

EDUCATION



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LUCAYA INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IS ESSAY WINNER FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR

For the second consecutive year, a student of the Lucaya International School has emerged as winner of the Mwanamugimu Essay Contest.

This contest is a national project of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated and is implemented by all regions, including the Southeastern Region of which The Bahamas and more specifically the local alumnae chapter, Zeta Rho Sigma, is a part.

The original goal of the project was to increase the students' knowledge of the historical and contemporary development of Africa within the context of their own culture. This year's theme was, 'The time is now, Developing Leaders for Local and Global Impact.'

The theme allowed emphasis on community issues both locally and globally as participants also improved their writing skills.

Amelia Baptiste, an eighth grade student of the school was the local contest winner. Her essay went on to win first prize in the Middle School category, during the 77th Southeastern Regional Conference held in Orlando, Florida from March 30 - April 2.

The Southeastern region consists of Alabama, Florida, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, Virgin Islands and The Bahamas. Amelia chose the topic: 'What kind of world do you want to live in? What actions need to happen to make the world a healthier, safer place?'

Amelia discussed the possibility of a world with gender equality, where people would be able to earn a living to sustain themselves in a clean atmosphere with less poverty.

She opined that education was the key to these problems, coupled with good health care, low electrification rates and access to clean water.

Amelia received a certificate, trophy and cash award as first place winner.

Worthy of mention and second place winner was Elliot Francolla, also of Lucaya International, who also wrote on the same topic.

Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated visualize a world in which all women and their families reach their full potential in all aspects of life and are able to create unlimited opportunities for future generations.

Afrika Karamo-Miller serves as chapter Basileus and Elcina Duncombe as The Bahamas Area Coordinator and Program Chair.



ESSAY WINNER – Amelia Baptiste (left) is pictured receiving her essay winning trophy from Elcina Duncombe. (PHOTO COURTESY OF DEREK CARROLL)

STUDENTS LAUD BENEFITS OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

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Mount Royal University Calgary, Albertha, Canada Third Year Bachelor of Midwifery Degree students Heather Carl, Paige Layden, Cheralynn Higgin and Taryn Campbell lauded the benefits of traveling to Grand Bahama to participate in the Study Abroad/ Transcultural Exchange Program.

Professional prenatal, postnatal and newborn care skills training were provided to the midwifery students within the past four weeks at the Rand Memorial Hospital, clinics, birthing centers and homes throughout the community.

Dr. Mary DeLashmutt, Doula Delight is the on-island facilitator of the Study Abroad/ Transcultural Exchange Programme, which helps to expose the midwifery students to the birthing culture of The Bahamas by working closely with midwives, obstetricians, gynecologists and nurses in the Grand Bahama health care system.

Campbell, Layden, Carl and Higgin stated that the experiences each has had thus far was most enjoyable and, having the opportunity to work with Public Hospital Authority (PHA) Principal Nursing Officer Cherlyn Bain and members of her team as well as pregnant women, new mothers and their newborns throughout the various stages of their health care needs and being able to witness comparisons and contrasting procedures proved to be enlightening and inspiring.

"The pregnancy, birth and postpartum training we have received has truly been good, in fact, I was amazed at how friendly and receptive doctors and nurses as well as the sisters have been, as everyone within the professional hierarchy were complaisant.

"The doctors and nurses have all been open to answering questions as well as the sisters were always willing to teach and chat with each of us and advise accordingly said, Carl, who went on to state, "Personally, I desired to pursue a career in midwifery because I wanted to help women and their families during this most important time in their lives.

"Providing care throughout this transition, helping to make it as easy and smooth as possible brings great joy. "Certainly, we all are grateful to Dr. DeLashmutt (best known as Dr. Mary) for all she has done and we appreciate the relationships she has been able to develop and nurture as a result of her work here on Grand Bahama.

"Dr. Mary has helped us to network and establish connections that we would not ordinarily be able to do on our own, in fact she is hosting us, providing a lovely place for us to stay as well as transportation while we are



IMPRESSED – Mt. Royal University Third Year Midwifery Nursing Students Heather Carl, Paige Layden, Cheralynn Higgin and Taryn Campbell enjoy participating in the Study Abroad/ Transcultural Exchange Programme on Grand Bahama island with Dr. Mary DeLashmutt, Doula Delight and Public Hospital Authority (PHA) Principal Nursing Officer Cherlyn Bain, midwives, obstetricians, gynecologists, nurses and social workers who deliver the best in pregnancy, birth and postpartum skills training and care. (PHOTO: SHARELL LOCKHART)

here and the organization of our schedules has been excellent."

Thanks to the Mount Royal University Third Year Midwifery Students Study Abroad/ Transcultural Exchange Program Layden noted any preconceived expectations she had initially upon traveling to Grand Bahama based on her limited knowledge of The Bahamas health care system has been transformed.

"The experience has been incredible, as I had many expectations and enjoyed wonderful, new and unexpected moments that I will cherish.

"Personally, I have never traveled to a place that has been more friendly and welcoming as Grand Bahama.

"Everyone is so kind and Nurse Bain and her team as well as all the doctors were polite and proficient in demonstrating to us all that needed to be done to provide the best care to patients.

"In fact, they did not hesitate to answer any questions we asked and took the time to build real relationships with us, which is heartwarming especially as we consider the fact, our operations, policies and procedures although similar do vary to a certain extent.

"Canada and The Bahamas are thousands of miles away from each other and no matter where one travels things are oftentimes done a bit differently

based on access to resources and supplies.

"Ultimately pregnancy and birth has a universal language and the experience that a woman and her family goes through during that transition is really the same no matter where you are, therefore, I believe we have more similarities than differences.

"Working at the Rand Memorial Hospital, Pearce Plaza, Hawksbill and Eight Mile Rock Clinics as well as in private homes here was amazing and I loved it all."

Also singing the praises of the Study Abroad/ Transcultural Exchange Program was Higgin, who noted that numerous doctors and nurses as well as sisters have been more than accommodating to her and her colleagues, as they enjoyed being given the opportunity to expand their knowledge and training by working as labor support.

Also stating that support given to them by Dr. DeLashmutt was indeed vital to their success in the Study Abroad/ Transcultural Exchange Program Higgin noted, "We are blessed to have had this experience and meet so many wonderful professionals during our training, inclusive of other midwives and obstetricians, gynecologists, nurses and sisters.

"We have definitely gotten to know many persons and value all the lessons we have been taught; Nurse Bain and

her team have been amazing and we can never thank them enough for taking time to really engage us and providing answers to all our inquiries."

Campbell was pleasantly surprised to meet several nurses who have the same surname as her, which made her feel like an extended family member.

According to Campbell, "Personally, I feel as though we were a bit unsure about what this experience was going to be like because we had such limited information before we came, however, I was pleasantly surprised to have everything well organized from the moment we landed with Dr. Mary picking us up from the airport, providing our accommodations and meals as well as being so lovely and welcoming to us.

"At the hospital the nurses and staff have also demonstrated the same love, care and concern for each of us and did their best to ensure we were treated well.

"Personally, I have really enjoyed my time here and the support received especially by Dr. Mary and Nurse Bain and all staff members who provided us with the best learning experience specifically at the clinics where we helped with antenatal and postnatal care.

"The home visits conducted throughout the community were an eye-opening experience and we also assisted

with breastfeeding support all of which will add to our cadre of experiences here.

"When you are a midwife it is very important to be culturally sensitive and certainly this program has made us all more aware especially as our experiences differed here from what we have become accustomed to in Canada.

"Of course Canada is a very multicultural country but this experience helped us to think critically about why we do things a certain way compared to other places like The Bahamas.

"We are now able to see things from a new maternity care lens and by being culturally sensitive we are able to meet people where they are as mothers-to-be come from all different places to have babies and we can assist in making that transition as smooth as possible."

Although the Bahamian dialect proved a bit difficult from time to time to catch onto as people are influenced by variant heritage traits Campbell, Layden, Carl and Higgin agreed that they were able to thrive due to the shared joy of doing what they love which is providing care and learning from adept midwives, obstetricians, gynecologists, nurses and social workers, who understand the natural, universal language of birthing.