



The Governor General's Youth Award

#WORLDREADY



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"My Up Close and Personal Experience with Hurricane Dorian"

When Category 5 Hurricane Dorian roared ashore at East End Grand Bahama sweeping 16 feet of water into eleventh grader Arlington Watson's High Rock home, it was his Governor General's Youth Award training which kept him from panicking while huddled barefoot and damp with his mom and stepdad in their ceiling. "Five to seven hours later when daylight came and the water in the house went down. I jumped out of the manhole and cut both my feet on pieces of glass. I used my GGYA first aid kit which I carried with me into the manhole to bandage up my feet until I eventually got shoes," recalled Watson, who is pursuing his Silver Award from the local affiliate of the UK-based Duke of Edinburgh Award, a programme which offers young people the chance to experience new activities, grow in confidence and develop useful skills for life and work in a non-competitive environment. Accustomed to "roughing it" and facing challenges head on during hiking trips for his Bronze Award, Watson had the fortitude necessary to help his stepfather knock a hole into the roof. Later, the 15-year-old walked around with bandaged feet until the rubble of a relative's home yielded odd pairs of shoes that could fit. "When we went outside, I realized I left my GGYA rope inside the house, but I found some long wire and suggested we wrap it around us so we wouldn't be blown away from each other," said 15-year-old Watson. For a day and a half, the family of three survived off Capri Sun juice, raisin and food eaten straight from cans. They sought shelter in the bathroom of a destroyed home, spending the night in total darkness since their flashlights and phones had been damaged by sea water. Watson, one of 30 participants in St Paul's GGYA unit, attributes his resilience to the youth programme. It instilled him with grit and the ability to adapt. According to the school's unit leader, Priya Doodnauth, about 75 percent of the participants suffered major damage to their homes. "A few lost almost everything. Some of the students lost family members. A lot of our participants say their GGYA skills helped them to survive during and after the hurricane," said Mrs Doodnauth who oversees the unit along with her husband, Ravindra. Although the couple was challenged by a loss of a vehicle, four feet of flooding in their home and a badly damaged roof, they worked to pull their units together post Dorian. "There's still no cable, internet and power in most places, the children are just happy to have activities and things to do with their friends that didn't require any of those necessities," said Mrs. Doodnauth who also serves as leader for Ruthnell's Technical Institute in Hawksbill, an "at-risk" unit. She estimated 95 percent of that unit's 25 participants sustained major damage to their homes. For many teens it was important to resume extracurricular activities. Young people needed a sense of stability and a return to some semblance of normalcy, said GGYA programme coordinators. For Watson, it helps keeps his mind off the family of six – two mothers, two toddlers and two teen boys his age – who sought shelter in a home next door and have not been seen since.

A slow return to normal

GGYA units across Grand Bahama face a wide array of challenges related to the storm as they find their focus post Dorian. Many of the island's private schools resumed meetings



Bishop Michael Eldon High School

last month. Public schools lag behind. Last year, Grand Bahama accounted for 10 units, 32 volunteers and 355 participants, ranking second to New Providence. Officials are expecting a significant dip in those numbers for 2019. With so many lives in a state of flux, GGYA gives young people something to anticipate,

said Linda Rahming, a unit leader at Lucaya International School (LIS). At LIS, 27 families lost everything – homes, contents and cars. "Many parents have lost jobs. A number of students have not returned due to parents' jobs [loss] or because the family relocated," the unit leader said. "Many are still dealing with disaster in one way or another. Those who lost everything are still displaced awaiting insurance settlements. *(continue on page 3)*

GGYA Hosts Activity Showcase

Whether it's kayaking, joining the Royal Bahamas Defence Force Rangers or feeding the destitute with Hands for Hunger, hundreds of young persons were shown how almost any activity could help them to obtain the world's leading achievement awards for youths. During a weekend showcase held at SuperClubs Breezes, the Governor General's Youth Award brought together representatives of the armed forces, service clubs, youth groups and even a tour operator to help 210 youths from 25 different Award units choose their activities, set their objectives and achieve their Award.

"We wanted to heighten participants awareness to show them different clubs that might exist in their school or in the wider community that they can be involved in and still pursue their Award whether it's anyone of the service clubs like Red Cross, Key Club, Rotary's Interact Club, or it could be that they are involved in the Police Cadet or want to become involved with the Bahamas National Trust, they can do all of that and have their involvement in those organizations fulfill our requirements," said Jacquetta Lightbourne-Maycock, GGYA's assistant national director. Activities for each section – volunteering, physical recreation and skills – should take a minimum of one hour a week over a set period so youths could fit it in around their studies. There are four sections to complete at Bronze and Silver level and five at Gold.

They involve helping the community/environment; pushing yourself physically; developing new skills; planning, training for and completing an expedition and, for Gold only, working with a team on a community service project, what GGYA calls a residential activity carried out away from home. Participants

have the freedom to choose activities they want to do, whether it is something they are already enjoying or something they have always been interested in pursuing. "We wanted to target our new people, Bronze, to pique their interest and keep them involved. Once they get on track towards doing something it becomes consistent – the time and effort that goes into pursuing an activity. If we get them at the Bronze-level they will be more compelled to continue being actively engaged in these activities over time," said Mrs. Lightbourne-Maycock. "We saw many young people very much interested in getting involved but at the same time what we are finding is that there is a shortage of adult volunteers across the board when it comes to youth organizations." Any young person can

pursue an Award regardless of ability, gender, background or location. Achieving an Award isn't a competition, rather it has to do with setting personal challenges and pushing personal boundaries. *(Submitted by: Precision Media)*



(GGYA's Grand Bahama units.....cont. from page 1)

Others are living in houses with missing walls awaiting drywall being replaced. Those who are not directly badly impacted at home are still heavily involved with relief work, from delivering food and supplies to building." As residents face months and even years of recovery, GGYA's 31 participants at the school have leapt at the opportunity to donate their time and talents. "Students have volunteered in World Central Kitchen, preparing hot lunches and dinners when time permits. They have been assisting the local Rotary Club with assembling tents in East Grand Bahama," said Ms. Rahming. "Our Girl-Up club provided feminine hygiene products to local families. Students are also helping replace drywall in damaged houses around the island." At Bishop Michael Eldon School (BMES), participants have carried out community service in conjunction with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and local food drives. Sadly, the unit at BMES is believed to have lost one of its own. Sixteen-year-old Mateo Bethel, a Bronze participant, was declared missing. The eleventh grader has two cousins still active in the 20-strong unit. "Students have been provided with counselling and they are doing fairly well with that," said Annika Linton, the school's GGYA coordinator. A few students and their families were forced to live temporarily in shelters having lost everything to Dorian, the schoolteacher advised. "Pre Dorian a lot of the students expressed that they made sure they had their GGYA backpacks packed and all their important documents water-proofed in the event they had to evacuate. I had my stuffed packed as well because of my exposure to GGYA. It made me ready. I had the lights, the whistle, the backpack, everything," said Ms Linton who was fortunate to emerge virtually unscathed from Dorian despite flooding in her area. Surprisingly, BMES students hit the hardest by Dorian where the ones eagerly anticipating GGYA's resumption post hurricane. "I guess it might be a means of escape for them," said Ms Linton. "They are with friends. Being among their peers and having a good time helps get their minds back to where they were pre-Dorian." An amazing community of young people Mrs Doodnauth said GGYA participants in Grand Bahama are "all positive." "They are looking forward to rebuilding and continuing stronger than ever," she said.

(Submitted by: Precision Media)



Lucaya International School

Blindfold Challenge

On October 19th, 2019, a number of GGYA participants took part in the Blindfold Challenge, hosted by Bahamas Alliance for The Blind and Visually Impaired. The aim of the event was to sensitize the public to challenges faced by those that suffer from this disability. Some participants were challenged to assist persons that were blind or visually impaired through an obstacle course. Others were blindfolded and partnered with someone without a blindfold to be guided through the course. It was an engaging learning experience for everyone.



Coastal Clean up

As a result of hurricane Dorian, the annual International Coastal Clean-Up, which is usually hosted by Beach Buddies, was cancelled. However, this did not discourage the many participants that usually look forward to and take part in it. The scores of young people gathered at the South Beach Pools on September 28th. They collected bags of trash and debris from the entrance of the site to the pools and within the surrounding mangroves. This service project gave the youngsters a look into why recycling is important in helping the environment.



2020 at a Glance

January

13th – Management Council Executive Meeting – 6:00pm
14th – Award Volunteers Meeting (Grand Bahama) – 5:00pm
16th – Award Volunteers Meeting (New Providence) – 4pm
16th - CASC 2020 Selection Due for Gold participants
20th - Board of Trustees Meeting - 10am
21st – Adventurous Journey Panel Meeting
19th – **Marathon Bahamas Orange Run**
24th – **Inagua participants Award Ceremony**
25th – Water Safety Course
27th – CASC 2020 Meeting

February

1st – 2nd – **Bronze Q Expedition/Exploration for New Providence participants – Central Eleuthera**
1st – 2nd – **Bronze Qualifying – Preston H. Albury School participants**
3rd – Management Council Executive Meeting – 6:00pm
3rd - CASC 2020 Fitness Walk Begins – 5pm (Every Monday until July 13th)
7th – 9th - **Silver Q/Gold P Expedition/Exploration – Grand Bahama units**
11th – Adventurous Journey Panel Meeting
12th – **South Eleuthera Award Ceremony**
21st – 23rd - **Silver Q/Gold P Expedition/Exploration – Central Andros**
24th – CASC 2020 Parents' Meeting
28th – BASE 2020 deposit due (non-refundable) - \$50.00

March

2nd – Management Council Executive Meeting – 6:00pm
6th – CASC 2020 Deposit Due - \$150.00
14th - Water Safety Course
21st – 22nd – **Bronze Q Expedition/Exploration for New Providence participants – Central Eleuthera**
28th – 29th – **Bronze Q Expedition/Exploration – Grand Bahama units**
28th - **New Providence Physical Recreation “Bowling Day” – 4pm – 8pm**

April

6th – Management Council Executive Meeting – 6:00pm
8th – Office closed @ 5pm “Happy Easter”
14th – Re-open @ 9am
14th – Adventurous Journey Panel Meeting
18th – 19th – **Bronze Q Expedition/Exploration for New Providence participants – Central Eleuthera**
24th - Annual General Meeting
25th – 26th – Volunteers' Training

Dates & Times Subject To Change

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New Units

The GGYA welcomed 3 new units: Windsor High School at Albany and C.V. Hart Institute, in Nassau and Ruthnell Technical Institute in Grand Bahama.

Units that were re-launched were Louise McDonald High in Bimini; C.C. Sweeting Sr. and New Providence Classical in New Providence.

Welcome All!

Bahamas Award Super Expedition 2020 (BASE) - Tri Island Adventure

This year's Bahamas Award Super Expedition (BASE) will take place in Crooked Island, Acklins and Long Cay June 30th to July 8th and will cater to Bronze, Silver and Gold participants. Gold participants will also get to complete the required residential project.



The expedition or exploration will take place in Crooked Island and travel to Acklins for a day and then onto Long Cay. The cost is \$200.00 and will include transportation, food, t-shirt, backpack and rations.

Participants can sign up thru their units, or online at www.bahamasggya.org or at the GGYA National Award office located at #11 Patton Street, Palmdale. The first deposit is due on or before March 2nd. All participants must be approved by the unit leader. More info to follow. [#stayconnected](https://twitter.com/stayconnected)

BASE began in 1992 to give young people the opportunities to:

- Experience adventure and discovery on a different Bahamian Family Island.
- Create an opportunity for participants from different islands to share skills and experiences.
- Encourage young people to be disciplined, responsible, use their initiative and be resourceful.
- Give them opportunities to receive training in the adventurous journey section and fulfill the requirements for that section.
- Experiences personal achievement in challenging situations.
- Ensure that Gold participants complete the Gold residential and service projects.