

DAAS President's Annual Report 2009

With the New Year comes a sense of challenge and uncertainty. We need to make a fresh start to restore membership and to reactivate the DAAS mission and see to our committees working much better than we have done heretofore. There is much discussion about maintenance of democracy, economic downturn in agriculture, tourism and manufacturing and persistent unemployment in Dominica and the balance with improvements in infrastructure

DAAS focus has always been to work with local and foreign institutions to provide some solutions to our national problems and to address evolving needs in education, health, foreign relations and the productive sectors.

DAAS was born November 2000 and has survived successfully these past 10 years. Its strength comes from the dedication of a number of committed individuals, such as our webmaster, and others who have kept the vision alive over these years through personal and institutional relationships. We have brought knowledge and information to better serve national needs in agreement with our motto "*To know and Serve,*" and within the limitations of our resources, human, physical and financial. We have had to navigate difficult situations and emotional challenges. Our achievements since our launching are testimony to how we have focused effort on national needs—working as a voluntary organization to achieve a better country. Members may wish to review <http://www.da-academy.org/chart.html> to refresh their minds of the composition of the Board, the Executive and the Working Committees.

Let me add here a clarification to dispel a misunderstanding about DAAS' function. While DAAS can offer official statements on national issues, political or otherwise, we respect the right of individual members to hold and express whatever political views they wish.

DAAS has endured because we have managed the organization with prudence, honesty and transparency, even where we had disagreements and faced criticism. We took the long term approach in meeting some of the needs of our members and the homeland. We navigated several challenges because we remained true to the DAAS mission. Our mission while not supported by a strong financial foundation has a large corp of human capital which sadly we feel is underutilized.

In spite of our limitations we were able to achieve the following in 2009. Visit <http://www.da-academy.org/daaschronicle01.html> .

First quarter 2009

DAAS received donation of shirts from Craig T Downs of a Miami law firm valued at (US\$2000), books from Edmund Delsol and a church in Wilmington, DE and children's clothing from Gillian Shillingford (DAAS President's daughter). During the month of March, 2009 DAAS donated clothing to Operation Youth Quake, a community based rehabilitation service for deprived delinquent and disturbed youth; reading material, clothing and shoes to Action for Children, Dominica (EC\$3,250); books for the Dominica Public Library (EC\$3,750); books for the Dominica State College (EC\$5,000) . Total value of all charitable donations EC\$12,000

DAAS also received a used piano from Dr David Lee, a professor at Florida International University valued at US\$2,000. This was gifted to the Division of Culture in Dominica in consequence of their request.

August 25/2009 - DAAS Donates Much Needed Equipment to the Gardens

As part of its interest in rehabilitating the Dominica Botanic Gardens, the Dominica Academy of Arts and Science (DAAS) today handed over several pieces of light equipment, valued at EC\$5,400, to the Dominica Forestry Division, for maintenance of the Gardens. This effort was spearheaded by Dr. Davison Shillingford, Coordinator of the <http://www.da-academy.org/dagardens.html>. Dr. Clayton Shillingford, President of DAAS did the handover. Receiving the equipment on behalf of Forestry was Mr. M. Burton, Director of the Forestry Division, and Mr. David Williams, Dominica's Superintendent of National Parks and Curator of the Botanic Gardens. Also in attendance were Mr. Cyril John, Manager of the Gardens, Dr. Henry Fagan of the local DAAS chapter, and Mr. Rupert Sorhaindo of Friends of Botanic Gardens.

October 22, 2009 - DAAS/De Filippis Scholarships

Two scholarships, one to a young woman and one to a young man, were awarded for attendance to the Dominica State College for studies in plant sciences. Ms Agnes Esprit, member of the DAAS Local Chapter Executive assisted with the interviews. The candidates chosen for the DAAS/De Filippis scholarships are:

1. **Shawn Francis** of Corona Yr.1 student of Agriculture of the Faculty of Applied Arts & Technology
2. **Melissa M Jno.Lewis** of Petite Soufriere ("residing" in Roseau) Yr.1 student of Biology/Psychology of the Faculty of Arts & Sciences

October/November 2009 - DAAS Donations

1. DAAS President, Dr Clayton Shillingford did the handover of a piano to the Cultural Division at a ceremony celebrating the end of the Children's Summer Arts programme at the Old Mill. The piano gift was obtained by DAAS from Dr David Lee, professor at Florida International University, Miami, through intercession of Dr Shillingford's daughter Gillian Shillingford-Palacios. The gift was accepted by Raymond Lawrence, Head of Cultural Division and Ms Pearle Christian.
2. DAAS donated six wall fans to the Dominica Cultural Div at the Old Mill. The fans were installed in the auditorium which suffered from poor air circulation and could be uncomfortably hot. The fans were purchased locally from Burton & Co Electrical Contractors who provided a significant discount on purchase price and installation. Photographs were provided to webmaster, Ragland Riviere to be shared.

DAAS continues with its commitment to:

- encourage or participate in its *Guest Lecture Series* at the Dominica State College in alignment with our MOU with that institution. One such example was lecture given on "Renewable Energy" by DAAS BOD member Lynton Scotland. We would encourage members to make themselves available for this project.
- expand the Botanic Gardens website which was launched in April, 2005 by adding several more plants.
- increase the number of DAAS Honorees

This New Year 2010, we will be:

- Exploring the resuscitation of the DAAS relationship with Clemson/ATREC and the phytomedicine project
- Supporting and working in partnership with groups and other institutions such as the Cadet Corps, DAIC, DHTA to advance the development of Dominica
- Working with the Oceanographic Institute of Dominica, Chef Joseph Ushinski and DAAS VP Gabriel Christian to pursue a project to provide protein-rich fish chowder to the youth in Dominica
- Reenergising the DAAS Working Committees at <http://www.da-academy.org/daascommittee.html> including Adult Education, Art and Culture, Agriculture & Environment, DA-Diaspora Relations, Economic Development, Emergency Relief, Finance, Health Services, Membership, News & Information, Research & Development, Tourism & Hospitality, Youth Development
- Creating more visibility for DAAS through local radio stations, the Internet and articles to the newspapers
- Offering short term student summer internships as institutions such as the Smithsonian Institution in Washington
- Preparing more incisive papers in economics, foreign relations, health, education and other key subjects for our Discussion Papers. It would be enlightening to go to...www.da-academy.org/papers.html. The discussion papers provide up to date evolution on political and social dynamics at home and abroad

This is a time to take a fresh look at our financial and human resource potential, the commitment of our membership and how we allocate our time and resources. DAAS needs more help from its members. Also in the coming year, we would like to see a Board and Executive that are more engaged in the guidance of the organization, and a general membership more willing to take ownership for the various activities that DAAS pursues to fulfill its mission. We need to remain focused on what we have set out to do. DAAS cannot service and meet ongoing challenges without support and commitment of all its members. The few will not cut it. DAAS leadership is here to listen and understand your needs, and to make the necessary adjustments to our plans given the current political, social and economic environment in the Diaspora and at home.

Here I must give special mention of our DAAS webmaster Raglan Riviere who over a period of time and with some cooperation from others created special links to our Constitution and Laws, the Integrity in Public Office Act, Dominica Phone Directory, Official Government Website, the Diaspora Policy Paper, Returning Residents Manual, and the Import & Export Manual. The DAAS website has become a fount of information to those who would wish to visit Dominica. Go to www.da-academy.org.

DAAS needs your help to develop a more comprehensive approach to move forward in fund raising, project identification and implementation, and budget preparation and planning.

I encourage you to reenergize your membership so you can see growth in your organization, help DAAS to take advantage of emerging opportunities, and ensure that our achievements continue to have success in 2010.

Finally, I would like to thank the DAAS faithful for the opportunity to be of service. The leadership will do all it can to ensure that the relationship among our members is personally rewarding, long lasting, true to our Mission, and productive. Again, best wishes for a happy, prosperous and healthy New Year.

Clayton A. Shillingford

President, Dominica Academy of Arts & Sciences

Clayton

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