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PRESS RELEASES

SVG Coast Guard Service Concludes 30th Annual Youth Development Summer Programme

August 30, 2024 - Kingstown: Marking three decades of unyielding support for youth development, the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Coast Guard Service celebrated the closing of its 2024 Youth Development Summer Programme at a ceremony held at the Calliaqua Coast Guard Base on Saturday, August 24, 2024. Under the theme "30 Years of Shaping Our Youth for Life's High Seas," the event highlighted the program's lasting impact on the lives of over 4,000 young Vincentians who have participated since its inception.

The ceremony commenced with remarks from Commander Deon Henry, Commanding Officer of the SVG Coast Guard Service, who reflected on the program's evolution. "At the inception of this program in 1994, our goal was to introduce youths to the practical aspects of Coast Guard duties. Today, we have expanded to offer not just maritime training but also critical life skills that will serve them in any path they choose," Commander Henry stated. He also acknowledged the program's legacy, adding, "For 30 years, we have been 'Shaping our Youths for Life's High Seas,' and I am proud to see the program continue to grow and adapt to the changing needs of our society."

Petty Officer (P.O.) Sasha Martin, who played a pivotal role in this year's program as one of the coordinators, offered insight into the participants' experiences. "From the moment the program commenced, our participants were challenged to push beyond their perceived limits," she shared. "This year, 140 youth were exposed to a wealth of knowledge, from maritime safety to financial literacy. They not only learned how to navigate the seas but also how to navigate life with

discipline and integrity." She also took a moment to thank the facilitators and sponsors, emphasizing, "Your dedication and commitment have made this journey possible, and I am confident that these youths will carry the lessons they have learned here into their future endeavors."

Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Christopher Benjamin inspired the audience with his motivational remarks. "Life is like a grindstone—whether it grinds you down or polishes you up depends on what you're made of," he began. "The experiences these youths have gained here will serve as their grindstone, shaping them into the leaders of tomorrow. I encourage you all to switch over to your victory channel, focusing on the positive achievements and blessings that lie ahead." His words resonated with the audience, reinforcing the transformative impact of the program.

The Feature Address was delivered by Mr. Darron John, a lecturer at the SVG Community College, who emphasized the program's role in national development. "This program is not just about maritime skills; it's about building a stronger, more resilient nation," Mr. John asserted. "The Youth Development Summer Programme has become a rite of passage for many young Vincentians, providing them with the tools they need to succeed both on and off the seas." He further highlighted the program's enduring legacy, noting, "The fact that approximately 4,000 participants have completed this program since its inception is a testament to its lasting impact on our society."

Representatives from the program's sponsors, including the Bank of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (BoSVG), Sagikor Life Inc., and the SVG Port Authority, also delivered remarks, expressing their pride in supporting such a meaningful initiative. Ms. Lou-Anne Thomas, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Security, commended the SVG Coast Guard Service for their dedication to youth development. She noted that the program is a shining example of what can be achieved when we invest in our youth and applauded the Coast Guard and the sponsors for their unwavering commitment to nurturing the next generation of leaders.

The SVG Coast Guard Service's Youth Development Summer Programme has proven to be a cornerstone of youth empowerment in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and with continued support, it will undoubtedly continue to shape the nation's future leaders for many years to come.

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