

For Immediate Release

GRAHAM THOMPSON SUPPORTS SAILING FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

March, 2018



Sailing students from the T. A. Thompson Junior High School, enrolled in the Bahamas National Sailing School's (BNSS), School Sports programme. The students are sponsored by the law firm of Graham Thompson. Image by Donald Knowles.

NASSAU, THE BAHAMAS – The law firm of Graham Thompson has teamed up with the Bahamas National Sailing School (BNSS), as a sponsor of the sailing organisation's School Sports programme. The firm has committed to sponsoring the T. A. Thompson junior high school for two years, through to the end of 2019 academic school year.

The BNSS' School Sports programme has a goal of making sailing part of the curriculum for both private and public schools. T. A. Thompson is one of two public junior high schools currently in the programme. Throughout the school year, students – up to 30 in each group – participate in the weekly programme of sunfish sailing in Montagu Bay, via the Nassau Yacht Club (NYC). Through corporate sponsorships and other donor support, BNSS provides the boats and other sailing equipment for the programme, including

life vests, for every student sailor. Students receive sailing instruction from internationally certified, locally trained instructors.

In March, partners from Graham Thompson met some of the students in the programme, on one of their training days, before they took to the sea. The students, some who are in the programme for the first time and others in their second and third years, were an excited bunch, who spoke enthusiastically about their sailing experiences.

T. A. Thompson Guidance Counsellor Cedric Seymour and retired educator Coach Franklyn Johnson, who has been instrumental in working with BNSS in their School Sports programme, joined the students. Also on hand for the occasion were Bahamas Sailing Association (BSA) President Lori Lowe, BSA Director of Operations, Jimmie Lowe and Barry Wilmott for the Regatta Desk of the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources. The Sailing School was established in 2004 under the authority and supervision of the BSA.



Pictured from left: Dana Wells, a senior partner in the law firm of Graham Thompson, Bahamas Sailing Association (BSA) President, Lori Lowe; two of the female student sailors from the T. A. Thompson Junior High School, Mennin Edwards and Lyndia Lindsay; Judy Whitehead, Graham Thompson's Managing Partner; and Robert Dunkley Director of the Bahamas National Sailing School's (BNSS). Image by Donald Knowles.

Robert Dunkley, the Director of the BNSS welcomed everyone on what was simply a picturesque day for sailing. Dunkley spoke about the School's mission to develop young sailors, and shared some of the School's achievements in sailing both nationally and abroad.

As an example of one of the School's student successes, Dunkley highlighted the achievements of Donico Brown, a senior sailing instructor employed full time with the National Sailing School since 2009. Like the T. A. Thompson students, Brown learned sailing through the BNSS' School Sports programme. The 2006 graduate of the C. I. Gibson Senior High School continued with sailing beyond the school programme, achieving UK certification as an instructor through the BNSS and BSA.

Speaking on behalf of T. A. Thompson, Cedric Seymour expressed how pleased the School was with the programme's impact on students' development, lauding in particular, the initiative's achievement as a conduit for behaviour modification. He celebrated the transformation of former T. A. Thompson student and current C. C. Sweeting Senior High School student, Gregory Lindsay whom he described as growing from mentee, when he first joined the programme as a T. A. Thompson student, to mentor, as he now helps guide current students in the sailing programme. Gregory, now 17 years old, aspires to a career in marine mechanics.

According to Seymour, transformation in students' behaviour, including a greater commitment to achievement is perhaps the most impactful outcome that the junior high school has observed of students enrolled in the sailing programme.

Dana Wells, a senior partner at Graham Thompson, and avid sailor, shared with students the many things he learnt through sailing. "I learnt so much through sailing. I learnt about camaraderie. I learnt about discipline. I learnt about the joy of sailing, the pure beauty of the islands". Sailing for him he said was a culmination of so many wonderful things. Wells continued, "I am so happy that you all are enjoying the opportunity to learn to sail. It is something that is going to carry you far, in the sense that it is character building, it creates great friendships and relationships that will carry you far in life."

Lori Lowe, president of the BSA encouraged students to "never give up", a phrase she attributed to Bahamian sailing icon Sir Durward Knowles, whom she told the group had still been winning sailing competitions when he was aged 82. Sailing she underscored was not only something that could take them around the world, but a sport they could participate in for the rest of their lives.

Regatta Desk representative, Barry Willmott encouraged students to stay focussed and to remain committed to the sport. He challenged them that if they developed a "mind-set to achieve the maximum", they could also, like Sir Durward, one day "make this country proud".

In addition to Graham Thompson's sponsorship of T. A. Thompson Junior High School, the firm has also given support to H. O. Nash Junior High School's involvement in the BNSS' School Sports sailing programme.

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NASSAU

P. O. Box N 272
Nassau, N P
The Bahamas
T: 242.322.4130
F: 242.328.1069

LYFORD CAY

P. O. Box N 272
Nassau, N P
The Bahamas
T: 242.362.4020
F: 242.362.4810

FREEPORT

P. O. Box F 42451
Freeport, G B
The Bahamas
T: 242.351.7474
F: 242.351.7752

PROVIDENCIALES

P. O. Box 965
Providenciales
Turks & Caicos Islands
T: 649.339.4130
F: 649.339.1069

info@gtclaw.com

www.grahamthompson.com