



Spring 2025 VOLUME 31, NO. 1

# Caystone

The Newsletter of Lyford Cay Foundations

## Fulfilling Dreams by Creating Opportunities

### Alumni Scholar ('02 & '20) Kevin Cartwright Breaks Barriers

“I am a 24-year-old intelligent, articulate, ambitious young man who happens to be blind. I recognise the need that exists for blind individuals like me to be given every opportunity to realise their hopes, dreams, ambitions and aspirations to become productive citizens in our society.”

Those were the words that Kevin Cartwright wrote in 2001 when he applied for a Lyford Cay Foundations scholarship. Kevin was overjoyed when he was awarded the Estelle Siebens Excellence Scholarship in 2002 to pursue a bachelor's degree in education at West Virginia State College.

Kevin knew that this was more than a scholarship – it was a chance for more.

“Coming from very humble beginnings and being an individual with different abilities, the gift of a Lyford Cay Foundations scholarship was a blessing,” said Kevin. “It opened doors of opportunity for my future and provided me avenues of training to prepare for leadership and service.”

Looking back, Kevin can remember the unique challenges he faced as a college student. “As a blind student attending university thousands of miles away, the pressures and expectation to succeed are tenfold,” he explained. “I was determined to beat the odds.”

Kevin did beat the odds by using every tool and resource available including a guide dog to help him navigate campus and technology outfitted with special reading software for blind students.



After graduation, Kevin returned home to New Providence to work for the Ministry of Education. For more than a decade he taught language arts, Braille and assistive technologies, while also advocating for the disabled.

In 2020, Kevin went on to obtain a master's degree from the University of Ottawa with the help of Lyford Cay Foundations once again, as a Thomson Leadership and Innovation Scholar.

Last year, Kevin made history by being appointed the first blind principal in The Bahamas. He proudly leads at Erin Gilmore School for the Blind, the school where he was once a student.

“Becoming a Lyford Cay Scholar gave me dignity, respect and independence. It enabled me to use my talent, training and expertise to educate our special needs children,” said Kevin.

“Becoming a Lyford Cay Scholar gave me an opportunity.”

### Inside

<b>FOCUS</b>	
Spring Sessions	2
OCTC	3
<b>Spotlight</b>	
Scholars	4
Alumni	5
<b>Grants</b>	
Afterschool Programmes	6
Grant Recipients	7
<b>Profile</b>	
Harry C. Moore Memorial Scholarship	8



# Update

## FOCUS

### SPRING SESSIONS

#### STUDENTS LEARN THROUGH EXPLORING LIVING THINGS AROUND US

This spring, FOCUS students embarked on a journey of exploration through the Saturday SLAM programme, guided by the theme *Living Things Around Us*. Designed to help students develop a deeper connection to nature and their environment, this year's theme emphasizes understanding the vital role that living things play in our daily lives.

Through engaging field trips and interactive lessons, students have been expanding their knowledge beyond the classroom. Grade 5 students visited Bonefish Pond National Park, where they explored the importance of mangroves and marine ecosystems to The Bahamas. Their outdoor learning was complemented by a dynamic classroom session on marine conservation, helping them connect what they experienced in the field to broader environmental concepts.

Grade 7 students ventured to Primeval Forest National Park, where they learned from a Bahamas National Trust (BNT) education officer about native plant and animal species found only in The Bahamas, as well as species currently endangered. The students' curiosity was evident as they asked insightful questions, eager to understand the link between conservation and national heritage.

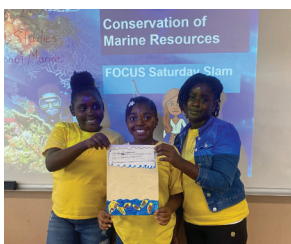
In addition to environmental exploration, students delved into our country's rich history with a visit to the Pompey Museum. Guided by a passionate educator from Antiquities

Monuments and Museums Corporation (AMMC), they learned about the nation's past and reflected on the importance of preserving and understanding their cultural identity.

Students also had the opportunity to develop new skills through a hands-on archery session. Under the guidance of instructor Gina Taylor, they honed their focus, communication, and teamwork skills while enjoying a sport many had never tried before. Gina remarked on their enthusiasm and natural talent, noting how quickly they embraced the challenge.

For Grades 9-12, the sessions also included an inspiring guest speaker, Lashante Sampson, National Youth Ambassador and founder of Bridge, an education consultancy dedicated to non-traditional academic pathways. Her talk sparked meaningful discussions, empowering students to consider diverse opportunities for their future success.

"These spring sessions have been instrumental in reinforcing FOCUS' mission to foster well-rounded, informed citizens," said Kendra Moss, Programme Director of Lyford Cay Foundations. "Thanks to the generosity of Lyford Cay Foundations' donors, students are empowered to explore their world, strengthen their character, and build critical skills that will serve them for years to come."



#### 2025 FOCUS FAST FACTS:

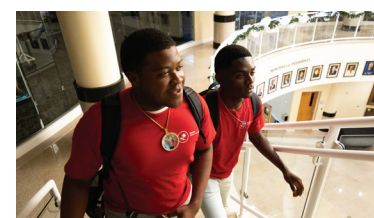
- **242 Students** from under-resourced communities served
- **8 Primary Schools** participating
- **53 New Students** entering in 2025 (46 in Grade 5, & seven Cutillas Scholars)
- **89% Attendance Rate** for Summer SLAM
- **100% Participation** in Project Based Learning

## You Are Building A Better Bahamas

You create unique learning opportunities for students



## ON COURSE TO COLLEGE: AFTER 8 YEARS: NAVIGATING POST-SECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES WITH CONFIDENCE



For students like Taiwan Thompson, a recent FOCUS graduate after eight years in the programme and now a Culinary Arts student at Synergy Bahamas, OCTC was a transformative experience. "OCTC motivated me to never give up, no matter how far behind I might have felt," he shares. "They believed in me, and because of that, I kept pushing."

The OCTC programme offers tailored guidance, helping students like Daleisha Sweeting, now a History major at University of The Bahamas, to excel. "FOCUS and OCTC boosted my drive to succeed academically. The teachers made a huge difference," she reflects. Daleisha credits the programme with helping her build communication skills that are proving invaluable in her transition to higher education.

For Ramon Smith, now employed in the Food & Beverage industry, the benefits of OCTC go beyond academics. "The biggest skills I gained were patience, resilience, and communication— those have been key for me at work," he says. His sentiments are echoed by fellow participant Evenel Luma, who highlights how OCTC and FOCUS helped him grow into a more energetic, joyful, and confident young leader.

The impact of OCTC is felt long before students cross the graduation stage. Alainia Garrick, Class of 2025, explains, "It helped me meet my graduation requirements, and it's made me more open with my parents and teachers."

Reflecting on their growth, Ms. Kendra Moss, Director of Programmes remarks, "We're incredibly proud of these students. Years of commitment to FOCUS and OCTC has shaped them into well-rounded, motivated young people who are ready to lead."

With the steadfast support of Lyford Cay Foundations, OCTC continues to create pathways to success for Bahamian youth. Together, we are building futures and strengthening communities— one student at a time.

**Watch the video "After 8 Years", where students discuss their experience as graduates of FOCUS On Course To College, available on YouTube:**



# Spotlight

## ON OUR SCHOLARS

### OPPORTUNITY IN THE CREATIVE SECTOR

**Scholar:**  
Giovanni T. Clarke ('24)  
**Award:**  
Harry C. Moore Memorial  
Scholarship in the Arts  
**College:**  
University of Maryland  
School of Music (USA)  
**Major:**  
Doctorate in Musical Arts,  
Wind Band Conducting



**Giovanni Clarke**, believes that music education can propel a nation forward.

"My goal is to cultivate a greater understanding and admiration for classical music, Goombay, Rake 'N Scrape and Junkanoo music by focusing on instrumental music and conducting," said Giovanni.

With a graduate degree from Vandercook College of Music and extensive music education experience in The Bahamas, Giovanni has big dreams for the country.

"Completing this degree will allow me to be part of a forward-thinking vision the government has set for the creation of The Bahamas Creative and Performing Arts School," he noted. "I will also be equipped to collaborate with experienced musicians and artists to create a national wind symphony."

In Giovanni's eyes, the completion of his degree means the expansion of cultural opportunities for Bahamians.

"I also aspire to join the faculty of the University of The Bahamas to share my expertise, teaching methods, rehearsal strategies and performance approaches," he said. "My goal is to enhance the artistic abilities of future instructors and generations of Bahamian students."

#### CELEBRATING 20 YEARS Harry C. Moore Scholarship in The Arts

- 22 Scholars awarded since 2004
- 17 Master of Fine Arts degrees
- 4 Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees
- 1 Doctorate of Musical Arts degree



**Scholar:**  
Cydne Coleby ('24)  
**Award:**  
Harry C. Moore Memorial  
Scholarship in the Arts  
**College:**  
Bard College (USA)  
**Major:** Master of Fine Arts in  
Painting

For **Cydne Coleby**, art is both a method of inquiry and a form of care.

"As someone shaped by personal loss and community resilience, my work is driven by interests in identity formation and a desire to explore how we heal—both individually and collectively," she says.

While attending University of The Bahamas, Cydne experienced a series of personal tragedies, that prevented her from completing her Associate's degree. However, through self guided study and online tutorials, she developed her skills and built a successful creative career.

She has worked with some of the country's leading arts institutions, including The National Art Gallery of The Bahamas, Popopstudios, and The Current at Baha Mar. Her artwork has been exhibited in more than seven countries and is held in collections worldwide.

Now pursuing a Master of Fine Arts in Painting at Bard College, Cydne continues to explore themes of identity, history, and belonging from a distinctly Bahamian perspective.

"This scholarship enables me to deepen my practice and contribute more meaningfully to conversations on art and culture," Cydne explained. "My goal is to return home and help cultivate a dynamic, inclusive arts community where Bahamian creatives can thrive."

## You Are Building A Better Bahamas

You empower Scholars to create viable solutions



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Aidan Barrow ('16)

### WEAVING HERITAGE, ART AND BUSINESS INTO BAHAMIAN LUXURY

**Aidan Barrow** has always believed that beauty lies in the details. As the founder and creative force behind Haus of Assembly, a luxury gift and resortwear brand located in Nassau's bustling Cruise Port, Aidan has built a business that embodies Bahamian craftsmanship, heritage, and a passion for design.

But before Aidan became a trailblazer in the Bahamian creative economy, she was a young girl harvesting silvertop palms under the summer sun in Exuma alongside her grandmother.

"Every summer growing up, I would help my grandmother gather straw and plait handbags," Aidan recalls. "Selling them at the Straw Market in Nassau taught me from an early age the value of creativity and tradition. Seeing visitors' fascination with our craft left a lasting impression on me."

Aidan's journey from student of Kingsway Academy to budding artist was fostered early on through an after-school program called After School Music and Art (ASMAC), where her talent was recognised and encouraged by art instructor Sue Bennett-Williams.

These formative experiences shaped Aidan's deep connection to Bahamian culture and sparked her interest in the world of design. Yet, she knew that turning this passion into a viable career would require technical training and global exposure.

In 2016, Aidan was awarded the Harry C. Moore Memorial Scholarship in the Arts from Lyford Cay Foundations to pursue a Master of Fine Arts degree in Jewelry Design at the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD).

"The scholarship was transformative," says Aidan. "Without it, I would not have had access to the world-class education that helped me develop the design, technical and business skills needed to turn my creative vision into reality."

"I wanted to create a brand that fused modern aesthetics with the traditional craftsmanship I learned as a child," Aidan explains. "Haus of Assembly celebrates Bahamian materials, local artistry and the vibrancy of our culture."



Aidan's designs reflect her deep connection to nature, childhood memories in Exuma, and the vibrant textures of The Bahamas.

Reflecting on her journey, Aidan credits Lyford Cay Foundations for being a key part of her success.

**"The scholarship gave me more than just financial support. It gave me the freedom to fully immerse myself in my craft and come home prepared to make an impact."**

As she looks ahead, she knows her grandmother would be proud— watching the little girl who once toddled through the Straw Market now paving the way for a new era of Bahamian luxury design.

# Update

## GRANTS

### CREATIVE OUTLETS WITH AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMMING

Recognising that the hours between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. are critical for student engagement, Lyford Cay Foundations focused their November 2024 grant cycle on the strategic support of afterschool initiatives. Some 16 grants were awarded to community-based organisations that will reach more than 1,000 young people across The Bahamas, particularly in underserved communities.

This cycle's grants directly supported initiatives that offer academic tutoring, mentorship, STEM education, career readiness training, and sports development. Whether a student is building confidence on the basketball court or strengthening their reading skills with a mentor, these opportunities are helping to shape bright futures.

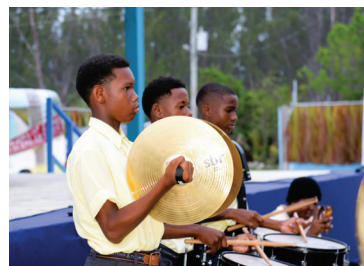
With an \$84,500 investment, we are helping to build stronger after-school programmes on 11 islands, including Abaco, Andros, Cat Island, Eleuthera, Grand Bahama, Inagua, Long Island, New Providence, Rum Cay and San Salvador.

"We are pleased to support so many organisations across our islands in constructive youth programming," said Mrs. Sarah Farrington, Vice-Chairman of Lyford Cay Foundations. "After-school hours are crucial for young people, and these grants will ensure that students have structured and meaningful opportunities to learn and grow."

Dr. Nicola Virgill-Rolle, Executive Director of Lyford Cay Foundations, reiterated the Foundations' dedication to lifelong learning. "Ensuring that children have safe, productive learning opportunities after school is essential."

This commitment to strengthening educational pathways is made possible through the generosity of Lyford Cay Foundations' donors and partners.

Together, we are expanding opportunities for students across The Bahamas— connecting them to programmes that inspire, empower, and prepare them for success.



### GRANTS 2024-2025

Creating access to education is at the heart of everything we do.

- **11 Family Islands** with afterschool programming
- **16 Community Grants** awarded to clubs and organisations
- **1,000 Young People** engaged in safe, enriching activities
- **\$84,500 Impact Investment** beyond the classroom

## You Are Building A Better Bahamas

You create access for afterschool programming



## GRANT RECIPIENTS

The following organisations are creating meaningful educational opportunities and safe, enriching after-school experiences for students across Abaco, Andros, Cat Island, Eleuthera, Grand Bahama, Inagua, Long Island, New Providence, Rum Cay, and San Salvador.

**1. The Anglican Diocese of The Bahamas and The Turks and Caicos Islands** (Abaco, Andros, Berry Islands, Cat Island, Eleuthera, Grand Bahama, Inagua, Long Island, New Providence, Rum Cay and San Salvador)- This grant will fund the Power-Up programme to enable 4th to 6th graders to lead healthy lifestyles on 11 islands.

**2. Bahamas National Sailing School** (New Providence)- Funding will expand the reach of the school's government school sailing programme, thereby opening the opportunity to The Bahamas' national sport to 20 more students at various public schools.

**3. Boys Club of The Bahamas Organization** (New Providence)- Serving students at Stephen Dillet Primary School and on the Family Islands, this grant will be used to provide uniforms, school supplies and meals for students who participate in a weekly mentorship programme.

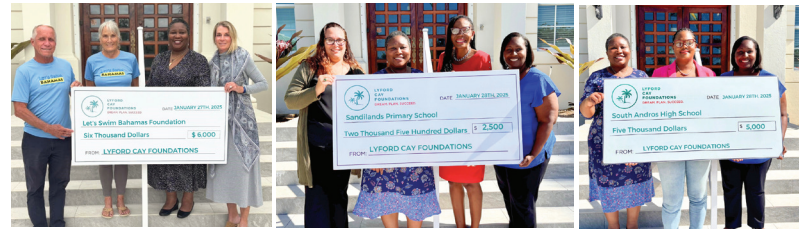
**4. BREEF** (New Providence)- Expands BREEF's experiential programmes for 10 through 12 graders in public schools by leveraging the Eco-Schools club framework to foster environmental stewardship and empower students to become advocates for ocean conservation.

**5. Cat Island Community Band Association** (Cat Island)- Bolsters the ability of the organisation to provide immersive musical training by funding instruments and needed resources for the strengthening of a community marching band inclusive of students from the north, central and south communities of Cat Island.

**6. Future Leaders of Worth/Feeding Five Thousand Network** (New Providence)- Provides literacy and foreign language support to students from underserved communities to close literacy gaps, provide equal learning opportunities and offer bilingualism to students.

**7. Inagua All Age School** (Inagua)- Funds will be used to develop a school community farm which will give students hands-on education in sustainable agriculture.

**8. Let's Swim Bahamas** (New Providence)- Helps to expand the programme to additional schools throughout the island.



**9. Legacy Church** (New Providence)- This grant will bridge gaps in literacy and emotional resilience for 7th to 9th grade students at the LW Young School by providing educational materials and a safe space for students.

**10. S.T.R.A.W. Inc Center for Young Women** (New Providence)- Educates and assists underserved girls and motivates them to remain focused towards achieving academic excellence while avoiding societal pitfalls.

**11. Sandilands Primary School/Learning Without Limits** (New Providence)- Enhances STEM education for elementary students through technology integration enabling hands-on learning experiences that inspire creativity and critical thinking.

**12. Sherlin C. Bootle Secondary School Soccer Team** (Abaco)- This grant will increase opportunities for students in Abaco to develop team-building skills through soccer.

**13. South Andros High School Garden & Environment Club** (Andros)- Funding will be used to create sustainable garden spaces to ensure food security on campus and within the community.

**14. The Bahamas Association of School Counsellors** (New Providence)- Provides essential career counselling services to high school students grades 9 to 12 from underserved communities in New Providence.

**15. The Bahamas Girl Guides Association** (New Providence)- Supports the printing and binding of much needed handbooks for Sunflowers and Brownies.

**16. The Bahamas Literacy Association** (New Providence)- Assists in establishing a comprehensive tutoring program and provides literacy toolkits to address literacy challenges faced by students.

# Partnerships

## A LEGACY OF ART & OPPORTUNITY

### 20 YEARS OF THE HARRY C. MOORE SCHOLARSHIP IN THE ARTS

For the past two decades, the Harry C. Moore Memorial Scholarship in the Arts has empowered Bahamian creatives to share their talents with the world. Established in memory of philanthropist and arts patron Harry C. Moore, the scholarship has become one of Lyford Cay Foundations' most beloved awards.

Each year, it supports Bahamian graduate students pursuing advanced degrees in visual arts, music, theatre, writing, and arts education. For many, it is the key to unlocking global opportunities and strengthening the nation's creative industries.

"We are proud to continue Mr. Moore's vision of investing in young artists," shared Dr. Nicola Virgill-Rolle, Executive Director of Lyford Cay Foundations. "This scholarship has opened doors for Bahamians at pivotal moments in their journeys."

The list of Harry C. Moore Memorial Award Scholars over the last twenty years include some of the most celebrated and accomplished Bahamian artists.

Mr. Jeffrey Meris (Lyford Cay Foundations Scholar, 2012 & 2017) is one of them.

"As one of my earliest accomplishments, The Harry C. Moore Memorial Scholarship was a launching pad," shared Jeffrey. "Everything I have been able to achieve is interconnected like a constellation. Lyford Cay Foundations and the Harry C. Moore award have been starward in my journey."



**Mrs. Patricia Thomson Leonard**, a champion of the Harry C. Moore Memorial Scholarship in the Arts, is recognised for her pivotal role in advancing opportunities for Bahamian artists over the past twenty years through her family's philanthropic legacy.

*Photographed Left to Right: Dr. Nicola Virgill-Rolle, Executive Director of Lyford Cay Foundations; Mrs. Patricia Thomson Leonard, Board Member, Lyford Cay Foundations; Mr. Basil P. Goulondris, Chairman, Lyford Cay Foundation, Inc. and Mrs. Mary Filippelli Hall, Chairman, The Canadian Lyford Cay Foundation.*



**Mrs. Dionne Benjamin-Smith** (Lyford Cay Foundations Scholar, 1991) has played a pivotal role in the success of the scholarship over the past 18 years. Additionally, she champions the work of Scholars in the arts through Bahamian Art & Culture, her popular online platform.

*Photographed Left to Right: Dr. Nicola Virgill-Rolle, Executive Director of Lyford Cay Foundations; and Mrs. Dionne Benjamin-Smith.*

#### ABOUT US

Lyford Cay Foundations comprises two distinct philanthropic legal entities. Lyford Cay Foundation, Inc., a United States registered public charity (Federal I.D. #23-7025275) and The Canadian Lyford Cay Foundation, a Canadian registered public charity (CRA BN/ Registration # 11921 9301 RR0001).

Lyford Cay Foundations have deep roots in the Bahamian community and believe 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/](http://lyfordcayfoundations.org/donate-online/) or call us at 242-362-4910

#### BE IN THE KNOW:

Email us at [info@lyfordcayfoundations.org](mailto:info@lyfordcayfoundations.org) to join our monthly e-newsletter mailing list!

#### Follow us on



Lyford Cay Foundations

Visit our website



#### Photo credits:

Page 5 - photo taken by Davrielle Burrows

Page 6 - Courtesy of Cat Island Community Band Association