

# **Duke of Edinburgh's International Award - Barbados**

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**2019 BARBADOS AGM**

**October 2018 – October 2019**

**Stephen R. Smith – Chairman of Council**

The first event of the 2018-2019 period was the International Forum, held in Ghana, West Africa. This was attended by our Operations Manager Miss. Carla Alleyne, Americas Region Emerging Leader Mr. Jamar Odwin and myself.

Much of what is happening to develop the Award program in Barbados is being hatched at the level of the International Council and the Foundation, and this is then being disseminated through the Forum. The Americas Regional Director's Office is also playing a major role in feeding the changes down to the member National Award Offices, and some of this would be of interest to those of you gathered here.

Of note, HRH The Earl of Wessex has undertaken to transform how the Association supports the development of the Award around the World. This includes a shift towards not only giving seed fund grants but also major development grants to appropriate projects in individual countries, as well as operators working collaboratively across countries.

The new funding initiatives will open opportunities for Barbados and this Council intends to take full advantage by applying as often as we can. We would have missed the July submission deadline while we awaited clarity from the presentations made at the Americas Regional AGM held in St. Lucia. Carla and I had one-on-one discussions with .

A new On-line Record Book has been released with additional functionality, particularly as it relates to Bronze and Silver levels.

The Foundation has announced a platform for the formation of an international Alumni network. The local operation and management of the Alumni network will be set out by each individual country and not dictated by the Foundation or Association, so long as the operator maintains the simple terms and conditions when these are established. Those eligible to become members of the Alumni must have participated in the Award as a participant, Leader, administrator, or volunteer. The minimum age for membership has been proposed as 18 yrs or older, but this is to be confirmed at the upcoming International Council meeting in November.

The Foundation has been working with the University of Surrey Business School to establish a Certificate of Business Administration to help Award executives within NAOs, and those new to management, to look at how they can run the Award most effectively. Further details are available from the office.

Locally, The Aspire Incubator program continues to play a vital role in developing the capabilities of the Barbados National Award Office, and to ensure compliance with all Legislation as required. Carla continues to lead this significant and onerous effort which is bearing fruit. The Charities Act, for example has some changes which will affect the running of the Award which is a Registered Charity, and working with the Aspire Incubator program brings these matters into focus.

Work with the Probations Department continues, as we attempt to help rescue young people with troubled paths. This has some significant challenges, but we will persevere. We have also signed onto the Deaf Heart initiative, which would see participants being given the opportunity to learn sign language as a skill. This would be very useful in bridging communications with the hearing impaired, as we open the door for them to participate in the Award program.

Fund raising continues to be sluggish, and a plan to start a Bingo fund-raiser has had to be shelved. However, other efforts are being looked at, and this is being tied to efforts to raise support for the DEIA NAO. In this regard, I have had exploratory discussions with senior executives at various institutions including Sagicor, Republic Bank, Guardian General, Coral Reef Hotel, among others. I have pitched to them a new initiative which would see responsible employers being listed as having signed on to regarding Gold Award holders as Preferred Interview Prospects.

In the PIP Program, once you are qualified for the post and have a Gold Award, employers who have signed on will place such candidates on a short-list to be interviewed. This concept was quickly and enthusiastically embraced, and I was invited to submit a formal proposal. A comprehensive document is now being developed to provide more details, and this will in time be submitted for their consideration. (Are you ready to PIP the others?).

Annexed to that will be another comprehensive document which will detail financing and sponsorship opportunities within the DEIA both locally and regionally. Some of the institutions being initially targeted have regional reach and will see the benefits of supporting the program beyond Barbados as a plus. It is hoped that this double initiative will drive additional recognition, funding support and employment opportunities for the program and its participants

From all accounts everyone would have participated successfully in CASC 2019, and a Gold Award Ceremony is being planned for later in the year. We are still looking for a suitable venue which we can afford. But we hope those days will soon be over and we will soon have a space of our own.

I am very disappointed that since we received official correspondence from the Ministry of Housing and Lands informing us that the Cabinet of Barbados has approved a property for use as a home for the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Barbados, nothing further has happened. We are not yet able to disclose the property as we ought not to get ahead of the Government while the Legal work continues. A formal disclosure will be made in due course, and a Press Release has been prepared in

advance to capitalize on the press attention which will focus on the Award once this location is made public. We ask you to be patient as the Government is extremely busy and it has been very difficult to get this matter to Parliament for proclamation.

A funding initiative is being developed to assist with the renovations of the farm house, and a vehicle is still being sought for the Award program. I have been given a lead which may lead to funding for this, and I will pursue this shortly.

The Government has rolled out a new youth program, and this Council is looking to re-shape our thrust to engage and get on-board with Government support. This will no doubt raise public awareness of the program, and increase access. With the re-alignment of the Government's youth policy, we are hopeful of a better collaboration.

This concludes the Chairman's Report for 2018-2019 period, and I will entertain any questions from the floor.