



Hundreds of deserving students to benefit from Bahamas Maritime Cadet Corps sponsorship

*Promising careers await successful Bahamian students through Royal Caribbean Group support of
renowned national industry program*



Clayton Curtis, National Coordinator, Bahamas Maritime Cadet Corps



Senior officials with the Bahamas Maritime Cadet Corps 2020-21 graduating class with cadets from public and private schools. Royal Caribbean's sponsorship will add onboard experience, job opportunities for those who qualify and scholarships.



Top cadets in the Bahamas Maritime Cadet Corps 2020-21 Bridge Watch Class, Samal Adderley and Myles Moncur, flanked by (left) Kenneth Sands, instructor, and Cardie Cox, Board Member, Bahamas Maritime Authority.

Nassau, (Sept. ~~2019~~, 2021) – The national coordinator of a program that has turned out more than 2,000 participants today thanked Royal Caribbean Group for its's for coming on board as a new sponsorship, which adding a hands-on-deck aspect that he described as a potential “game-changer that will make a difference in hundreds of Bahamian lives.”

Clayton Curtis, national coordinator of the Bahamas Maritime Cadet Corps (BMCC), the youth training arm of the Bahamas Maritime Authority, praised the cruise company for its support which includes scholarships for deserving cadets and making real-time experience on a ship possible for qualified graduates and some trainees.

“Since 2004, more than 2,000 students in The Bahamas have participated in the program that exposes them to different aspects of the maritime industry and even during the pandemic, we had 110 who graduated,” said Curtis.

Of that number, about one in five will go on to a career at sea, seeking academic maritime scholarships and onboard experience. The program was established to build awareness of opportunities in the maritime industry and prepare high school students for careers in growing sector.

Prior to the pandemic, classes were held after school twice a week on the campus of CR Walker High School in Nassau with cohorts in Abaco, Grand Bahama, Inagua and Eleuthera.

“We have faced a dual challenge, having lost one of our primary providers of sea service and dealing with restrictions imposed because of the pandemic. It is difficult to teach the hands-on skills like how to tie knots virtually,” explained Curtis, “but with Royal Caribbean’s engagement, we feel like we are writing a new chapter in the history of maritime career excitement and readiness.”

The program is highly structured. Tenth graders are taught the basics in ship types, seamanship and vessel husbandry while 11th graders add firefighting, navigation, rules of the road and practical exposure to life at sea during school breaks. In the third year, 12th graders who qualify experience life at sea and can earn international certification through an additional course conducted by Bahamas Maritime Training Institute and held at the Royal Bahamas Defence Force (RBDF) base.

While its major support comes from the Bahamas Maritime Authority and instructors are provided by the Defence Force, the popular training programme lacked onboard experience after the main provider of that experience, Campbell Shipping, was sold.

“Now, Royal Caribbean has joined other sponsors in supporting hundreds of students who derive so much from the Bahamas Maritime Cadet Corps program. The focus is on the maritime industry, but these students are also gaining experience in teamwork, discipline and earning a respect for the sea.”

In the past, the BMCC’s focus was on shipping and preparation for careers such as merchant marines.

“Although historically The Bahamas is a seafaring nation, the life and language of the maritime industry is still alien to many young Bahamians,” said Curtis, one of the reasons the Bahamas Maritime Authority created the program. “There is a serious disconnect between the classroom and standing on the deck of ship.” Erasing that disconnect will be just one aspect of what Curtis calls “the game-changer.”

Under Royal Caribbean’s banner, students will have a greater opportunity to experience cruise travel with berths offered to sea cadets undertaking officer-of-the-watch training. Royal Caribbean will also provide scholarships for deserving cadets to complete their tertiary training in the maritime field with intense concentration on related math and science subjects.

According to Royal Caribbean Group Vice President, Government Relations, Americas, Russell Benford, the sponsorship was a natural fit given the cruise company’s long and supportive relationship with The Bahamas and its continuing partnership on a number of beneficial causes.

“What’s most important is developing the talent and potential of current and future generations in The Bahamas to fill positions of leadership in the maritime industry. The programming offered by the BMCC complements our goals of showcasing the unlimited opportunities of a career in the cruise industry to young Bahamians and providing the initial training to launch their careers,” Benford said. “Working with the team at the BMCC made us realize that creating the right foundation for success begins with providing opportunity and that’s what this organization does day-in and day-out.”

Two Bahamians who graduated from the cadet corps and went on to higher training, Kristoff Davis and Ivanna Seymour, are already holding officer-of-the-watch posts with Royal Caribbean.

For more information about the BMCC, please visit: www.bahamasmaritimecc.com.

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