

STETHS ALUMNI CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

Volume I # I
Spring 2021

WELCOME

The STETHS Alumni Connection (SAC) Newsletter Team is pleased to present our first ever quarterly newsletter at a time which, although fraught with threat from a viral pandemic, is also filled with the hope that spring brings and the joy of celebrating longevity. This year marks 25 years of STETHS Alumni Association (Inc.) and 60 years since inception of our alma mater. As we celebrate and learn to adapt to a changing world, we hope SAC helps you to reconnect, renew and strengthen those ties formed decades ago, or more recently, at the foot of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

ALVIN G. WINT

Who would've thought that a 13-year-old British born boy of Jamaican descent, would move to Jamaica and become one of the most highly accomplished, admired, respected, savvy, and distinguished men of all time? From humble beginnings beginnings as a teenager in Junction, St. Elizabeth, to becoming a stellar student

FINISH READING ON PG. 4



Steths Alumni Connection
NEWSLETTER

SAC Newsletter Team

Exec. Editors: Dannet Parchment, Wesley Wright & Gary Samuels

Co-Editor: Dr. Cecil Wright

Finance: Audrey Brown & Gary Samuels

Public Relations: Belinda Haughton & Tracey Newsome-Bostick

25 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

Is it the steepness of the hill, widening of the road, or the image of that bright blue and yellow entrance that symbolized you had arrived at STETHS? Or is it the boys who looked like men and acted like kings?

FINISH READING ON PG. 2

ZONIA WATKINS

She's calm, free-spirited, full of energy, known for keeping a "cool head," has an easy-going demeanor, and possess a humble heart and always lending a helping hand. But don't be fooled by her beautiful smile and easy-going spirit. She is a no-nonsense, beautiful, independent, black woman who knows what she wants. She's unstoppable, unforgettable, and a force to be reckoned with.

FINISH READING ON PG. 8

Steths Alumni USA Inc.



The Dorman Law
Firm in Hartford,
Connecticut.

CALL US TODAY AT

860-524-1862

Your Lawyer, Your Side

Family Law • Immigration Law
Criminal Defense • Real Estate
Deportation Defense

255 MAIN ST, SUITE 400
HARTFORD, CT 06106

WWW.TDORMANLAW.COM



CELEBRATING

25 Years of Excellence

BY: Dr. Cecil Wright

Or is it the beautiful girls who were not only quick with their wits but blazed track with their legs? Or is it the smile of the vendors who knew we were always fifty cents short but served us anyway? Or is your enduring memory one of walking to the tuck-shop with your friends to get that patty and coco-bread? Whatever your fondest memory is, nothing has set us on surer footing than the words “Work and Integrity” that have been branded in our minds.

Our heroes and heroines came in every shape and size, and what they gave us we took it with us! Principals - Roper, Wray, Pottinger, Burton, Watson, Samuda, Wellington, administrative staff and teachers gave their all. It was their guidance, inspiration and encouraging words of work harder, study longer and you could be anything, that kept us going. And we went with the words “Work and Integrity” like a guiding light. Inspired by the impact of these principals and teachers, in 1996, a group of dedicated past students, thousands of miles away in the “land of opportunity” and mindful enough of their successes woven in the fabric of Work and Integrity, seized their chance to give back to their alma mater. On February 15th, 1996, Patrick A. Josephs, Pete Smythe, Neville Ferguson, Joy Smythe Kelsey, Philbert Wright, Glenton Smith, Byron Chamberlain, and Marcie Dawes etched their names in history, as the founding giants of STETHS Alumni Association (USA) Inc. The essential mission of this association was to provide a place where past students could connect and discuss ways of giving back to their beloved school. The task was not easy. Funds were low, but their commitment to not letting this organization fail was optimal, said Carlene a member of the association for 24 yrs. After joining the organization in 1997, she recalled driving from Brooklyn to New Jersey, to meet at Dr. Glenton Smith’s (a former team member) home to discuss plans for the association. “We were committed, STETHS gave us so much and we just wanted an opportunity to show the school we appreciate what they did and the best way to do so was to give back,” she stated in an interview. When pressed on what kept the association successful for 25 years, she responded, “We are successful because we are committed, we respect each other, we value and support each other, and we love to have fun.” She continued, “We still love having fun. We have the best boat rides, picnics, and Christmas parties... mi a tell yu STETHS people love to dance,” her Jamaican accent kicking in. There is something to be said about the bonds within the organization and the powerful members who have contributed so much over the years, among them Zonia Watkins, who served for over 20 years in many leadership roles such as president and vice president and Maureen Beckford Hewitt, who served for 14 years as secretary.

The consistent theme for every member of the organization, man or woman, executive member or not, is the power to change lives through giving back. Our current president, Donovan Wilson, once described his role as “just making sure every child at STETHS has a chance to succeed and to help STETHS as much as we can, while creating a place for alumni to have fun and stay connected.” Celebrating 25 years of existence is no small feat. The accomplishments are tremendous and ranked differently in the minds of many: When members were randomly asked what they thought was the biggest accomplishment of the organization in 25 years, these were some of their responses:

- Assisting students in times of need over the years.
- Staying relevant and giving scholarships to underserved students.
- Providing care packages during the pandemic.
- Providing accommodations for students attending Penn Relays.
- Being active through the many years, even through recessions in 2008/09 and during COVID 19.
- Handing over a motorized wheelchair to Mr. Royal as students cheered.

The inference that resonates from these comments is WE CARE! We care for each other; we are a family and we are committed to ensuring that our association continues to support our current members and gives back to the STETHS community. As successful as the last 25 years have been, the future is upon us, and as we continue to celebrate our history and accomplishments, we are steadfast in our mission to ensure that the next 25 years will be better than the last! The STETHS Alumni Association (USA) Inc., is guided by these values: The mission of STETHS Alumni Association (USA) Inc., is to positively change the lives of STETHS students and STETHS alumni. Our Vision is to reach, serve and engage all STETHS alumni and students; to foster a lifelong intellectual and emotional connection between the School and its graduates; and to provide the School with goodwill and support.

As we tackle the future, our organization must be willing to unite, strengthen what we have started, and forge a new path that will allow all STETHS alumni to have a place where their voices and resources can be used to move our institution forward. The history of our association is strong, our members are committed, and we have great confidence that the future of the organization is bright because of us. We urge you fellow STETHSonians, to pick up the mantle, act where you are, do what you can, and let's all make this association a world-class organization, not only for us but also for those who will come behind.



Shop #1, The Lampard
Pedro Cross, St. Elizabeth
Ph: 876 5969976
Email: wondoncatering@gmail.com



Alvin George Wint:

The **Best** Version of Himself

BY: SHIRDENE MICHAEL



at St. Elizabeth Technical High School (STETHS), Alvin George Wint was a young man on a mission.

He was fiercely determined to achieve greatness, to become successful, to make a difference, and in the process, help others do the same. That process, that ideology, that journey, that reality, wasn't going to be an easy one; but this young, ambitious teenager was ready for whatever challenges came his way, by being the best version of himself.

Attending Junction Junior Secondary School in St. Elizabeth, was an experience that would set the stage and the trajectory of Alvin Wint's life. In 1974, while attending school in Junction, Alvin's science teacher took the class on a field trip to visit the University of the West Indies, which was instrumental in science and other areas of his interest at the time. "This was a powerful visit," Alvin shared as he reminisced, "because it was informative and educational, and this had a huge impact on me and my classmates."

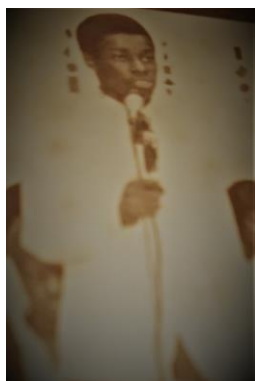
The visit to the University of the West Indies was like a forecast, giving him a sneak peak, a hint, a taste for what was to come later on his life. He knew that in order to do well at school in Jamaica, he had to take the necessary achievement tests needed to matriculate, so that he could continue to higher education. For Alvin, that meant paying money to do these tests; money, he didn't always have. There's a common saying in Jamaica, "Wi likkle but wi tallawah," which means that even though Jamaica is a small nation, the people are strong-willed, refuse to be restrained, and are very determined. Alvin's financial challenges could have hindered him from even trying or being hopeful, but he was strong-willed, determined, and had that Jamaican fighting spirit to keep trying, to keep believing.

Alvin's teachers at Junction Junior Secondary School saw that drive, that spark, that determination, and believed in him. One of his teachers -- whose name he couldn't remember -- paid for him to take the Grade Nine Achievement Test so that he could qualify for high school. This was a win-win situation for Alvin because he was able to study, pass the Grade Nine Achievement Test, and be in a position to finally attend high school. Students who were successful in this exam back then, earned a place in a technical high school and Alvin and his peers from Junction were placed at STETHS. This was an exciting prospect for him and he proudly attended STETHS from 1974-1977.

STETHS, located on the outskirts of Santa Cruz, St. Elizabeth, was known for its athletic prowess, innovative curriculum, relaxed and fun school environment, and academic excellence. No wonder this would have excited Alvin and his friends to be able to attend. It didn't take long for that excitement to come to a screeching halt, however, during his first year at STETHS. It was an experience that was going to test his physical and emotional endurance. An early disappointment for Alvin was that the school seemed to invest time in recruiting football players who he thought were stronger and more athletic than he was. He didn't think he could compete.

This was a sport that he was good at and had wanted to play, but he had to just watch from the sidelines. It was this experience, however, that helped him to develop other interests and new-found friendships and also led to him meeting the love of his life.

Reminiscing on the good old days at STETHS, Alvin describes his experience as at first. "...very difficult. It was very challenging because STETHS had a very intense indoctrinating system of "ragging." For the seniors, this was a way to "break the ice" with students like Alvin, to get



them used to doing things the STETHS way. For those being indoctrinated, this was a way to humiliate or even harass them, in a whole new way.

Alvin and his friends were called "grubs," which meant they were to be treated as inferior, and as Alvin expressed, "Those who were indoctrinating us made sure that we understood that we were grubs." He later adds, "There were certain things expected of us. We had to prove

ourselves."

It didn't take Alvin long to realize that in order to make it through that first year at STETHS, it was religion that would keep him grounded. As a devout Seventh Day Adventist, his religious beliefs played an integral part in his life as a student and has continued into adulthood. He had to also learn how to lean on the other students from Junction who were also attending STETHS. In Alvin's view, "We were able to become a tight-knit group. It helped us to survive the first year." He was able to build and has retained those relationships with his friends.

While attending STETHS, Alvin became friends with one of his classmates, Masie Simms. This friendship blossomed into her becoming his high school sweetheart. After five years they were married and his soulmate became his lifelong partner. Alvin and Masie Wint have celebrated 39 blissful years of marriage, and are still going strong. As Alvin recalls, "I feel like STETHS created the kind of environment to find love and friendships, and in this case, the love of my life." For Alvin, STETHS produced wonderful experiences that created great memories, and this was one of them. Another wonderful experience for Alvin was meeting Prime Minister Michael Manley who came to visit and gave a speech at STETHS in 1977. Principal John Pottinger had graciously asked Alvin to give the vote of thanks to the People's National Party's (PNP) icon. In reminiscing about that moment, one could hear the excitement in Alvin's voice. "I was asked to thank Prime Minister Michael Manley," he explains. "I was very excited to do the vote of thanks, and afterwards, Mr. Manley shook my hand. That was a moment I will never forget. Just imagine for one moment, the Prime Minister of Jamaica shaking your hand!" That was the highlight of his day, a day he would never forget. It was featured on television news and although he didn't get a chance to see the news item, because as Alvin candidly jokes about the situation, "I didn't have a TV to watch it on at the time," the next day in devotion Principal John Pottinger advised. the school of Alvin's appearance on the TV news the previous evening.

Bank, have been the beneficiaries of his services in advisory or oversight capacities.

His more current title as Emeritus Professor of International Business at the University of the West Indies (UWI), has elevated him to a distinguished retired status. He has

For Alvin, "that was a fantastic experience."

Alvin was able to use these experiences as building blocks to contribute to his academic success. He was able to complete and pass his O-level GCE exams, and graduate from STETHS in 1977, with a Diploma in Science. He gives credit for his academic learning and success to the teachers, because they understood the importance of independent learning and to him that was powerful.

He believes that STETHS had more of a holistic approach to education, where teachers focused on the emotional, social, ethical and academic needs of the students. "STETHS understood how to present a well-rounded education in creating well-rounded students," Alvin explains. As he further elaborates, "Education at STETHS focused on student development rather than just achievement. STETHS was a wonderful experience and the teachers helped to mould me and the other students into being the kind of individuals we are today."

After graduating from STETHS in 1977, Alvin was given the opportunity to teach Math and English and study for the Advanced level (A-level) exams. He was successful in all his subjects, but his desire to excel didn't stop there. He wanted to make a huge impact, especially in the business world. With the help and direction from his mentor, then Vice Principal Rupert Linton, Alvin, after completing undergraduate studies at UWI, was fortunate to travel to the United States where he attended and graduated with an MBA from Northeastern University, and later, obtained a Doctorate in International Business from Harvard University. After completing studies abroad, Alvin returned to Jamaica and has worked with several companies and institutions to provide his services and expertise on the local, national, regional, and international front.

For a man who is nothing short of genius and who has made an impact in business and policy-making in Jamaica and around the world, Alvin has himself enjoyed interesting connections with other influencers. He recalls in 1994 when he taught the current Jamaican Prime Minister, Andrew Holness Jr., International Business Management at the University of the West Indies. This reminded him of the time when Andrew's father, Morris Holness, was his Form Teacher and Agricultural Science Teacher in 9H during his first year at STETHS from 1974-1975. In 1996, he had the pleasure of working on a national industrial policy for Jamaica with U.S Vice President Kamala Harris' father, Donald Harris. Among his extensive and impressive list of accomplishments, Professor Wint has authored several books and written a plethora of scholarly papers in the fields of international competitiveness and international investment policy. Numerous private, public and educational institutions in Jamaica and the Caribbean, governments of African, Asian, Caribbean and Latin American countries, as well as multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank Group and the Inter-American Development Group have graciously served UWI in several capacities including as a Pro Vice Chancellor. He is the recipient of the UWI Vice

Chancellor's Award for Excellence, the Jamaican Order of Distinction (Commander Class), and an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters Degree from Northern Caribbean University. Professor Wint has been the recipient of numerous research, teaching, publication, and academic awards.

Professor Wint is a man who is an intellectually gifted academic, who cares about his personal excellence, but more importantly, loves to give back and loves to serve. He is as down-to-earth as he is distinguished. He loves God. He loves his wife and two sons. He's an avid tennis player, having developed this passion in his 40s, and likes to compete with his friends on the court. He considers himself generous, idealistic and compulsive. He is humble, has a gentle spirit, a calm demeanor, an optimistic outlook on life and genuinely cares about people and how he can help make Jamaica, and the rest of the world, a better place.

**"We should always try
to be the best versions
of ourselves so that
we can help others be
the best versions of
themselves!"**

~ Professor Alvin Wint

with purpose or passion, he is actually succeeding

Mighty Spice Jamaica Ltd.



Quality seasonings, spices, and herbs, all produced and processed in Jamaica; we ship international

Click Mighty Spice on Instagram and Facebook

Email: Mightyspicejamaicaltd@outlook.com

Phone: 876-329-5913



THE DORMAN LAW FIRM
ATTORNEY & LEGAL SERVICES

Firm Overview

The Dorman Law Firm, LLC is a General Law Practice based in Hartford, CT. We've been protecting the rights and assets of our clients here in Connecticut, and around the world.

We understand; The Dorman Law Firm combines compassion and understanding with an effective strategy, client-focused drive to win. When it counts, Tanya Dorman, Esq. is the Attorney you want on your side.

Your Lawyer, Your Side

CALL US TODAY AT
860-524-1862

255 MAIN ST, SUITE 400, HARTFORD, CT 06106



Steths
Alumni Association USA Inc
25TH YEAR Anniversary

NEWSOME, MCCOOK & ASSOCIATES
Commissioned Land Surveyors and Chartered Surveyor
COMBINED TOTAL OF OVER 50 YEARS EXPERIENCE

Member of The Land Surveyors Association of Jamaica (Past Presidents) | Member of The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)

- Surveyor's Identification Reports
- Cadastral / Land Title Boundary Surveys
- Digital Mapping
- Route Surveys & Design
- Hydrographic (Seabed) Surveys
- GNSS Consultants
- Topographical Surveys
- Strata / Condominiums / Apartment Surveys
- Exploration & Mining Surveys
- GIS Data Collection, Mapping & Analysis
- Land Administration & Registration Consultants
- Subdivision Design Surveys
- Land Development Surveys

Suite 5, 11 1/2 Swallowfield Road, Kingston 5 Tel: 876-960-5802 / 4 Fax: 876-960-5793
E-mail: newsomemccook@cwjamaica.com
f Newsome, McCook & Associates

Health and Wellness

By Wesley Wright



Three areas that can contribute to a person's overall health and wellness are:

Body Mass Index, Mental Wellness, and Financial Wellness. Body Mass Index

Maintaining a healthy body should be the goal of every person; staying healthy helps you to live longer, can save money and improves your overall quality of life. A good indicator of the state of your health is your Body Mass Index (BMI).

$$\text{BMI} = (\text{Weight in Lbs} \times 703) / (\text{Height in inch} \times \text{Height in inch})$$

A normal BMI is within the range 18.5 – 25.0; a person with a BMI between 25 and 30 is considered overweight; and a person with a BMI over 30 is considered obese. A person is considered underweight if the BMI is less than 18.5. Your BMI is an estimate of your total body fat, according to the National Institutes of Health. The more fat a person carries on their body, the greater their BMI and this excess fat poses a greater risk for a variety of diseases, according to the NIH, including: Breathing problems, certain types of cancer, gallstones, heart disease, high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes. These are some of the underlying conditions that makes you susceptible to developing COVID-19 when exposed to the coronavirus. A well-balanced diet and regular exercise are two actions that you can take to achieving and maintaining a normal BMI. Other actions such as not smoking and drinking alcohol in moderation can contribute to maintaining a healthy BMI.

Mental Wellness

The World Health Organization, defines mental wellness as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”

Managing stress, managing depression, and balancing work and family time are key to achieving and maintaining stress, managing depression, and balancing work and family time are key to achieving and maintaining mental wellness. Many companies offer Employee Assistance Programs that offer help employees and their family as a part of their benefits package. Some healthcare providers also offer limited behavioral and substance abuse counselling for their members.

Financial Wellness

Financial wellness is defined as “effectively managing your economic life” (Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Nov 16,

2020). Achieving and maintaining financial well-being plays an especially important role in your overall health and wellness.

Financial wellness helps us to realize financial security and financial freedom of choice, in the present and in the future.

There are many steps you can take to achieve financial wellness. Some of them are:

- Spend less than you earn and try to save and reduce expenses
- Only borrow what you can afford
- Grow your money, that is invest
- Boost your earning capacity

Summary

With the current COVID-19 pandemic on everybody's mind after claiming so many lives, we all must make every effort to prevent us from getting the coronavirus. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has published numerous guidelines detailing ways to protect ourselves from the coronavirus as well as how to prevent us from infecting others if we become infected. If we do not survive the pandemic the three topics discussed above will not mean anything!

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused stress levels to reach alarming proportions and there are reports of scores of people young and old taking their own lives. We can never be sure of the overall effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on us in general, but we can assume that the healthier we are the better we are able to cope with events when they occur, planned and unplanned. The COVID-19 pandemic has also caused many people to lose their jobs, homes, and other material possessions. We anticipate that many of these jobs will return when the pandemic subsides, but the pandemic and loss of jobs and earnings has resulted in other problems such as homelessness, food insecurity, home schooling/virtual learning, loss of health insurance and the list goes on and on. There are many resources that are available to help you cope with the pandemic and many of the ways it negatively affects quality of life: These resources may vary depending on where you live. Some of them are:

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC); <http://www.CDC.gov>

The National Institutes of Health (NIH); <http://www.NIH.gov>

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA); <http://www.HRSA.gov>

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ); <http://www.ahrq.gov>

World Health Organization (WHO); <http://www.who.int>

STETHS Local News: Students view Point...



Over the years, the school has excelled in the areas of sports, practical and technical academics among other achievements. However, as of March 12, 2020 when the campus was shut down due to perils in the form of a Coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic. The school had to assess the inconvenience and decide the best way forward. It was decided by the Ministry of Education that all schools should avert from regular face-to-face learning, and adapt to online modalities. The ambitious pupils and versatile staff quickly adjusted and the exemplar school began to function as nonpareil once more. Here are the stories from the students' perspective. Their perspectives are diverse and impassioned and mirror the diversity of the impact of this pandemic.

By: **Gabrielle Granville**

My first encounter with online learning went fairly well. To me, Steths has always been a model school. So of course they had already began preparation to channel the school population into virtual learning. It was a bit challenging at first to adjust to the new norm, however, with the aid of our teachers, it slowly became better. Initially, we used WhatsApp and Google Classroom. Google Classroom was not as effective as it is now. We had no video classes; we only wrote notes, watched videos and completed SBAs. Thankfully, I had already completed the majority of my SBAs so the transition was not as bad for me. There was no asking for help if you misunderstood a topic unless you contacted the teachers personally. Although our teachers ensured all the lessons were prepared, it felt as though we were floundering in uncertainty. Conversely, as the new school year approached the online learning platforms and learning experience ameliorated.



Now, online learning at Steths has become quite efficient from my perspective. As a science major in Cape, saying the syllabus is packed would be an understatement. However, I have become more acclimatized to the online learning. Since the onset of online school, I have managed to become well versed in Chemistry, a subject I had previously failed no matter how hard I studied.

Our teachers are excellent as they make it easier for us to learn. There is definitely potential in online learning and I believe Steths is on the way to mastering the new normal.

By: **Shaniece Collins**



For all your vacation rentals in Westmoreland, Jamaica and Bluffton, South Carolina book with Murray's Enterprise on [Airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com). For more information contact: Elaine Murray, 843-301-6108



In March of 2020, the novel corona virus entered on Jamaican shores. It changed everything that students considered to be a norm for learning. Within less than a week the “new norm” of learning (online learning) was thrust upon students. Students were ready for online classes, having the right learning materials, such as good internet access, smartphones, tablets, laptops and other digital gadgets made learning easier for some students; on the other hand, the students who lacked the necessary learning tools were faced with numerous challenges.

“I live in bush, so sometimes mi get kick out of class” voiced a deranged six form student, other six formers also voiced: “mi just cah bada, sometimes mi WiFi nah work, teachers nah come class, or students nah show up suh nuh class can’t keep, honestly mi fed up”

With upcoming CAPE and CSEC examinations, students are worried as to what the final outcome will be. Another student voiced “See all me? Mi nuh know wah gwan fi those exams” as the Caribbean Examination Council is still indecisive of whether or not students will be sitting both papers this coming June/July. Covid-19 has not only affected students mentally but also the educators. One teacher opined “I believe that this pandemic has affected teachers psychologically; when students are not showing up to online classes, it puts a strain on teachers to make adjustments to allow students try to catch up on work” He believes that parents have yet fully met teachers half way as it relates to online classes and this needs to be done in order to make work easier in these stressful times.

The school must be commended for the adherence of the different Covid protocols. The Administration has placed different pipes in strategic areas, contracts have been negotiated with different bus drivers to bring STETHS students to and from school so students have less contact with persons outside of the school. Three to six feet markers are placed around the school so students are always reminded to keep physically distant. Where the wearing of masks are concerned students have followed protocols for the most part.

By: **Crystal Rowe**



Zonia Watkins



A Force to Be Reckoned With

By: Shirdene Michael

Zonia Watkins, also known as “Adelphi Girl” knew that her hopes and dreams of getting a great education would extend beyond the community walls of a little district in St. James, called Paisley, that was hardly visible on the map. This is where she grew up. It was a place she called home. She was proud of where she came from and more proud to be called “Adelphi Girl” by her friends who attended the same school. Just three miles from her home, Zonia often walked to Adelphi All-Age (Primary) School and without even realizing it, would embrace the school’s motto: “For Life We Learn”. That took on a life of its own when, in 1978, she made the decision to attend St. Elizabeth Technical High School – STETHS.

It was a life-long lesson that had many twists and turns that would take her out of her comfort zone of walking, to riding on buses, trains and diesel carriages. As she would later find out, this was a journey that would build resilience, character, independence, determination, and a strong will to come out as a survivor, a fighter, a winner. But being a winner isn’t always easy. Weighing only about 70 pounds at the time, Zonia was excited to finally leave home. She was eager, outgoing and curious to find out what STETHS had to offer. It was no wonder when her parents took her to Santa Cruz and left her with her “foster mother” she felt like she had become an adult overnight. Zonia candidly expressed, “First, being away from home we had to board at a private residence. To sort of assimilate into a new home setting, to meet new people and in a few days, go into this huge institution, was sort of scary.”

How could an institution that was known for its academic and personal success in sports, debating, agriculture, music and so much more be scary? STETHS soon became a place of dread for her. It wasn’t the fear of doing work. It wasn’t the fear of going to high school. It wasn’t the fear of being away from home. It was the fear of “ragging” for Zonia, who felt like a “tiny person among giants,” as she later recalled. Laughingly, she reminisced about this dreaded fear of ragging. “We would hear that they were going to pluck your nose and ask you to blow out light bulbs and take your money. I might have been about 12 or 13 years old and going to this place where people are just going to harass you, I feared it. But I grew up as a very feisty person so I was resistant to some of these big folks who were probably just a year older than me or a grade higher than me.” Very soon, Zonia began to attract a number of persons because of her feistiness. She had become a force to be reckoned with, and even though she was constantly called “grubness,” that didn’t stop her from asking one of the senior students who had wanted her to jump and blow out a light bulb, “Does that make sense to you? Does that really make sense to you?” Chuckling and burying her hands in her face as she remembered this incident, Zonia recalls how grubbing and ragging were only the tip of the iceberg. An avalanche of trials and tribulations from boarding and diet restrictions, to commuting to and from STETHS, would present a whole new set of challenges for this innocent Adelphi girl.

For a lot of folks in the Santa Cruz area, boarding students was an income earner. The more kids they had, the more income; but this only led to overcrowding in a lot of homes. It didn’t take Zonia long to realize that something was not right at the places where she lived while being away from home. It was crucial that the boarding fees got paid on time every month. That became a problem for many students, but not for Zonia. As she recalled, “I know my mother, she worked night and day. When the tourist season was down she would sow, she would plant, she would do everything to make sure that the boarding fee got to my “hostess” -- that’s what we usually called them.” Paying the fees on time was always a concern, but eating a proper meal was even more concerning. Zonia was no stranger to always eating ackee and fried pork rind to steamed callaloo and rice. If eating the right kind of food wasn’t enough worry for Zonia, the first time she discovered “chink”, also known as bed bugs, was something she would never forget, and something that made her cringe. It was time for her to move.

Zonia quickly moved to another home for a better life, only to be greeted with lots of opposition from her new foster mother. As she recalled, “We couldn’t study in the same room with her. We couldn’t use her electricity. We couldn’t turn on the light. So I said, Ok, I would have to rush home, get my homework done while it was still daylight because we couldn’t use her light, even if her daughter was sitting in the living room studying.” This could have easily frustrated Zonia and she could have just given up, but instead she found a solution to her problems: a “HOME SWEET HOME” lamp! Yes, the one that uses the kerosene oil and has the big glass lamp shade. Even though trying to study using such dim lighting would hurt her eyes, she was determined to study and do well in school. But her joy at finding solace in her HOME SWEET HOME lamp was short-lived when her foster mother complained that this kind of lamp would burn down her house. Zonia had to seek refuge and she expressed, “This accommodation wasn’t right. That was a challenge. It was a tough time, so at the end of that year, I never went back to that house.” She had to keep on moving and if what she had already endured wasn’t challenging enough, getting to and from school presented its own set of headaches; its own set of challenges



Transportation was one of the hardest things for Zonia. She would often take the bus, train or diesel to get to Santa Cruz after the holidays or returning from a long weekend. This meant she had to wake up extremely early in the morning so that she could catch the Morning Star Bus, but if she missed the bus later in the day, she was at the mercy of anyone who was willing to give her a ride into Montego Bay. For the journey from a visit home in St. James to get back in time for school Monday, she could either endure the 15-stop lumbering ride on the train, which was like a commuter train, or take “the diesel” which was like a cargo train that transported all the market vendors. On the weekends, there was hardly any public transportation. It brought a bit of fear and adventure and created a sense of independence and punctuality. It was also an experience that brought her to love nature.

If there was one thing she reminded herself of when faced with a challenge, it was her own self -proclamation: “I am not going back home and not have something to move on in terms of education.” As a technical institution, Zonia was grateful for the fact that it groomed her into becoming and being ready for the world. She was also elated because of the connections that were formed while attending STETHS. As she expressed, “One of the things that I have gained are my life-long friends. They weren’t necessarily from my batch, but these were folks that from the day we met, they’ve been in my life. It’s one of the things I would not swap going to STETHS for.” She credits her success to the nurturing spirit, practical experience, and caring teachers, guidance counselor, and principal from STETHS.

**“Life becomes
more
meaningful by
hopes realized.”**

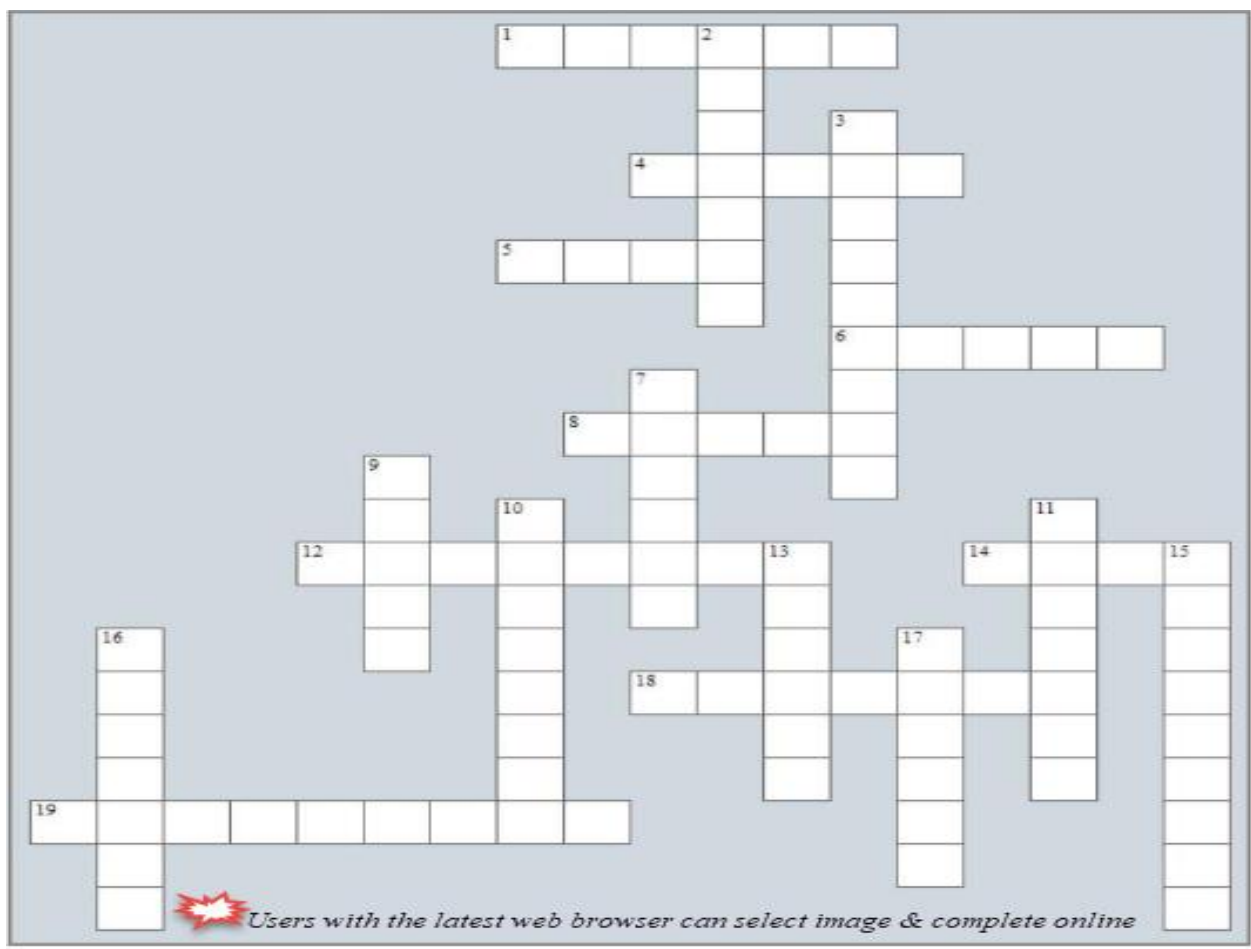
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Life becomes more meaningful by hopes realized.” As Zonia further elaborated, “I remember this quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson, which means if you have hope, if you have a plan, an objective; once you attain that goal, once you reach that goal, whatever you had hoped for, once you have obtained it, it propels you to go beyond and to build more hope for better plans.” Zonia graduated as Valedictorian from STETHS in 1982, with a Diploma Certificate in the Sciences, worked for two years at a local newspaper called The Western Mirror, and in 1984, applied to The University School of Nursing in Jamaica. She has excelled in the field of nursing and currently works in the health insurance industry. She currently resides in Long Island, New York, with her husband, son, and 2 step-sons. She’s an avid gardener, loves dancing, loves to read books and knows how to budget and manage her money. She loves to mentor, and has been an active member of the STETHS Alumni Association for years.

The experiences at STETHS helped Zonia Watkins to build resilience and determination, to fight, never give up, and never let others underestimate her abilities or talents. Her feisty and blunt personality allowed others to never stereotype this petite girl from Paisley. After all, that little girl has blossomed into a powerful force to be reckoned with.



BRAIN TEASER ... KNOW YOUR STETHS TRIVIA!



****Answers will be in the next publication.**

By: Wesley Wright

Crossword Puzzle Clues Below:

Across

1. STETHS alumnus recording artist who topped Billboard 100 in 1994
4. Mr. E. G. _____ was first Principal of STETHS
5. STETHS has won the DaCosta Cup _____ times
6. Nickname of Principal who took over the reins at STETHS in 1987
8. A khaki social is a _____
12. Last name of dub poet who graduated from STETHS in 1992
14. Nickname of STETHS Principal when the first DaCosta Cup was won
18. Longtime STETHS Groundsman
19. Last name of Minister of Education when STETHS was opened

Down

2. What month was STETHS officially opened?
3. Last name of the first student to take A levels at STETHS
7. The land on which STETHS was built was donated by the _____ Bauxite Company
9. A favorite tuck shop lady
10. The county where STETHS is located?
11. Last name the JFF President who went to STETHS
13. STETHS has won the Headley Cup _____ times
15. Name of the Reggae band formed at STETHS in the 1970s
16. The soccer, track & field and cricket facility is called the STETHS Sports _____



IMPLANT SPECIALIST/ FAMILY DENTIST

DR. DWIGHT WILLIAMS DDS MPH

BOARD CERTIFIED

MAXIOFACIAL SURGEON

"Changing smiles for life!"

3370 Baychester Avenue

BRONX, NY 10475

718-671-2826

Free implant with advertisement

