



## The St. George's Foundation

*Bringing Bermuda's History to Life within the UNESCO World Heritage Site*

### 2019 Chairman Report

Dear Members:

I start this report by dedicating the 25 February 2020 Annual General Meeting to the memory of our good friend and past employee Debbie Loader, who recently passed. For 13 years, Debbie was the General Manager of the World Heritage Centre and the heart of Second Hand Rose. Her spirit and determination was an integral part of the St. George's Foundation, as she was to St. George's. On behalf of the Board, our heartfelt condolences go out to Charlie Loader, family and friends.

#### *Fiscal 2019*

Since our last Annual General Meeting, the Board of the St. George's Foundation (SGF), together with the General Manager, has put in a tremendous amount of hard work and preparation for the organisation's future.

The Board started with an offsite 360° review, which quite frankly was a harsh reality check. Of huge concern was the mounting debt. Overheads associated with operating three facilities – the World Heritage Centre (WHC), Deliverance replica and a separate administration office – along with the burden of fulltime salaries were easily engulfing and endangering SGF's revenues. Further, as SGF was an unincorporated association, legal advice confirmed that the membership and trustees were directly liable, triggering two new Trustee resignations. Quick and urgent action was required.

On legal advice, the Board started the process of forming a Company Limited by Guarantee to house SGF and protect the membership and trustees from liability. Operational finances were reviewed and cash closely monitored. Payables were strategically managed and receivables were collected. Opening hours for the WHC and Deliverance as well as staff working hours were decreased. The administration office was shut down and operations were consolidated at the WHC. Membership data was reviewed and a major mail out to lapsed members was conducted. Grant applications were submitted.

Gratefully, at the end of fiscal 2019, confirmation was received of SGF's successful grant application to the Bank of Bermuda Foundation (BoBF) in the amount of \$40K to support general operations with a funding condition of conducting a needs assessment.

Overall, the quick and effective decisions made by the Board in combination with the successful BoBF grant, laid the ground work for the fiscal 2020 turnaround of SGF.

### *Fiscal 2020*

In the current year, SGF continued with the internal review and reorganisation process. Operationally, the decision was taken to not renew the Corporation of St. George Deliverance lease, allowing SGF to focus energies on the WHC. Accounting practices and processes continue to be updated, including setting up a new Chart of Accounts in QuickBooks for year 2021 and recruiting a new volunteer bookkeeper. SGF received a provisional waiver from the requirement to submit audited financials, an annual savings of \$9K along with substantially less administrative burden.

The new limited by guarantee company, "The St. George's Foundation" was formed June 2019, changing the SGF governance structure. As it is a company, the new entity's shareholders are the "Voting Members" who appoint a "Board of Directors". To be consistent and to provide for a clean transition, the Board of Trustees plus three new members, being Cheryl Hayward-Chew (Chair), Louise Wakefield (Deputy Chair), Peter Barrett (Treasurer), Wendy Percy (Secretary), Neil Moncrieff, Quinell Francis and Stephen Lowe, were appointed both Voting Members and Directors.

It is worth noting here that parallel to the Board activities and ongoing operations, SGF was an active member of the World Heritage Site Management Committee (WHSMC), advisory body for the temporary Heritage Officer who was tasked with writing the draft 2020-2025 World Heritage Site (WHS) Management Plan. The Heritage Officer completed her contract June 2019 at which time she submitted the draft management plan to the Department of Planning. The WHSMC continued to meet monthly in anticipation of the release of the plan but on October 2019 suspended meetings due to the lack of WHS technical and administrative support, traditionally supplied by the Heritage Officer. As of the date of this report, the Bermuda Government has not yet released the WHS 2020-2025 Management Plan.

SGF was required to produce two outcomes associated the \$40K BoBF grant – a needs assessment report with recommendations and to "provide educational, cultural and historical information to 175 public education students to encourage connection and insight to Bermuda's history." The latter was fulfilled through the heritage tour program already

in place, conducted by the General Manager and in collaboration with the Bermuda National Trust and St. George's Historical Society. Thanks to the tracking and reporting requirements of the BoBF grant, the exercise provided documentation of the important role SGF plays in educating Bermuda's children about the history of our Town of St. George, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. During the March to December 2019 period, the General Manager's Heritage Student Program hosted 554 students, 421 of whom were public education students, 241% of the BoBF grant goal.

The BoBF grant requirement of a needs assessment was completed July 2019. Feedback was collected from 50 participants from a variety of backgrounds, including education, business, heritage and government. The report provided the Board with affirmation of the important role and brand of SGF, recommending that SGF's mission and focus be refined and that SGF work in collaboration with key stakeholders. As a first step to confirm if there was stakeholders' consensus on the role of SGF, inconclusive meetings were held with the Permanent Secretary of Home Affairs under which the WHS and the Department of Planning fall; Minister Foggo, MP Ming and MP Swan; and Mayor Dowling and Town Manager Foggo.

### *Looking to the Future*

After taking into consideration the feedback from the 2019 needs assessment report and the strengths of our current heritage tour program, the Board has narrowed SGF's focus as reflected in the new mission statement:

“To support the UNESCO World Heritage Site  
through collaboration, education and awareness.”

The Board is seeking members and stakeholders who are interested in serving on or supporting the SGF Education Working Group led by Director and past Mayor Quinell Francis.

Concurrently, the Board is reviewing options for the World Heritage Centre, which is leased from the Corporation of St George for a nominal rent. SGF is a small organisation and the burden of maintenance and upkeep, both in terms of cost and oversight, is not necessarily the best use of its resources. For the next three months, members are invited to submit feedback and suggestions to the Board regarding the World Heritage Centre building and property; after which the Board will commence dialogue with the Corporation of St. George.

In closing, the Board of the St. George's Foundation is excited about the new direction of the organisation and the potential to have meaningful, positive impact for the residents and visitor to the Town of St. George and Bermuda's UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### *Acknowledgements*

*On behalf of the St. George's Foundation Board, I would like to thank the following:*

- *General Manager Peter Frith for his tenacious spirit as we navigated this difficult year along with Alison Correia who supports the World Heritage Centre operation;*
- *our amazing volunteers including*
  - o *administrator Carol McCormick who departed Bermuda in June 2019, Patty Betcher assisted by her husband Allan, Debi Montgomery; and*
  - o *outgoing accounting administrator Karen Olsen along with Myra (Patricia) Simmons, our new volunteer bookkeeper;*
  - o *the ladies at Second Hand Rose*
- *David Chew for volunteering his project management support and time;*
- *Craig Rothwell of CHW and Kit Cunningham of Beesmont for their legal assistance;*
- *Richard Winchell and Tom Conyers for their non-profit advice and support;*
- *Vivian Carter and the Bank of Bermuda Foundation;*
- *Deloitte for their past assistance and waiving of their 2018 audit invoice;*
- *the Meyer Group of Companies for support during this transition with accounting support and meeting facilities;*
- *and finally our valuable members, whether corporate or individual, large or small.*

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Cheryl Hayward-Chew  
*Chairman*