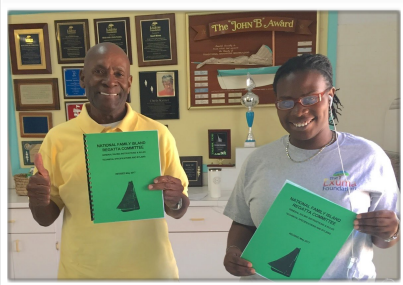


NEWSLETTER

Supporting Sustainable Farming in Exuma | Visiting Groups | Foundation Update

SPOTLIGHT

The National Family Island Regatta



The Exuma Foundation has a long history of supporting one of The Bahamas' largest sporting events, the National Family Island Regatta. The NFIR has been held annually in Elizabeth Harbour since 1954. Our own Danny Strachan has served as the Commodore of the NFIR since 1992. Chris Kettel, one of our founders, served as statistician from 1970-2018. Much of the organization that takes place behind the scenes during the racing is supported by our staff. This year's regatta was bigger than ever with the theme of putting sailing forward as the national sport of The Bahamas. We thank all those that contribute their time and resources to this historic and cultural event proudly held in Exuma. For more information about how we support the tradition of wooden sloop sailing please visit [our website](http://ourwebsite).



Daniel Sawyer serves a customer at the Exuma Farmers Market.

ENVIRONMENT

Supporting sustainable farming in Exuma

Sustainability is not just a buzz word anymore as the concept gains necessary traction throughout the world and in The Bahamas. There are a growing number of non-government organizations and government agencies working towards sustainable development goals and seeking solutions to some of the toughest challenges we are faced with globally and nationally. Questions about food security during a time when the farming community is aging and the climate is changing is at the top of that list. The Exuma Foundation environmental education program has several ongoing projects that promote sustainability through entrepreneurship, youth and agriculture in Exuma.

Our GROW Exuma program began in 2016 with a generous grant from the Argus Fund. This program supports permaculture apprentices and a summer work/study program. The GROW Exuma "home team" has had a hugely successful year with three apprentices (Daniel Sawyer, Treyvine Neymour, Carlton Taylor) earning permaculture design certificates from Oregon State University's online program and making big strides in the further

THANK YOU!

We are always very thankful to those who support our School for Exceptional Learners. In May, we had an exciting project come together with support from the cruising community and the Exuma Garden



Club. Inspired by their tour of our campus, Bonni and Irv Alpert met with Ms. Jasmine Nixon (ESEL lead teacher) and our GROW Exuma team to share their experience and ideas on gardening with special needs students. As a result, they organized a group of volunteers from the cruising community to assist with the building of two raised bed gardens. The Garden Club donated funds from their plant sale to buy the materials. The GROW Exuma team will lead their gardening lessons next school year. We also recognize the Sandals Foundation and our Member of Parliament, Mr. Chester Cooper for their gifts of time and donations to the school, and Jeannie Jeffries for spreading the word about our tours!



development and support of our backyard permaculture farm, nature trail, and apiaries. This skilled group, also including Bradley "BJ" Charlton and Brmonta Rolle, were critical to our outreach by leading popular campus tours and field trips, and participating in the new Exuma Farmer's Association Farmers Market in George Town.

In 2018, we established a partnership with the Spindrift Foundation to introduce the Sow My Dream project to Exuma. The Sow My Dream project has supported a major renovation of L.N. Coakley High School's farm to demonstrate climate smart agriculture with the use of shade houses, raised beds, irrigation and other low-tech efficient farming methods. This year the school was able to produce a variety of greens, herbs and eggplant that the were sold at the Farmers Market and to Plus 39 Restaurant at the Peace and Plenty Hotel. We recently received additional funding from the Spindrift Foundation to continue to improve the facilities at the high school farm and to engage our GROW Exuma apprentices in a special green enterprise internship.



L.N.Coakley students (Tahj Brown, Rashad McKenzie, Waydero Rolle) and teacher Ms. Gemma Fontanelle harvesting in their climate-smart shade house supported by the Sow My Dream project.

Our Exuma Beekeeping Initiative has been very successful in catalyzing a cottage industry in Exuma and was recently featured in a micro-documentary by our supporters at the Savannah Bee Company. In June, Catherine Booker and Ted Dennard (Savannah Bee) co-led workshops sponsored by IICA Bahamas on Eleuthera, Cat Island, and New Providence. They had the opportunity to share stories and the approach the Exuma Foundation and The Bee Cause Project has taken to inspire new beekeepers on those islands. Through careful record keeping, and the commitment and skill of our lead beekeeper BJ Charlton, we have established a very promising model for others to follow.

The Exuma Foundation is grateful to the partner organizations that have funded the majority of this work and to the individuals that have supported us along the way. We see many opportunities for young entrepreneurs in the quest for sustainability in Exuma and The Bahamas.

EDUCATION

Visiting Groups, Scientists, and Students

The Exuma Foundation campus was bustling with visitors in March, April and May as we hosted school groups and research scientists from The Bahamas and the U.S. on our campus. The Savannah Country Day School returned for their second mini-mester trip and we established a new relationship with Thayer Academy and the shark research organization Beneath The Waves during their 10-day stay. The Mt Carmel Preparatory Academy from Nassau and Bishop Michael Eldon School from Freeport visited over long weekends. Our GROW Exuma team learned a lot about native plants from Dr. Ethan Freid, botanist for the Leon Levy Plant Preserve and the Bahamas National Trust when he spent a week with us in March. In May we began an exciting conch research project in collaboration with Dr. Megan Davis and her graduate student, Laura Isaac of Florida Atlantic University. The project engages local fishers and students in the creation of an "egg farm" for the queen conch and will be on-going throughout the summer. We appreciate the interest of these groups in engaging with our programs and local students.



Beneath The Waves researchers with Thayer Academy and L.N. Coakley students and the baited remote underwater video camera they built together for shark research.



(Top Left) Trey Neymour leads Savannah Country Day students on a tour of our backyard farm. (Top Right) Carlton "CJ" Taylor with Laura Isaacs, Dr. Megan Davis, and Dr. Matt Ajemian of FAU/Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute delivering conch from the fishing boat to the egg farm. (Bottom Left) Discovery Club students from Mt. Carmel Preparatory Academy in the dorms. (Bottom Right) Karla Farquharson of L.N. Coakley High School assisted our beekeepers during her week-long job readiness experience.

We've been very fortunate to have Carlton "CJ" Taylor as an intern in 2019. CJ graduated from St. Andrews Anglican School in 2018 where he achieved the highest BJCSE test scores in Exuma. After graduation, he became a Bahamas Environmental Steward Scholar receiving a full scholarship to attend a semester at the Island School in the Fall on Eleuthera followed by a 6-month environmental conservation internship that included time with the Exuma Foundation, the Family Islands Research and Education's Bahamas Sea Turtle Research program and BREEF in Nassau. We've extended CJ's internship to assist with our summer-long conch research project and a special beekeeping project to advocate for protection of our honeybees from the varroa mite. He has been an avid volunteer for the Exuma Foundation in our GROW Exuma program, the Beekeeping Initiative and as an early member of our Bahamas National Trust Discovery Club. We are proud of CJ's accomplishments and appreciate his dedication to the Exuma Foundation and to teaching others about our beautiful Bahamian environment.



CJ Taylor with his favorite feral beehive in a termite mound on the nature trail.

Moriah Harbour Cay National Park, Field Trips and Discovery Club

The Moriah Harbour Cay National Park was the focus of our Spring field trips for 6th grade classes to support the Bahamas National Trust's efforts to begin active management of the park. In coordination with the Elizabeth Harbour Partnership, we led students from five primary schools on tours of hiking trails and the new "outdoor classroom" on the eastern end of Stocking Island. Students learned about the ecosystems the park protects and why national parks are important to The Bahamas. We had several visits by lower primary schools to our campus that were treated to a nature trail and backyard farm tour by our GROW Exuma apprentices. Our Exuma Bahamas National Trust Discovery Club had 15 members this past school year and worked on bird, shorebird, herpetology and sea turtle badges.



(Bottom right) Discovery Club leader Shequita Clarke with club members on a bird watching field trip. (Top) Stuart Manor 6th graders at Moriah Harbour Cay National Park. (Above) Trey Neymour delivers another fun tour of our nature trail.

FOUNDATION UPDATE

The Exuma Foundation's Annual General Meeting was held in April. The US Board of Directors welcomes Danielle Esposito, Bill Sanford, Peter Whitehead, Kathleen Sullivan-Sealey, Janie Palmer-Albury, Ramon Darville and Jenny Kettel. Barry Benjamin now serves as President. The Board of Directors of the Exuma Foundation Bahamas Ltd. welcomes back Chris Kettel, with Warren Rolle continuing his role as Chairman. Thank you for the service of those board members departing their positions including Harry Carlson, Anna Maynard, and Don Haycock. We also wish to extend our best wishes and congratulations to Robert Stich as he moves on to a new life in Malaysia as Principal of the Garden School in Kuala Lumpur. Our long-time board member and business manager Mr. Danny Strachan now serves as Interim Managing Director. Please keep Jenny and Chris Kettel in your prayers as Jenny recovers from surgery. We are collecting cards here at the Exuma Foundation at the front desk.

OUR TEAM

Danny Strachan Interim Managing Director

Catherine Booker Educator & Program Manager

Shequita Clarke Operations Assistant

Vincent Burnside Repairs & Maintenance Manager

Many of our programs and staff are supported by donations from individuals like you! 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. And of course, feel free to call or visit us in Exuma! Thank you for your support! 242-336-2790

Congratulations!

We wish to extend special congratulations to the St. Andrews Anglican School's Eco Club for working hard over the past two years to achieve the globally recognized Green Flag through the Eco Schools Programme. A well-deserved award for their effort to green their campus including hosting a happy hive of honeybees in their science classroom in a Bee Cause Project observation hive! The Exuma Foundation has granted SAAS a \$1000 small grant to continue their progress. [Learn more.](#)



Congratulations also go to Ms. Sanaanja Smith of LN Coakley High School. Ms. Smith was presented a check for \$5000 by Mr. Danny Strachan and Mrs. Cecilia Cooper at graduation. This scholarship is funded by proceeds from last year's Run for Pompey/Exuma Marathon through the Exuma Foundation of Canada. Ms. Smith will study psychology at the University of The Bahamas.



Looking Ahead...

The new **Exuma Learning with Technology Summer Camp** starts July 1st! The camp will reach 20 students in a 5-week program.

We will host the second **summer GROW Exuma work/study program for high school students** on our campus in July.

Registration is now open for the Exuma Marathon featuring the **Run For Pompey on November 9th!**