



# NEWSLETTER

Rolleville Shelter Renovation | Beekeeping Travel and Research | ELTP Update

## THANK YOU!

The Family Island Book Initiative (FIBI) has been spreading the love of reading in Exuma since 2007, one book at a time. Founder Danielle Esposito and dedicated volunteer Jill Ben Porat spent twelve days in November visiting and distributing 3000 books to eleven schools. They organized their Island-famous Book Fair at the Exuma Foundation campus. We appreciate FIBI and all of the smiles they bring to readers of all



ages in Exuma, and are happy to provide the space and logistical support necessary to make their visits a hit! FIBI will be back on February 23rd for their first visit of 2019.

Visit the *FIBI* [FaceBook page](#) for more information and to see these smiles for yourself.



## SOCIAL OUTREACH

### Rolleville Shelter Renovation

Starve Poverty International, key partners in the Exuma Foundation's social outreach program, were on the island in late January to tackle a major renovation of the Rolleville Emergency Shelter. With the re-establishment of the Rolleville Emergency Shelter Committee and a new direction for management, the timely work will ensure that new temporary residents have a safe, clean, and secure living space. Installing three new roofs on the units was a major aspect of the work, but Starve Poverty volunteers also repaired porches and interior spaces and applied fresh paint in just a week.

The renovation of the Rolleville Emergency Shelter is a great example of how the Exuma Foundation facilitates partnerships that benefit the community. A big thanks to [Starve Poverty](#)!



## SPOTLIGHT

### The Exuma Sailing Club

The Exuma Sailing Club (ESC) is one of the most exciting things happening in Exuma! Under Dallas Knowles' leadership, the club now has 25 kids involved and a growing fleet of Sunfish and Optimists, in addition to the E and C Class Bahamian sloops. The ESC recently acquired a new C Class boat, "Bye Gully", which makes even more



room for the senior sailors in the club that have graduated from high school but want to remain involved. The ESC spent October and November practicing and preparing the boats for the 2019 sailing season. The club's C-Class boat "Termite" took 2nd overall in the Bul Reg Regatta.

The Exuma Foundation is proud to support the ESC through grant management and financial contributions. *We encourage others to get involved and follow their progress!* [More on the ESC.](#)



Rob Stitch, Crystal Ferguson, and Bill Sanford with LN Coakley's Principal Barr and his Academic Support Program Team.

## EDUCATION

### The Exuma Learning with Technology Project early results and extension to the high school

This school year has seen the most progress so far with the Exuma Learning with Technology Project (ELTP) which is in no small measure due to the Ministry of Education's agreement to appoint Mrs. Crystal Ferguson as an itinerant teacher. Some of the major highlights and positive outcomes this school year are:

- Significant progress in key numeracy skills among students who initially tested below grade level within only a few months based on data collected in October and December.
- Improved teacher participation, enthusiasm and technological competence. Ongoing teacher training focuses on developing Personalised Learning based around mastery concepts.
- The students' enthusiasm for this program is a joy to see. Not only do they love working with the Chromebooks and the Khan Academy, they are also motivated by their progress.

This year we would like to further develop the program in order to support those students in Grades 5 and 6 who are most at risk because of significant deficits in numeracy. History has shown that these students will leave Primary School and move into the High School not equipped to graduate. Currently LN Coakley has 35 students who are "at risk" with numeracy and literacy benchmarked at below Grade 4 levels. The Foundation is currently working with Sandals, LN Coakley Administrators and teachers to address this issue. The ELTP has the potential to revolutionise the educational landscape. We are excited by the prospect of taking this program to the next level! [Find out more about the partnerships that make the ELTP work.](#)



## ENVIRONMENT

### Exuma beekeepers travel to Grand Bahama for the Caribbean Bee College and the University of Georgia travels to Exuma to start a research project

The Exuma Beekeeping Initiative continues to evolve into a self-sustaining program that sets a great example for new beekeepers here in Exuma and beyond. Our hives produced over 150 gallons of honey in 2018. The honey supports the program through sales to our campus visitors, and now by reliably supplying Grand Isle Resort and Smitty's Convenience Store. We appreciate everyone who has participated by taking home a jar of honey!

Besides providing beekeepers with low cost equipment, bees, and mentorship, we have twice supported travel experiences to make sure our beekeeping community is kept up to date and exposed to the highest professional standards. In November, we supported a group of six to travel to Grand Bahama for the Caribbean Bee College. Sponsored by the Inter-American Institute for the Cooperation on Agriculture, the Office of The Prime Minister, and the University of Florida, this was a wonderful opportunity for Exuma beekeepers to receive training right here in The Bahamas.

In December, we were reminded just how special our beekeeping environment is on Exuma by a visit from the University of Georgia's Honey

Bee Lab, a program partner that has gone above and beyond to help us establish our beekeeping program. In collaboration with Emory University, UGA is undertaking a study on varroa mite viruses, a highly destructive and difficult to manage force in the beekeeping world today. The study is using Exuma's thriving honey bee population as a control for this study as we are a lot closer distance from Athens, GA than Australia, the other known varroa mite-free location in the world. It was a great learning experience for us to participate in this research and we look forward to the results!



Catherine Booker, Lyn Toker, Daniel Sawyer, Trey Neymour, Bradley (BJ) Charlton, and Marsha Musgrove at the Caribbean Bee College in Grand Bahama.



Jack Garrison of UGA with BJ Charlton, CJ and Ceyon Taylor.



### Nature Trail and Backyard Farm Tours

BJ, our amazing beekeeper, knows that everyone loves a taste of honey from the hive! In December the GROW Exuma team started leading tours of our nature trail and permaculture backyard farm. It's been a great success so far and we hope you can visit soon! *For more information on what to expect and how to schedule a tour, check out our website.*

## OUR TEAM

**Rob Stitch** President

**Danny Strachan** Business Manager

**Catherine Booker** Program Manager & Educator

**Shequita Clarke** Operations Assistant

**Vincent Burnside** Repairs & Maintenance Manager



## How to Stay in Touch and Contribute

We planted a money tree in our backyard permaculture farm, but it hasn't fruited yet! Our organization is funded primarily by monetary donations, in kind gifts, and grants. We have a constant need to support our work, but unlike many non-profits, we do not have a marketing department to let people know about all the good things that we do with the community. Therefore, we are sincerely grateful that you have taken the time to read our newsletter, and if you have another moment, *please help us get the word out by sharing this with others you think might be interested.* We also have several easy ways to make a donation to support a specific program or help us keep the lights on.

Visit our website to learn how to make a **tax deductible donation** or an **online donation**. If you'd like more information or have questions about how else to get involved, it's easy to do though our online contact form. You can always email us directly at: [exumafoundation@gmail.com](mailto:exumafoundation@gmail.com). And of course, feel free to call or visit us in Exuma! Your caring is so appreciated, **thank you!!**  
242-336-2790

## Looking ahead...

The annual **Garden Club Plant Sale** is coming soon to the Exuma Foundation campus! Don't miss the plants, produce, baked goods, Bahamian food, honey, and tours of our nature trail on **Saturday, February 16th!** Proceeds go to a charitable cause.

Stop by the **Family Island Book Initiative Book Fair** at the Exuma Foundation campus **Saturday, February 23rd.**

The **66th National Family Island Regatta (NFR)** will take place on **Wednesday - Saturday, April 24th - April 27th.** Preparations for the big event are underway and T-shirts are available for sale! Be sure to get your favorite color and size at Exuma Market in George Town on Saturdays, or give us a call and we can let you know how to get a shirt!

We have a number of **visiting groups** scheduled over the next few months including a return visit by Savannah Country Day School in April, Mt. Carmel Primary School Discovery Club in April, and Earthwatch in May. Besides international and educational groups, we are expecting the Bahamas National Trust and the Department of Marine Resources to utilize our facilities as a base for their ecological surveys of our Moriah Harbour Cay National Park and the southside marine reserve in the coming months. *Our dorms and kitchen facilities serve a great purpose of providing reasonably-priced accommodation for visiting groups that benefit our organization, our community, and our country.*



*See more of our facilities here.*