

# News Release

For immediate publication



## Manzanilla's Vertical Solar Greenhouse wins top award in RBC's Young Leaders Program

**PORT OF SPAIN, September 19, 2024** — Manzanilla Secondary School has emerged victorious in the prestigious RBC Young Leaders 2024 competition. The six-member team, known as the Agri-preneurs, captivated the judges with their innovative project proposal inspired by a comment from Prime Minister Keith Rowley about the importance of school-based gardens as vital for building food security.

The Agri-preneurs proposed the construction of a vertical solar greenhouse using eco-friendly materials and a rainwater harvesting system to reduce energy consumption. Their compelling pitch, which included a model of the proposed garden, to a panel of judges from RBC and the Inter-American Development Bank earned them the top prize of \$100,000 to bring their project to life. The theme for this year's competition was "Conserve, Produce, Enhance".

While the Young Leaders program had a four-year hiatus, this year saw 11 schools participating in a revamped competition during the July August holidays designed to enhance financial literacy; teach world-of-work proficiencies – project management and presentation skills; and inspire and encourage sustainability practices. Students were challenged to develop a project for implementation in their school or local community that promotes environmental and/or social benefits that align with the project theme.

Naparima Girls' High School, which also pitched a rainwater harvesting system, but one built off the topography of the school environment with the aim of alleviating flooding and producing garden crops, secured second place, receiving \$50,000, while St. Stephen's College took third place with a prize of \$25,000. They pitched the idea of using aquaponics combined with plastic sequestration to support food security and plastic reduction. The judges were thoroughly impressed by the creativity, innovation, and commitment to sustainability demonstrated by the Form IV students. They appreciated the unique approaches to the theme, the students' depth of understanding and the willingness to implement meaningful change in their communities.

Speaking on behalf of RBC, Treasurer Nichola Guy-Alexander lauded the young leaders for their efforts and reiterated they were all winners in some way especially as they brought to life the essence of the Young Leaders Program.

"RBC believes greatness can be unleashed when opportunity is fuelled by youthful enthusiasm, and what better avenue than our nation's schools," said Guy-Alexander. "Young Leaders is founded on the idea of driving real impact in communities and helping prepare youth to lead a stronger Caribbean. Over the years, the program has evolved in form – from essay writing and debates to community development projects, service learning and this year, a pitch competition – but it has not changed in function: helping become civic-minded and change makers in their local communities and the Caribbean.

Four special prizes were awarded as follows:

- Best Team Written Proposal - St. Stephen's College
- Best Team Oral Presentation - Naparima Girls' High School
- Most Innovative Proposal – Roxborough Secondary School, Tobago
- Best Individual Presenter – Maikhailanne Dyer of Naparima Girls' High School who received an iPad for her accomplishment.

Host of the event, RBC Royal Bank Managing Director, Marc Jardine expressed gratitude to the Inter-American Development Bank, represented by Carina Cockburn, Country Representative, and the Ministry of Education for their support. Minister of Education, the Honourable Nyan Gadsby-Dolly was in attendance. He also acknowledged the teachers who were instrumental in managing the students and shared special thanks to the team of RBC employees who served as sponsors assigned to the school to provide support and guidance.

In addition to providing a laptop to each school for the duration of the program and stipends to the participating students and teachers, the Bank also hosted workshops in financial literacy, project management, presentation skills and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and environmental awareness. Participants also benefitted from a special session on sustainability hosted by the IDB. Speaking about the future of the program, Jardine said the event was “a collective testament to the importance of environmental sustainability and the impact that young leaders can have. It is a vision we must not lose sight of and a commitment to keep the Young Leaders program going.”

## PHOTO CAPTIONS



Nichola Guy-Alexander, Treasurer, Caribbean Banking, delivers the feature address at the Awards ceremony of the 2024 RBC Young Leaders program at the Hilton Trinidad on September 17.



Managing Director, RBC Royal Bank Trinidad and Tobago, Marc Jardine and Nichola Guy-Alexander, Treasurer, Caribbean Banking, flank Maikhailanne Dyer of Naparima Girls' High School at the 2024 RBC Young Leaders program at the Hilton Trinidad on September 17. Maikhailanne won the award for the Best Presenter and earned herself a trophy and iPad.



Third place winners in this year's RBC Young Leaders program was St. Stephen's College, who walked away with \$25,000 to support the execution of an eco-aquatic and aquaponic project in keeping with the theme Conserve, Produce, Enhance.



The Rain Guardians of Naparima Girls' High School show off their digital deposit of \$50,000 in recognition of earning second place in the 2024 RBC Young Leaders program.



All smiles: The winners of the 2024 RBC Young Leaders program from Manzanilla Secondary School, accept their trophy and top prize of \$100,000. Pictured from left to right are: Carina Cockburn, Country Representative, Inter-American Development Bank; Ginger Lutchman-Baijoram, Teacher; Temple Gordon, Student; Marc Jardine, Managing Director, RBC Royal Bank Trinidad and Tobago; Daniel Governor, Student; Chenelle Lamotte, Student; Adrielle Lucus, Student; Nichola Guy-Alexander, Treasurer, Caribbean Banking; Ismael Hosein, Student; Cindy Mungroo, Student; Georgia Fleming, Teacher; Antionette Campbell-Roberts, Teacher.

### **About RBC in the Caribbean**

With 115 years of dedicated service to the region, RBC has a presence in 10 countries and territories, with 38 branches and over 2,800+ employees serving more than half a million clients. As one of the Caribbean's leading diversified financial services companies, RBC provides personal and commercial banking, wealth management, corporate and investment banking, insurance and trust and asset management services to a wide range of clients, including individuals, small businesses, general commercial entities, regional and multi-national corporations and governments. For more information, please visit [rbc.com/caribbean](http://rbc.com/caribbean).

### **About RBC**

Royal Bank of Canada is a global financial institution with a purpose-driven, principles-led approach to delivering leading performance. Our success comes from the 98,000+ employees who leverage their imaginations and insights to bring our vision, values and strategy to life so we can help our clients thrive and communities prosper. As Canada's biggest bank and one of the largest in the world, based on market capitalization, we have a diversified business model with a focus on innovation and providing exceptional experiences to our more than 18 million clients in Canada, the U.S. and 27 other countries. Learn more at [rbc.com](http://rbc.com).

We are proud to support a broad range of community initiatives through donations, community investments and employee volunteer activities. See how at [rbc.com/community-social-impact](http://rbc.com/community-social-impact).

### **For more information, please contact:**

Andrew Knowles | RBC Communications

E: [andrew.knowles@rbc.com](mailto:andrew.knowles@rbc.com) | T: +1 (242) 826-1803