



INSIGHT

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. (SVGAT)
P. O. Box 80066 – Don Valley Village P. O., Toronto, ON, M2J 0A1

svgat@vincytoronto.com

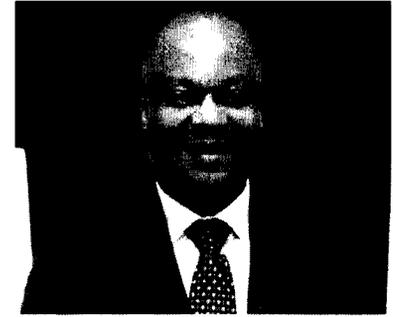
www.vincytoronto.com

Quarterly Newsletter

WINTER ISSUE

JANUARY 2026

PRESIDENT'S GREETINGS



Dear Members and Friends of the Association,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend warm wishes to you and your families for a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year. As we welcome 2026, we do so with gratitude for how far we have come and optimism for what lies ahead.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to our Board members for their dedication and hard work throughout 2025. Your commitment of time, energy, and expertise has been essential to keeping our Association strong, accountable, and forward-moving.

To those Board members who joined us for the very first time last year, thank you for stepping forward to serve. I trust that the experience gained has strengthened your confidence and prepared you to continue playing an active role in transforming and building our organization for the future.

To our members, volunteers, sponsors, and the wider Vincentian community, your relentless support does not go unnoticed

Whether through participation, encouragement, or quiet acts of service behind the scenes, you remain the foundation on which this Association stands. We are deeply grateful. Looking ahead, planning is already underway for two of our signature events: the Vincy Unity Picnic at Crysler Park and our August *Splash of Blue* Boat Cruise. These gatherings not only celebrate our culture and heritage but also strengthen the bonds that connect us as a community. We look forward to sharing more details in the coming months.

Thank you for continuing this journey with us. Together, we will keep building an Association that reflects the pride, resilience, and unity of the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

With warm regards,

Cordel Telfer

President

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto, Inc.

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Handwritten note: Noted 3/21/2026

Handwritten note: Noted 30.11.2026

CORPORATION NEWS

CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

President: Cordel Telfer
president@vincytoronto.com

Vice President: Terrance Gordon
vice-president@vincytoronto.com

Secretary: Jamillah Wyllie
secretary@vincytoronto.com

Treasurer: Delcina Jardine-Reckley
treasurer@vincytoronto.com

Public Relations Officer: Cheryl Hazell
pro@vincytoronto.com

Assistant Secretary: Petraun McIntosh
Assistant Treasurer: June Ellis
Director: Erline Granderson
Director: Kenneth Farrell

The Corporation continues to hold meetings and other presentations virtually on Zoom unless otherwise indicated.

NEXT GENERAL MEMBERS MEETING

Sunday, February 22, 2026

COMMITTEES

Public Relations Committee
Cheryl Hazell, Gideon Exeter

Fundraising Committee
Delcina Jardine-Reckley - Chair

Education/Scholarship Committee
Terrance Gordon

Council of Caribbean Associations of Canada
Bernadette Petra Ryan-Phillips
Erline Granderson

Vincy Unity Picnic Committee
Jim Lewis, Cordel Telfer, Terrance Gordon

Adopt a Child Coordinator
Erline Granderson

Independence Planning Committee Chair
Sandra Bobb

Christmas Hamper Committee
Erline Granderson

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION MEETING
Last Sunday of April, June, August, October

The Board of Directors and Members of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines of Toronto Inc. offers sincere condolences to all those members of our community who have lost their loved ones. We wish you God's blessings during your period of grief.



May the souls of the departed Rest in Eternal Peace.

CORPORATION NEWS

SVGAT's ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The annual general meeting of the Association will be held on Sunday, February 22, 2026 @ 4:00 p.m. At that meeting, there will be a review of the activities of the Corporation for 2025, the presentation of the financial report and the election of board members to replace those whose terms have expired. All members of the Association are invited to attend and to make themselves available to serve.

VOTING ELIGIBILITY

In order to cast a vote at the upcoming annual general meeting, a person has to be a financial or honorary life member in 2025. According to the by-laws, a person who is not a financial or honorary life member can be elected to serve on the board. If such a person is elected, the person has up to ten (10) days following the election to pay his or membership fee and become a member. Membership fees are paid annually and are good up to December 31 of the year in which they are paid, however, there is a grace period ending March 31 where those members remain financial.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION PROCESS

Introduction

According to paragraph (22) of the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto (hereinafter "The Association") By-laws, each year Board seats are opened for elections according to numbers. Elections will take place during the Annual General Members Meeting that is normally held in the month of January. For 2026, the Annual General Members Meeting will be held on February 22.

In accordance with the Province of Ontario Corporation Law, a person can be elected as a director without being a member of the Corporation. If a person who is not a member is elected, then that person has up to ten (10) days following the election in which to become a member.

The logistic of the elections and its running will be managed by an Election Supervisor. Firstly, there will be the election of a president, then there will be election for the remaining directors.

Eligible Candidate

In order to be nominated for and elected as president and/or director, the person must:

- Be 18 years of age
- Not be a declared bankrupt
- Not be prohibited from being a director or promoter of the Association
- Be of sound mind
- Agree to be nominated
- Must be present at the meeting
- State his/her qualifications and why he or she feels they are fit to serve the Corporation in that capacity.

CORPORATION NEWS

Eligible Voters

Only persons fulfilling the following criteria are eligible to vote:

- Any financial member of the Association in good standing. Good Standing in this context refers to a member who has paid his/her membership dues for the year 2025. All paid members for the 2025 year continue to be members up to March 31st, 2026.
- Honorary Life Members. These are persons who have received special status for their contributions to the Association.

The following voting criteria apply to all members. Members present at the election have both a self-voting right as a candidate, if they are board members seeking reelection, and as ordinary members to nominate and elect persons to serve on the board.

The Election Process

Nominations

The nominator must state why he or she feels that the nominee is a good candidate for being the president/director of the Corporation. If the nomination is seconded, then the nominee must state his or her qualifications for being a president/director and whether he or she feels that they are fit to serve the Corporation in that capacity. The Election Supervisor shall ask if there are any more nominations. If none is forthcoming, he/she asks for a motion that nominations to be closed, seconded, and agreed upon.

Voting

Voting takes place when nominations are closed. The following voting criteria apply to all candidates:

A candidate, present at the election, either has a self-voting right as a candidate or as an ordinary member if they are a board member seeking re-election.

Election of President

The president is elected to serve as president for one year. The president will automatically become a director and his/her term of office as a director will be determined when the directors are elected. Nominations and voting will follow the above-noted process.

Election of Directors

For 2026, four directors will have completed their terms; therefore, there will be four vacancies to be filled as follows:

One director to be elected for a three-year term

Three directors to be elected for a one-year term

The Supervisor of Elections will declare the names of all candidates who have been elected. The elected President may choose to give some remarks at this point.

The election results will be published on the Association's website

COMMUNITY NEWS

46TH INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto and the Consulate General of SVG in Toronto organized a series of events to mark the 46 years of SVG's independence. Events included a Thanksgiving Church Service on October 12 at Rosewood Church of the Nazarene, Scarborough where Pastor Caroline Layne delivered the sermon and there were presentations by several members of our community, including singer/songwriters Margaret Williams and Elgin "Ebou" Hamblett; Flag raising ceremonies at Toronto City Hall on October 25 and Brampton City Hall on October 27. Instead of the traditional Gala, there was a major change to a daylight Brunch at Parkview Manor on October 19, which catered primarily to those who did not like nighttime events. Attendees were treated with musical entertainment by many SVG nationals, and an impromptu SVG Got Talent, where a number of singers graced the podium to express themselves musically, followed by dancing; and the illumination of the Niagara Falls on October 27. Acting Consul General Ms. Lasana Andrews made her first public appearances to the SVG community in Toronto at the various events.



FAMILIES RECEIVED CHRISTMAS TREATS

The SVGAT was able to assist 4 families over the Christmas holidays with food hampers and cash. The gifts were provided by Grace Foods Canada and the SVGAT.

Special thanks to members of the committee that organized the collection and distribution to help the organization continue its tradition of assisting the less fortunate in our community. The committee included Erline Granderson, Cordel Telfer, Petra Ryan-Phillips and Gideon Exeter.

Persons who wish to assist with this project can make contributions throughout the year by e-transfer to treasurer@vincytoronto.com.



MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS REWARDS
Arbor Memorial Inc.
is a proud sponsor of the
Council of Caribbean Associations-Canada
(CCAC) and its member affiliates including
St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of
Toronto Inc. (SVGAT)



Through **Alliances By Arbor Memorial**, members of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines community in Ontario who are members of the St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. who choose to use the services of Arbor Memorial at any of its cemeteries or funeral homes are entitled to special discounts off products and services.

Through **Arbor Foundation**, the CCAC and its affiliates receive special funding for its programs and activities. For further information, please visit any of the websites listed below or contact Gideon Exeter at 416-992-4253 or by email at gexeter@arbormemorial.com



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MARY CARRUTH
Senior Travel Consultant

COMMUNITY NEWS

BURSARIES PRESENTED AT INDEPENDENCE GALA

Bursaries of \$1,000.00 each were presented to five students of SVG descent studying at colleges and universities in Ontario.

Memuna Roforce, who was in her first year at the University of Guelph Humber, working towards her Honours Bachelor of Applied Science in Justice Studies, received one of the bursaries sponsored by the SVGAT; **Naomi Lampkin-Zienus** was also a first-year student at the University of Toronto, pursuing a joint major in Forensic Science. A high-achieving scholar, Naomi maintained an academic average of 95% or higher throughout high school and graduated as the recipient of her school's Mathematics and Science Award. **Timanna Sutherland**, a first-year student at George Brown College, pursuing a diploma in Early Childhood Education received a bursary sponsored jointly by District Stairs & Straight Gate Ministries. She moved to Canada three years ago after graduating from the SVG Community College; **Augustus Gellizeau**, an aspiring aerospace engineer, is pursuing a Bachelor of Engineering in Aerospace Engineering at Toronto Metropolitan University, received the KLC/Eastern Caribbean Freight Lines bursary. The fifth recipient was **Margaret Williams** who received the Sonia Seaton Memorial Bursary. She is attending Western University's Faculty of Law, towards achieving her dream of becoming a lawyer.

Congratulations to these rising stars.

The SVGAT's bursary program began in 2004 and has since assisted over 30 students.

Please visit the website www.vincytoronto.com to read the profiles of the students.

COMMUNITY AND LEADERSHIP MEMBERS RECOGNITION

The membership of The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. welcomed Mrs. Adina James and Ms. Elma Gabriel, two long-serving members in the category of Honorary Life Members for their contributions to the life and work of the Association. Both individuals served in leadership roles while Ms. Gabriel is a past president.

Mr. Ken Chitolie of KLC Freight Forwarding Services and Eastern Caribbean Freight Lines was recognized for his contribution to the Association as well as the government and people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, both here in Canada and in SVG.

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COMMUNITY NEWS



Annie Bynoe, Executive Director of Knights Table, is being recognized for her compassionate leadership and unwavering commitment to supporting Brampton residents facing hunger, poverty, and housing insecurity by the City of Brampton and will receive a key to the City on January 30, 2026.

During the pandemic, she launched the Mobile Community Kitchen food truck and was a key player in securing a permanent home for Knights Table. Annie's contributions have earned her the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal as well as many other honours. Her vision and service continue to uplift and empower individuals and families throughout Brampton.

2026 TORONTO HARBOUR BOAT CRUISE



The SVGAT and the Toronto SVG Support Group (TorSVGSG) will again coordinate the summer boat cruise to raise funds for supporting the activities and programs of both organizations. The annual popular cruise will be held on Friday, **August 7, 2026.**

More details about this event will be shared in due course.

CCAC NEWS

The Council of Caribbean Associations-Canada (CCAC) of which the SVGAT is a founding member, held its bursary and scholarship presentations on November 17, during which it presented 5 bursaries of \$3,000.00 each to students of Caribbean descent who are attending colleges and universities. Two other students each received full tuition-paid scholarships to attend Seneca Polytechnic and George Brown College at \$6,000.00 for up to four years. A similar number of bursaries and scholarships will be offered this year. Also, for 2026, the CCAC is naming one of its bursaries in honour of Ms. Ingrid Veronica King, a long-serving administrator and former president of the Alliance of Guyanese Canadian Organizations.

In 2025, the CCAC had ten active member associations – Alliance of Guyanese Canadian Organizations, Antigua & Barbuda Association of Toronto, Barbados Canada Association, Commonwealth of Dominica Ontario Association, Grenada Association Toronto, Montserrat Association Toronto, Nevcan Cultural Association, St. Kitts & Nevis Association of Toronto, St. Lucia Association Toronto, and The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto.

A major change to the CCAC's Constitution and By-Laws now allows for Associate Members, both as individuals and organizations whose ambitions, aims, and policies are in line with those of the CCAC.

To learn more about the CCAC, please visit the website at:

<https://caribbeancouncilcanada.org/about-council-of-caribbean-associations---canada>

NEWS FROM SVG & THE CARIBBEAN



The New Democratic Party (NDP), led by **Hon. Dr. Godwin Lorraine Friday**, defeated the Unity Labour Party (ULP), the governing party in SVG since 2001, at the November 27 polls. The NDP won in 14 constituencies while the ULP's sole win was by its leader and former Prime Minister, Hon. Ralph Gonsalves. The ULP won 27,152 votes while the NDP won 37,207. This was Dr. Friday's second attempt as leader of the party since taking over from former PM, Mr. Arnhim Eustace. His party lost 6 to 9 seats in 2020.

The constituencies, representatives, and their portfolios are as follows:

Northern Grenadines – Hon. Godwin Lorraine Friday

Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Legal Affairs & Justice, Economic Planning and Private Sector Development

Southern Grenadines – Terrance Ollivierre

Minister of Higher Education, Grenadines Affairs, Local Government, Airports and Seaport

North Leeward – Hon. Kishore Shallow

Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation and Sustainable Development

Central Leeward – Hon. Conroy Huggins

Minister of Fisheries, Marine and Land Conservation and Climate Resilience

South Leeward – Hon. Nigel Stephenson

Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Physical Planning

West Kingstown – Hon. Daniel Cummings

Minister of Health, Wellness, Environmental Health and Energy

Central Kingstown – Hon. St. Clair Leacock

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, Disaster Management and Immigration

Cont'd on next page

East Kingstown – Hon. Dwight Fitzgerald Bramble
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Foreign Investment and Diaspora Affairs

West St. George – Hon. Kaschaka Cupid
Minister of Youth, Sports, Culture and Creative Industries

East St. George - Hon. Laverne Gibson-Velox
Minister of the Family and Gender Affairs, Persons with Disability and Labour

Marriaqua – Hon. Phillip Jackson
Minister of Education, Vocational Training and Innovation, and Digital Transformation and Information

North Windward – Hon. Shevern John
Minister of Social Welfare and Community Empowerment, Ecclesiastical Affairs and National Heritage

South Windward – Hon. Andrew John
Minister of Housing, Land Management, Urban Development, and Informal Settlement Upgrading

South Central Windward– Hon. Israel Bruce
Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Transformation

North Central Windward – Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves
Leader of the Opposition

Following the outcome of the general elections, the new government appointed the following ministries: Speaker of the House of Assembly, Attorney General and Senators

Hon. Ronnia Durham-Balcombe - **Speaker of The House of Assembly**

Hon. Sarah Louise Mitchell - **Attorney General**

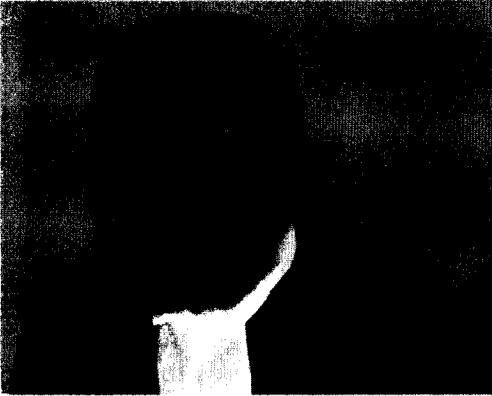
Hon. Chieftain Neptune
Senator and Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

Hon. Laverne King
Senator and Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Innovation, Digital Transformation and Information

Opposition Senators

Hon. Carlos James

Hon. Keisal Peters



NEW GOVERNOR GENERAL

Esteemed Legal Counsel Stanley Kendrick John, KC, became this country's 8th Governor General when he was sworn in on Tuesday, January 6, 2026. His Excellency Mr. John has had a long and illustrious career, having received the prestigious honor of King's Counsel following his call to the Bar in 1977. Dame Susan Dougan who served as SVG's Governor General, demitted office shortly after the swearing in of the new Parliament.

DIPLOMATS RECALLED

As is customary following elections when a new administration takes over, the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has recalled the consuls general and ambassadors who represented the country under the past administration. To date, there are no official announcements about who the new representatives will be. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Foreign Investment and Diaspora Affairs has advised the SVGAT that it is currently reviewing the framework outlining the respective roles, responsibilities, and functional scope of Heads of Missions and Consular Officers, as part of a broader effort to modernize and strengthen the conduct of diplomacy, consular service delivery, and engagement with the diaspora. The advisory further stated that the SVGAT will be informed in due course when the review and appointments are finalized.

FIRST VAT FREE DAY

Following several promises made by the NDP during its election campaign, the new government proclaimed Friday, December 19, 2025, as the first VAT-Free Day in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Scores of nationals flocked to business places across the country to take advantage of the temporary removal of taxes from many items. It was reported that although there were some inconveniences to some shoppers, the savings were well worth the waiting and inconvenience.

DISMISSED CIVIL SERVANTS RETURNED TO WORK

One of the several promises made during the 2025 election campaign was that the NDP, if it were to form the new government, would reinstate all civil servants, including teachers, nurses, and policemen, who were fired for not taking the COVID-19 vaccines. Immediately after assuming power, those who had lost their jobs and wished to return were allowed to go back to their former places of employment. It is not clear how many people took advantage of the offer.

APPEAL FOR NEW MEMBERS

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of Toronto Inc. welcomes new members for its survival. An appeal is being made to younger persons who have an interest in its survival to become members and use your talent to make your contribution.

NEWS FROM SVG & THE CARIBBEAN

Antigua and Barbuda

The country's Cabinet has approved a sweeping modernization of the country's immigration system, introducing automated e-gates at all air and sea ports. The new digital framework will allow travellers to process their own entry by swiping electronic passports at kiosks, replacing traditional manual checkpoints and improving passenger flow. Director General of Communications Maurice Merchant said the upgrade is designed to boost efficiency while strengthening border security through enhanced screening, expanded fingerprint databases, biometric verification, and real-time watch list integration with international aviation and law enforcement systems. The technology will be fully connected across airports and seaports, include improved reporting tools, meet International Civil Aviation Organization standards, and is expected to roll out soon with minimal disruption to travel.

St. Kitts and Nevis

The government has clarified that Haiti's exclusion from a recent U.S. agreement on relocating third-country nationals is based on national security and capacity limits, not a rejection of the Haitian people. Prime Minister Dr. Terrance Drew said his government remains humanitarian and welcoming toward Haitians, noting the country has one of the largest per capita Haitian populations in the Caribbean and provides access to education, healthcare, and social support despite limited resources. Drew added that the agreement applies only to CARICOM nationals in U.S. custody and that St. Kitts and Nevis retains full discretion over which cases it accepts, while remaining committed to Haiti's long-term stability.

Jamaica

Joy Spence, the legendary master blender at Appleton Estate, has been named to Forbes' 2026 *50 Over 50 Global* list—making her the only Jamaican and the only Caribbean representative honored this year. At 74, Spence is celebrated for a trailblazing career that has helped shape the global rum industry, becoming nearly three decades ago the first woman in the spirits world to hold the title of master blender. A trained chemist with an extraordinary talent for identifying subtle aromas, she has created more than 30 rums, wines, and liqueurs, earned Jamaica's National Medal for Science and Technology, and is now the inspiration behind the Joy Spence Rum Experience in Kingston. Born in Manchester and raised in Kingston, she studied chemistry at UWI and Loughborough University before rising through the ranks at J. Wray and Nephew Ltd., eventually producing her first signature rum for Appleton Estate's 250th anniversary and crafting special blends for notable figures including Ronald Reagan, Prince William, and Prince Harry

Belize

The Baseball Federation of Belize invited fans out to the inaugural Babe Ruth National Baseball Tournament, where young athletes from Belize, Guatemala, and Mexico competed in a full day of exciting regional baseball. The tournament took place Saturday, January 24 at Sandhill Field on the Philip Goldson Highway, and organizers explained that it was directed at developing youth talent, growing the sport locally, and giving players valuable international exposure. Public Relations Director Sasha Eiley described the event as a historic and nostalgic moment for Belize, noting that it is the first time a tournament of this kind was being hosted in the country, with two Belizean teams—Young Legends and Black Viper—taking to the field alongside visiting teams from Mexico and Guatemala.



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ADOPT-A-CHILD PROGRAM

The SVGAT's **Adopt-A-Child Program** has a total number of 13 sponsored students in the 2025 – 2029 cycle across primary schools in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The program selects recipients based on need, not academic performance. A key expectation for each student is punctual and regular attendance, giving them the best opportunity to benefit from the education and guidance offered.

Current participating schools and students in the program are:

- **Barrouallie Anglican** – Alexis Solomon
- **Belmont Government** – Kaylee Baptiste
- **Bequia Anglican** – Markel Harris
- **Evesham Methodist** – Akira Browne
- **Fitz Hughes Government** – Koice Castello
- **Georgetown Government** – Keranique Ryan
- **Kingstown Anglican** – Imaga Toney
- **Layou Government** – Micah Charters
- **Lowmans Windward Anglican** – Olivia Phillips
- **Mary Hutchinson Primary** - Kaidon Laborde
- **Owia Government** – Deron Medica
- **Rose Hall Government** – Zanner Williams
- **School for Children with Special Needs - Kingstown** – Glendeen Douglas

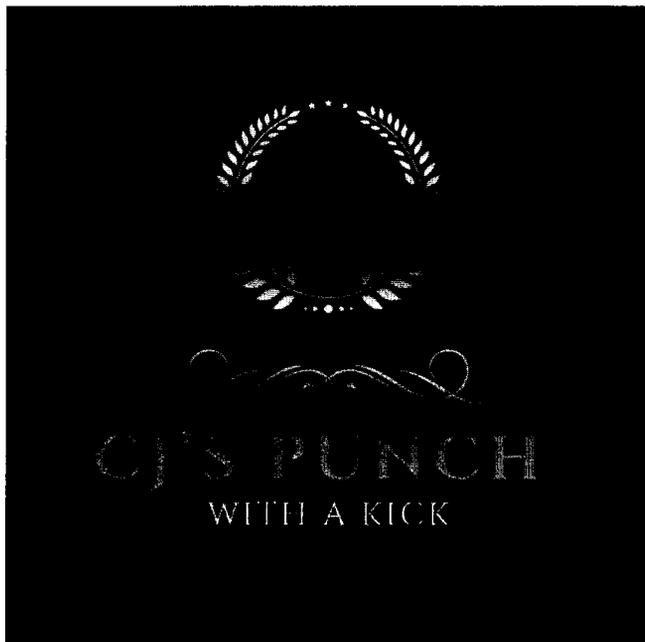
Since its inception in 2008, schools have been selected in five-year sponsorship cycles. The current cycle, 2025–2029, has the highest number of sponsored students to date. Unless a sponsor specifies a particular student or school, primary schools are chosen via a lottery system

All publicly funded primary schools are entered into the draw according to their district. Once selected, a school is not eligible for the next cycle until all 66 public primary schools have had an opportunity. Please note that private schools are excluded from the draw.

When a school is selected, its principal is contacted and asked to form a school/community-based committee. This committee identifies a suitable student based on need, oversees the administration of monthly support, and reports back to the SVGAT on the student's progress throughout the sponsorship period.

The cost to sponsor a student for five years is CAD \$720.00 annually, totaling CAD \$3,600.00. Those interested in sponsoring a student are encouraged to contact the Association's executive by email at secretary@vincytoronto.com.

The board of directors and members of the Association herewith takes the opportunity to once again sincerely thank all sponsors for helping the selected students to prepare for their future.



CJ's Pineapple Rum Punch will be available in the LCBO this spring!

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ARTS AND CULTURE



Colin “Minkah” Peters is a singer, fine artist, and activist from Bequia.

Colin had a love for drawing at a very young age and later attended Assumption College in Windsor, Ontario where he studied Art History and Commercial Art. His works of art can be seen gracing the walls at the Cocktail Lab, on a mural at the entrance to the Bequia Beach Hotel, and are exhibited in the new Bequia Original Art Gallery in O’Car next door to Encore.

Colin is a well-known reggae fusion artist who performs live at various venues around Bequia with well known bands.

His activist work led him to co-found the Hub Collective, of which he is the Creative Director.

The Hub is a non-profit organization involved with the arts, environment and healing based on grass roots work by its members. Its mission is to help in the development of Vincentians using creative channels.

Keep up with Colin at the following links to see his new art, music, and Hub Collective work.

Facebook

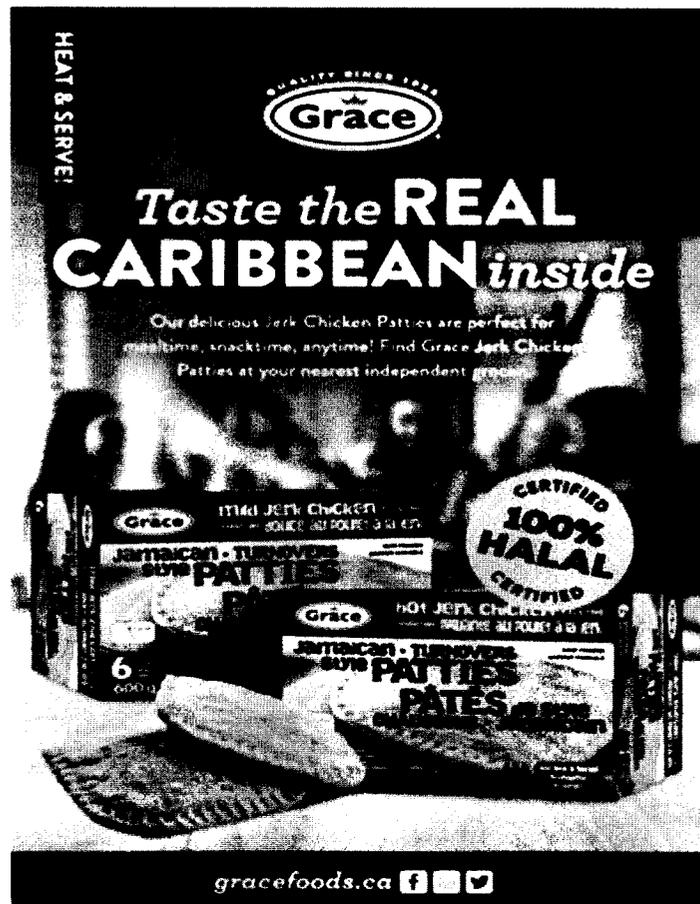
<https://www.facebook.com/colinminkahpeters>

Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/colinminkahpeters/?hl=en>

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/@colinminkahpeters>



ARTS AND CULTURE



Finicia Providence is an educator whose love for teaching took her to the next level with her talent for writing. She has published several motivational children's books which with an aim to create a lifelong love for reading in young people. Her creativity doesn't stop there, though – her small business, T's Sweet Treats, offers wholesome pastries. Not only is Finicia an educator and writer – she also is known as a kind and knowledgeable volunteer within her community.

Finicia's three books can be purchased on Amazon and are:

The Easter Egg Hunter: Betty, a bunny who works to overcome physical limitations to become the best egg hunter.

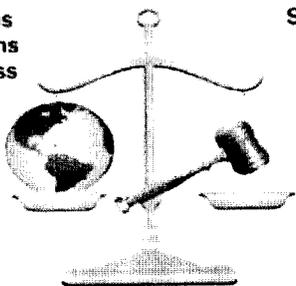
Glowy the One Fin Fish: A story about a small angel fish born with one fin who overcomes bullying and discouragement to achieve his dreams.

Mary Daisy: The Joy of Seeds: A story about overcoming despair and finding joy, love, and blessings through gardening.

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THE MYSTERY

Let me hear the rain falling softly
On my tiny window pane
Let me hear the rooster crowing
To greet the newborn day
Let me hear the bluebirds calling
From far, far away
Let me hear the waves breaking gently
On the warm sandy beach
Let me watch the Golden Sun gliding slowly
To greet his old, faithful friend—the Sea
Giving way to darkness and to Me
The shadows lengthen, the darkness deepens
The Moon and Twinkling Stars arrive
To guide and Guard the MYSTERY, THE NIGHT

HUMBLE and POLITE

YES...I have done everything you asked me to do: I've worked hard. I've been Respectful, Humble and Polite. And my reward has been. POVERTY and the scant opportunity to eke out an existence, living paycheck to paycheck.

My parents and grandparents have always been hardworking

Humble and Polite - Knowing their place and staying in their place, POVERTYVILLE.

Whenever they inadvertently and innocently stepped out of their line, they were quickly and unceremoniously hustled back into their PLACE. Sometimes not by a nudge, shove or push but by A LOOK, "THE LOOK" which says, "Who are you?" And "Why are you Here" "Look around, This place is reserved for The Entitled, The PRIVILEGED. Who did you say your parents are?"

Yes, my parents are Mr. Humble Poor and Mrs. Polite Poor.

We live in a small shack at the end of the village outside of town. My cousins are cockroaches, bed bugs, and centipedes. They come out at night to play. We have resigned ourselves to sharing the small space with them. We the children watched our parents toe the line. We have been and continue to be Humble and Polite. But we refuse to accept Poverty as our lot. We will not live in POVERTYVILLE.

NOW I am an adult with children of my own, what should I tell them? I see Greed- Arrogance- Bullying being elected Leaders. I see Bullies and Strong Men and Women advance their incompetent Friends and Relatives to influential and lucrative positions. All this while We the People remain Honest, Humble, Poor and Polite, eking out a meagre existence from paycheck to paycheck.

So tell me.. What Should I tell my Kids? To be Humble? Yes. Polite? Yes. Work Hard? Yes.

LIVE in POVERTYVILLE? ----- N E V E R

HUMBLE and POLITE.

Contributed by Mr. Nedd

CARIBBEAN AIRLINES FLIGHTS TO AIA

Caribbean Airlines



The only direct flights that Caribbean Airlines provides from North America to Argle International Airport, SVG are from New York on Wednesdays and Saturdays. All other flights to AIA go through the airline's hub in Port of Spain.

For information on Caribbean Airlines flights to SVG, please check the airline's website, www.caribbean-airlines.com or your travel agent.

CORPORATION ADDRESS

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The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association of
Toronto Inc.
501 - 230 Westney Road South
Ajax, Ontario, L1S 7J5

HAIROUNA HERITAGE

Exploring Vincentian History & Genealogy

Friendly societies historically played an important part in local life in our islands, providing a mix of community support, financial services, and social solidarity, especially in smaller towns and rural areas. The photo below taken between 1925-1930 is of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, a type of friendly society organization that is over 200 years old and still functioning today in the UK. Friendly Societies registered in St. Vincent and the Grenadines are located in Marriaqua, Barrouallie, Layou, Buccament, Chateaubelair, Bequia, Canouan, and Union Island.

The meaning of the symbols in the photo seen on the collars/sashes and hats:

Five-point stars	Rank/degree
Collar with medallion	Office/membership
Hanging jewels	Official lodge position
Ceremonial hats	Degree symbol/officer rank
White aprons	Formal lodge uniform

Based on the symbols on their collar and hats, the men seated left to right are: Warden, Trustee, Permanent Secretary, Elective Secretary.

The embroidered aprons were typically worn to lodge meetings and ceremonies, funerals, and parades or public events and symbolized respectability, service towards and building up of the community, rank and membership identity.



Photo Credit: Shalemar Sardine



CARI-ON

Conducting Action Relief Impacting Our Neuron

CARI-ON SVG DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

JOIN OUR MISSION TO HELP COMMUNITIES IN SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

WHO IS CARI-ON?

Established in 2018, CARI-ON is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing resources and timely relief efforts to help families and communities carry on during and after disasters in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

To achieve this, we are establishing several committees with representatives from each Caribbean country, operating under the umbrella of the Canadian Caribbean Disaster Relief Action (CCaDIRA) committee. This initiative aims to strengthen ties and cooperation between the Caribbean diaspora and their home countries in times of need.

OUR VISION

To provide preventative measures and mobilization support to meet the human needs of those impacted by natural disasters in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

WHY JOIN US?

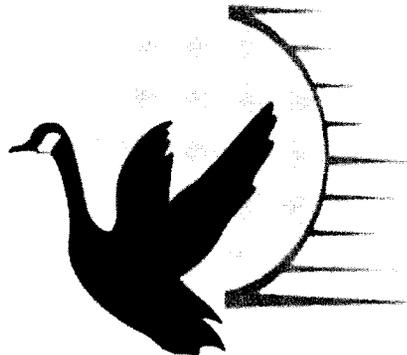
- Be part of a dedicated team making a real difference
- Support disaster preparedness and relief efforts
- Help build resilient communities

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

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IMMIGRATION MATTERS

IMMIGRATION MATTERS: THE VIEW FOR 2026

Contributed by: Sandra Sutherland, RCIC-IRB

During 2025, we saw some tightening up with immigration programs. In 2026, we shall see decreased admissions to Canada and closures or suspensions of some immigration programs. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) released their 2026-2028 Immigration Levels Plan, which they claim shall support a return to sustainable immigration levels. Over the next three years, the volume of permanent and temporary residents will decrease as IRCC focuses on reducing pressure on housing and infrastructure and place higher concentration on filling labour market shortages. IRCC announced that they will also be focusing on attracting French-Speaking immigrants, high-skilled global talent, and skilled/economic immigrants.

Fewer Permanent Residents

In 2026, Canada plans to admit 380,000 permanent residents, down from the 395,000 targets in 2025 (actual admissions were approximately 393,500). This continues a downward trend from 2024, when the target was 500,000 (actual admissions were approximately 483,600). A further reduction to 365,000 is planned for 2027. About two-thirds of new permanent residents will be selected through economic immigration programs, based on their skills and ability to fill labour shortages. The remaining one-third will comprise of family sponsorships, refugees, and humanitarian and compassionate cases.

Fewer Residents

Throughout 2025, IRCC made several changes to the study and work permit categories, which made it more restrictive and thus harder and less enticing for potential applicants. The volume of new international student arrivals will be capped at 155,000 in 2026 - almost half of 2025's target. The intake for temporary foreign workers will drop to 230,000 - a reduction of more than one-third from last year's target. The government's goal is for temporary residents to make up less than 5% of Canada's population by 2027. Temporary workers will come from the International Mobility Program (IMP) - programs which focuses on open work permits (via programs such as the Post-graduation Work Permit program (PGWP) for international graduates) and from the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program - which focuses on closed employer-specific work permits, which require employers to prove there was no suitable Canadian available for the job.

Programs Impacted

In 2026, several **Temporary Resident to Permanent Resident (TR to PR) pathways and pilot programs** that helped temporary residents become permanent residents will either close or be suspended.

- The **Agri-Food Pilot Program** ended in May 2025 and will not reopen in 2026.
- The **Home Care Worker Pilot Program** will remain closed. Affected workers should explore alternative pathways to permanency, such as **Express Entry** or **Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs)**.
- The **Start-Up Visa (SUV) Program**, designed for innovative entrepreneurs, closed in December 2025 and will be suspended throughout 2026.

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In Addition, IRCC will not accept new applications for the **Parents and Grandparents Sponsorship Program (PGP)** in 2026. As an alternative, families may consider prolonged temporary residence options, such as the Super Visa, which allows eligible parents and grandparents to stay in Canada for up to five years, or the regular visitor visa which, generally, allows for a 6-month stay with the possibility of extensions.

Some Encouraging Developments

Despite these limitations, there are some encouraging developments on the horizon. IRCC is considering starting **new TR to PR pathway** pilot programs geared towards attracting innovative **entrepreneurs** and keeping **specialized temporary foreign skilled workers** in Canada who are working in high-demand fields such as skilled trades and healthcare. Over 2026 and 2027, Canada plans to help to accelerate the transition of up to 33,000 select in-demand temporary workers towards permanent residency.

The government announced that they will make it easier for **licensed, internationally trained doctors** already working in Canada to apply for permanent residence through a new Express Entry category, provided they have at least one year of Canadian work experience in an eligible occupation.

Effective December 15, 2025 new **citizenship by descent** rules came into effect to change the first-generation limit of citizenship by descent. The government reserves the right to make additional amendments to these new rules at any time. Persons born or adopted outside Canada in the second generation or later **before December 15, 2025**, may now have their citizenship restored or given to them. Persons born or adopted outside Canada in the second generation or later **on or after December 15, 2025**, may now be Canadian if:

- their parent was also born or adopted outside Canada to a Canadian citizen (meaning the grandparent was Canadian), **and**
- that same parent spent at least 1,095 days in Canada before the birth

IRCC has been testing **digital visas**, and depending on the outcomes, these may be introduced in 2026, replacing traditional counterfoil visas that are affixed to passports. This would eliminate the need for applicants to submit their passports to a Visa Application Centre (VAC) thus reducing cost to applicants and mitigating logistical concerns.

Final Thoughts

While the prospects of immigrating to Canada may appear more challenging in 2026, potential applicants should not lose hope. Strategic planning is essential. Working closely with an authorized immigration representative to develop and implement a well-considered immigration strategy can improve the likelihood of success in these times of complexities.

Sandra Sutherland is a competent authorized immigration representative and counsel who can represent clients at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), CBSA, and at all divisions of the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB). She specializes strictly in immigration, citizenship and refugee matters and is licensed with the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants (CICC) as a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant/Counsel at the IRB (RCIC-IRB). She can be reached at **(416) 431-2829** or via e-mail at ssutherland@southernimmigration.com. View her advertisement under **Suthern Immigration & Paralegal Services Inc.** in this publication for more information.



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Metelsky Law is a boutique law firm serving the Greater Toronto Area and specializes in criminal law, family law, wills and estate administration. We continue to provide community service by providing legal services to various community organizations and mentor high school, college and university students interested in pursuing a career in law. We understand that corporate involvement isn't just an activity: we are genuinely committed to improving our communities, investing our time and expertise to facilitate those improvements throughout the year.

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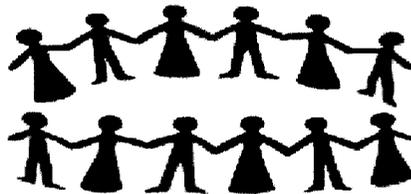


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