

What it's like to win a Governor's Youth Award for Excellence – Part 2

~ Nominations for this year's awards accepted through Monday ~

Preparations are underway for the third annual Governor's Youth Award for Excellence, scheduled to take place in June. This programme is an initiative of Governor Eugene Holiday meant to cultivate an attitude of excellence among the youth ages of 13 through 19. With it, outstanding achievers are picked among the categories of academics, sports, arts, environmental protection, and community service. The Governor said that these reflect important qualities required to take an active and constructive role in St. Maarten.

In yesterday's edition of the *Out N About*, we shared the experiences of 2021 winners Faith Peterson, Tafari Prevoo Francisco, and Jamie Lynch. Now, let's hear from the 2020 winners, in their own words, how becoming a winner in this programme has impacted them.

Note: Nigel Adriana was also co-recipient in the Academics – 2020.

RAY-ANGEL BOASMAN
Recipient in the Category Arts - 2020

How did you feel when you found out that you were nominated/ that you had won?
Upon finding out I was nominated, I was filled with excitement. It was truly a joyous moment to know that my craft allowed my name to be put forth for such an award. This compares to nothing I have experienced before when I

found out I had won, it honestly felt like a milestone accomplishment for me to receive such an honour from the Governor himself.

How has winning this award impacted your life?
This award served as an evident reminder that everything I pour into my passion will someday, somehow reap reward. It fuelled my motivation to another level and inspired me to continue further.

Why do you think this award is important for the youth of Sint Maarten?
This award is important for the youth of Sint Maarten because it is proof that with consistency and hard work, all our feats can be recognized and celebrated.

SARA BHARWANI
Recipient in the Category Environmental Protection - 2020

How did you feel when you found out that you were



nominated/ that you had won?

Being nominated for the Governor's Youth Award for Environmental Protection was an honour in itself, but winning the title brought me worlds of joy. Upon receiving the Governor's Youth Award, I was ecstatic because the award was one of the first times that I had received acknowledgment for the work I had done for my campaign, Breathe Better Air.

How has winning this award impacted your life?
Receiving the award has directly impacted my life

in many ways. Many new opportunities were given to me after being presented with the award. I was encouraged to take on a vital role as a leader for Sint Maarten's youth through those opportunities. Being a recipient of the Governor's Youth Award for Environmental Protection has allowed me to advance in my career as an environmental activist and grow as a person and a representative of Sint Maarten's youth.

I started Breathe Better Air in 2018 when the Dump began to burn due to the massive amounts of debris after Hurricane Irma. My initiative was to raise awareness about the effect of the burning on the health of citizens of St. Maarten. When the burning receded, I went further, including raising awareness about the impact of single-use plastics that eventually end up in the Dump. I was part of a group that helped pass a law banning single-use plastics on the island, which allowed me to be recognized for my efforts by the Governor of St. Maarten.

My environmental activist career took off once receiving the Governor's Youth Award. I was also given the opportunity to represent the Governor as emissary during Remembrance Day and was able to MC during Sint Maarten's Flag Day. Receiving the Governor's Youth Award for Environmental Protection has allowed me to have new opportunities, spread my wings, and soar on new paths that I would not have otherwise been able to take. Through the award, I became an ambassador for

the youth of Sint Maarten and led my peers to be more environmentally conscious. I have resolved not to waste the opportunity given to me by this award, and I will continue to strive to push the youth of Sint Maarten towards a better and more environmentally friendly tomorrow.

RIYA BAHARANI
Co-recipient in the Category Academics - 2020

How did you feel when you found out that you were nominated/ that you had won?
Upon finding out that I was nominated and had won the Governor's Youth Award in the Academics category, I felt and still continue to feel very grateful and appreciative. In addition, I felt honoured to know that what I have accomplished in both the community and the scholastic environment was being recognized.

How has winning this award impacted your life?
This Award has definitely had a positive impact on my life as it provided me with a variety of opportunities and experiences such as participating in the 2021 Memorial Day ceremony, being interviewed on the radio, and having an audience with the Governor. In addition, this recognition has been very fulfilling because it put into perspective all of the hard work that I have put in over the years.

Why do you think this award is important for the youth of Sint Maarten?
I personally feel that this Award is important be-

cause not only does it recognize the talented and industrious youth of Sint Maarten, but it also serves as a source of inspiration for others to be motivated in achieving their personal goals. In addition, I believe that the youth play an integral role in the community of Sint Maarten, hence it is essential to demonstrate to them that their hard work and effort are definitely being noticed and that they should continue to strive for excellence.

Any inspirational remarks for other talented youth?
To the talented youth, know that with dedication and commitment, you have the capability of making a positive impact – not only in your life, but in the community as a whole. Believe in yourselves and know that you have the ability to overcome any obstacles that you may face. When you are presented with a great opportunity, do not be afraid to take it, and always strive to be the best version of yourself.

Nominations for this year's awards are still being accepted. Interested persons and organizations can still submit typed nominations electronically via the nomination form no later than 11:59pm on May 9. For further details on the nomination process, please see the Governor of Sint Maarten website <http://www.kabgsm.com> or contact the Cabinet of the Governor of Sint Maarten via email office@kabgsm.com.

Mothers are wonderful

continued from page 1

fed, protected and a little sweaty. Mother marsupials lick their babies and their pouches clean regularly. That sweat is important too for good skin development and keeping microbes at bay.

The Colombians reported a surprising observation. Death rates in kangaroo care fell! Infants and their mothers showed improved bonding, the babies remained stable and were less distressed. They stayed warm, learned to suck sooner and grew better. They could be discharged home in a shorter time, together with their new magical, less complex nursery – their mothers. Kangaroo care has since been researched in many situations, with many careful checks. But in rural, urban, developed or developing centres, it works. Neurological development is promoted by kangaroo care;

its effects may be measured many years later in children who started out with this link to their mothers.

Reports this year show kangaroo care can be used safely and immediately in unstable infants. It often reduces any phototherapy that might be required to treat jaundice. The World Health Organisation and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund support this low-cost, safe and effective method of new-born care. The current challenge is to allow such management within neonatal intensive care where the focus is on separating mothers and their infants. Incubators may not always be required! Training medical teams to give kangaroo care has become a new horizon.

Even more unexpected is that binding infants to a mother surrogate includ-

ing father, or even a cousin, works well too. However, it points to a really valuable lesson for Mother's Day. We need to ensure support for mothers from their families and communities. *Homo sapiens* took over from *Homo erectus* largely because our socialising in large groups meant that some members of a group of humans could specialise. So mothers can look after the infants, but with support. After all, we too are born pretty hairless and incapable, and take some 15-20 years to reach adulthood. In that time, we need to learn a great deal. Our mothers have capabilities extending beyond that early life pouch; they have evolved traditional skills within communities they may not even recognise. Kangaroo care has shown this to be true! So let's find a way to celebrate on Mother's Day!