Summer SLAM participant



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OCEANS. For some they represent a scenic view, a day of play or a peaceful backdrop of melodic waves.

For The Bahamas, oceans represent so much more. They are a gateway to a sustainable economy and security for thousands of hardworking Bahamians.

The Bahamas houses five percent of the world’s coral as well as the planet’s third longest barrier reef (www.climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org). What can we do to ensure that these treasures are preserved? And how can we harness the sea’s vast potential to benefit Bahamians?

These are some of the questions Lyford Cay Foundations’ FOCUS students sought to answer in the 2023 Summer session.

Our daily goal is implementing our mission of “investing in learning opportunities for Bahamian children, families, young adults and communities.”

That is why our life-changing work, made possible by our generous donors, includes programming to educate young people about the importance of preserving the health of the oceans and the many opportunities they provide.

In this issue, we invite you to learn how the Foundations’ commitment to the oceans:

1. provides Scholarships for the next generation who will care for the seas;
2. uses Project Based Learning to teach FOCUS students to respect and protect the planet and Bahamian waters;
3. funds life-changing research encounters for young Bahamians through Grants;
4. and, opens the door to robust and exciting career opportunities for our alumni.

Thank you for your support that ensures that the OCEANS represent OPPORTUNITIES for Bahamians.



Update

FOCUS

SUMMER SLAM EXPLORES THE SEAS

EXPLORING THROUGH PROJECT BASED LEARNING

Over the summer, FOCUS students in Grades 5-9 learned the importance of the oceans through hands-on fun.

Hands-on fun is actually Project Based Learning (PBL), a student-centred pedagogical approach to instruction. In PBL, student interests, needs, and curiosities guide learning and the exploration of solutions to national needs and global challenges.



With the Summer SLAM theme of OCEANS, FOCUS students explored the importance of protecting marine life and the value of ecosystems in various ways.

They learned that 80 percent of our land mass is within 1.5 metres of sea level and that a recent World Bank Report cited The Bahamas as one of the island states most vulnerable to rising sea levels.

Students also became aware that the ocean is important for tourism, fishing and other marine-related industries in The Bahamas.

It was an action-packed summer as students visited Blue Lagoon Island and Conversation Park, Bonefish Pond National Park,

Atlantis Resort Marine Park and His Majesty's Coral Harbour Base of The Royal Bahamas Defense Force.

Exploring mangroves, learning about ecosystems, seeing sea life up close, kayaking and touring Defense Force vessels were all a part of the adventure.

An interactive virtual field trip facilitated by Coral Vita conservationist Alannah Vellacott, one of the inaugural winners of the Royal Foundation's Earthshot prize, topped off the summer learning experience.

Thanks to Summer SLAM, FOCUS students are on their way to becoming ocean champions.



FOCUS Facts

Last year, FOCUS:

- served 238 students from under-resourced communities;
- provided 45 days of high-quality out-of-school programming;
- improved academic success by strengthening math and reading benchmarks;
- saw that 100% of On Course To College (OCTC) students completed personal visions statements;
- proudly stated that 85% of OCTC 12th graders applied to college or a post-secondary institution

You Are Building A Better Bahamas

You expose students to new experiences and perspectives

ON COURSE TO COLLEGE: A CLOSER LOOK



Students are all ears at a Summer Seminar session



OCTC students learned how they can impact the planet at the 2023 Sustainable Development Conference at University of The Bahamas.



Beach Clean Up Day was a popular service-learning opportunity that allowed OCTC students to care for the beaches and ocean.

OCTC is the component of FOCUS designed to prepare 10th - 12th grade students for the college admissions process.

Benefiting from a team of dedicated teachers, OCTC students work toward the goal of becoming the first in their families to attend college. The structured support system that guides students on their path to college includes:

- **Student support** - Students are mentored through the process of obtaining a national diploma and gaining admission to a post-secondary institution.
- **Informational sessions** - These sessions provide an opportunity to interact with college students and learn about college life.
- **Coaching** - A personal coach guides students as they compile and write resumes, high school transcripts, college essays and other documents needed for college applications.

- **Academic enrichment** - OCTC offers a fun and engaging atmosphere where students are exposed to core concepts in math, science and language needed to achieve the National High School Diploma.
- **Service learning** - With each student giving a minimum of 10 hours to a community-focused initiative each summer, they are able to learn their responsibilities as global citizens.

Students look forward to Summer Seminar, a series of special sessions for high school seniors which covers several important issues to help them prepare to transition from high school into college and beyond.

With 85% of our students applying to post-secondary institutions and many of them attending University of The Bahamas and Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute, OCTC continues to be a success.

Spotlight ON OUR SCHOLARS

CREATING SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH

Scholar:
Michael Bowleg ('24)
Award:
Fiona Albek Graduate
Scholarship for the
Environment
College:
University of Exeter (England)
Major:
Sustainable Aquaculture



Michael Bowleg believes that the oceans are key to a plentiful Bahamas – a food secure Bahamas with the capacity to feed all from food grown and raised in the country. This belief led him to pursue a PhD in Sustainable Aquaculture.

Michael has learned that the ability to farm from the water is powerful. He notes, "Aquaculture has the potential to help the country diversify food sources, create employment opportunities, stimulate economic growth and make The Bahamas more climate resilient." All of these solutions are possible through research.

As a part of his PhD research, Michael worked with the Cape Eleuthera Institute to assess spiny lobster settlements and conduct laboratory-based experiments to optimise water chemistry for the welfare and health of the animals.

The university commended Michael for his outstanding ability to design and undertake impactful research. In fact, these skills have helped cement long-term collaborations with University of Exeter, the National Lobster Hatchery in the United Kingdom and Cape Eleuthera Institute

Michael is grateful for the doors that the Fiona Albek Graduate Scholarship for The Environment has opened and credits his scholarship for bringing his dream for The Bahamas a step closer.

He shared, "Donors like you create life altering impact through providing unique opportunities for students like myself, for which I cannot express my gratitude enough."

Scholar:
Cidney Thompson ('24)
Award:
Solmssen Templeton Scholarship
College:
IMO International Maritime
Law Institute (Malta)
Major: International
Maritime Law



Cidney Thompson is a proud Bahamian who wants to contribute to national development. Pursuing a master's degree in maritime law is her path to get there.

In high school, Cidney was a member of The Bahamas Maritime Cadet Corps. Afterward, she obtained an associate's degree in Law and Criminal Justice before receiving a Bachelor of Law degree with distinction. Internships with the Attorney General's office and local law firms opened her eyes to the world of maritime law.

Full of ambition, Cidney aspires to specialise in maritime both as an attorney and arbitrator. "I wish to complete bar school and to become certified in alternative dispute resolution under the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators," shared Cidney.

"What inspires me is the many opportunities for national development that this sector offers – especially international maritime arbitration."

With The Bahamas having the seventh largest ship registry in the world and its proximity to The Americas, Cidney sees the country as positioned to excel as a center for international maritime arbitration.

"When I return home after completing my studies, I am certain that I will have gained even more exposure into the field and knowledge of ways that I can contribute to The Bahamas becoming a center for maritime arbitration," she noted.

LAST YEAR

27 NEW Scholarship recipients

- \$900,000 invested
- 59% Female Scholars
- 56% First Generation students
- 15% Public School students
- 26% from Family Islands
- 26% Technical Scholars

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Marcel Amann ('13)

NAVIGATING GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES, GIVING BACK TO THE BAHAMAS

Marcel Amann has always been drawn to the sea. However, he never imagined that his love for the ocean and a boost from Lyford Cay Foundations would take him around the world

Born in New Providence, Marcel spent his early years in Germany, his father's homeland. But it was his time on Bahamian shores that gave him clues to his career calling.

"Dad and I were always on the boat fishing and going to the beaches. The love of the ocean was always there," explained Marcel. "At first, I wanted to be a chef like Dad, but summer breaks working in the restaurant quickly taught me that wasn't what I wanted. I started looking for other options."

While in high school in The Bahamas, research led Marcel to the idea of marine engineering – a career that could combine working with his hands, travel and, of course, the ocean. With the help of a Lyford Cay Foundations scholarship, Marcel obtained a Bachelor of Science in Marine Technology from California Maritime Academy.

Marcel's excelled in his first experience engineering tugboats in Freeport. Soon he was the senior engineer in charge of the extensive fleet.

Since then, Marcel has been on an accelerated path of success sailing around the world as a chief engineer and licenced captain for various types of vessels. In fact, Marcel is only the third Bahamian to ever hold the second marine engineer licence!



"I've probably traveled to 40 different countries. It's been amazing! The only continent I haven't been to yet is Antarctica," Marcel marveled.

Now after 10 years on the sea, Marcel is back in The Bahamas running his own company, Yacht Services Bahamas, Ltd., and eager to give back.

"I make time to teach Bahamas Maritime Cadets and that's been a joy. I just created the first draft of the engineering curriculum for the Grade 11 and 12 engineering cadets" shared Marcel. "It's been wonderful to spark their interest in marine engineering."

Reflecting on how he's been able to thrive, Marcel shared, "It's because of my parents that I have an insatiable hunger for success and a drive to give back."

Marcel also credits the Foundations for playing a role in his life.

"Many Bahamians have big dreams and want to do want to do big things. For me that was made possible by donors. It's been an incredible ride, and I'd like to thank Lyford Cay Foundations for that."

Update

GRANTS

WHALE CAMP

PROVIDING LIFE-CHANGING ENCOUNTERS FOR YOUNG BAHAMIANS



Imagine enjoying the peaceful Abacos on a warm day. As you bob up and down on the gently rolling waves, you see something in the distance. Wait! Is that a WHALE?

That's the same reaction that many young Bahamians have during Whale Camp, an experience made possible by Lyford Cay Foundations' \$25,000 community grant to Bahamas Marine Mammal Research Organisation (BMMRO).

"Interestingly, most of our students, when they start the camp, don't know that The Bahamas has whales in its surrounding waters," said Charlotte Dunn, Co-Founder of BMMRO.

"They've heard about dolphins, and recently manatees, but they're usually surprised to learn about the whales that we have in our environment year-round. Most of our students get to see whales in the wild during the camp, which is fulfilling," Dunn continued.

Dunn believes that the grant has helped provide these critical experiences and encounters. Over the years, Dunn has seen students transformed from being afraid of going out into the deep water to looking forward to days of deep-water swimming and exploring.

The camp aims to educate students about marine mammals inhabiting The Bahamas. Camp sessions awaken the interests of budding environmentalists and marine biologists. In 13 years of operations, the camp has touched the lives of the brightest Bahamian marine scientists including an All-Bahamas Merit Scholar currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Miami.

The grant has made it possible for Bahamians to experience the programme that was previously only available to those who had the ability to pay for camp. In 2022 and 2023, FOCUS students were among those who were able to participate in Whale Camp.

"We felt that Bahamians were missing out on such an amazing opportunity and that the only way to offer it to Bahamians was to get it fully funded. Now we can open it up to kids who have a true passion for the marine environment and want to learn more, regardless of their background and regardless of where they live," noted Dunn.

"Without Lyford Cay Foundations, hundreds of kids would not have come to camp," she adds. "They've removed a barrier to life-changing opportunities for the children."

You Are Building A Better Bahamas

You provide life-changing opportunities for future scientists

BAHAMAS PLASTIC MOVEMENT

EDUCATING AND ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE



Dr. Kristal Ambrose received her PhD in Maritime Affairs in October 2023.

“I hate the thought of a child from another generation not experiencing the ocean for years to come.”

Dr. Kristal Ambrose, Alumni Scholar (14) and Executive Director, Bahamas Plastic Movement



There are those who see problems and then there are those who see solutions. Alumni Scholar and environmental scientist Dr. Kristal Ambrose is the latter. She created the nonprofit Bahamas Plastic Movement as a solution for plastic pollution in the oceans.

After sailing across the Pacific Ocean in 2012 to study the Western Garbage Patch near Japan, Kristal was inspired to return to The Bahamas to spark a plastic pollution revolution. She founded Bahamas Plastic Movement in 2013. Today, the organisation brings awareness and change to thousands locally and globally through educational lectures, citizen science projects and summer camp programmes.

Notably, Kristal and her organisation led the charge for the 2018 legislative change in The Bahamas banning single-use plastic bags, plastic cutlery, straws and Styrofoam containers and cups.

Educating the next generation on the importance of protecting the oceans from plastic pollution is a critical part of Bahamas Plastic Movement’s mission. Lyford Cay Foundations grants totaling \$13,000 for 2016, 2017 and 2019 to help fund the Plastic Pollution Education and Ocean Conservation Summer Camp assisted in furthering the mission.

Based in South Eleuthera, the six-day, free intensive camp empowered Bahamian youth to become environmental leaders and tackle the issue of plastic pollution using a dynamic, creative approach. With additional community funding, the camp was able to exceed its goals.

For participants, science came alive as they learned through activities, classroom lectures, community activism and artistic expression. Students were equipped to take the knowledge they gained from the camp into their communities to implement change.

“Our programme is grounded in a very real problem we are facing in our environment, but it is rooted deeper in the hopefulness that comes from engaging young people in developing innovative solutions,” Ambrose reflected.

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

Partnerships

LJM MARITIME ACADEMY

PARTNERING TO CREATE MARITIME LEADERS



The Bahamas has one of the world's fastest growing ship registries officially listing more than 1,500 vessels around the world that fly the Bahamian flag (www.bahamas.gov.bs/wps/portal.public/GuideforInvestors). LJM Maritime Academy (LJMMA) is a unique nonprofit created with the vision to put skilled Bahamians on each one of these ships and the many others that traverse the world's seas.

Just over a decade old, the institute prepares students to excel in seafaring environments and positions them to support the projected growth of the maritime industry.

Lyford Cay Foundations is proud to partner with the academy in a variety of ways to help them achieve their mission.

Over the past six years, the Foundations has granted over \$100,000 to LJMMA to support four deserving cadets in their three year programme. For Andron Spence, one of the students receiving the award, it made a world of difference.

"For the average Bahamian, school fees are steep, even it's the more affordable

option of staying close to home," said Andron. "I'm grateful for taking a big burden off my family."

The Foundations continues to partner with young people pursuing education at LJMMA by offering scholarships each year for Maritime Cadets.

The Bahamas Resilience and Excellence Education Programme is a newly created Lyford Cay Foundations scholarship initiative focused on graduate and technical studies in Canada. Importantly, the initiative also provides an award specifically for students pursuing Maritime Studies at LJM Maritime Academy who show a strong likelihood of success.

Dr. Brendamae Cleare, President of LJMMA, says that scholarships are instrumental for assisting future maritime leaders.

"We don't turn away students when they have needs - we welcome them and hope we can find them a scholarship," she said. "Lyford Cay Foundations' support has been so rewarding because it has helped deserving students to have opportunities."

ABOUT US

Lyford Cay Foundations is a philanthropic organisation with deep roots in the Bahamian community, the United States and Canada. 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 (Federal I.D. #23-7025275) and in Canada (CRA BN/Registration # 11921 9301 RR0001) respectively.

Lyford Cay Foundations believes that increasing educational attainment across the country is key to the development of a prosperous, healthy and peaceful Bahamas.

DONATE TODAY

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

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

To make a gift, please visit lyfordcayfoundations.org/donate-online/ or call us at 242-362-4910

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