



# THE NATIONAL TRUST OF TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

## MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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### OPEN MIND AWARD

Nomination for Open Minds Award: Open Minds shall have demonstrated success in education and advocacy involving volunteers and community members to ensure the continued relevance of the organisations work.

#### General Application information

National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago

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Officer: Joseph Bertrand: Education and Outreach Officer

Programme: **Heritage Keepers**

#### Highlights:

- 1) The Heritage Keeper at its core it “opens the minds” of the nation’s youth (18yrs and younger) through education about historic sites. In T&T the youth are often given the message that to be successful one must be a doctor or a lawyer or that interest in heritage is for the senior citizens. It opens up opportunities for engaging with the heritage sector through careers or volunteer work.
- 2) The Heritage Keepers programme creates longevity and relevance of the work of the National Trust of T&T through youth engagement. Trinidad and Tobago’s Heritage is multi-cultural and varied, underfunded, and the information and resources are not widely accessible. The Heritage Keepers programme invigorates new interest among a previously untapped age bracket which is slowly changing the national rhetoric.
- 3) The National Trust of T&T has successfully created a movement of youth advocacy and empowerment through the Heritage Keepers Programme through the creation of Heritage Clubs in schools across the country.

## Summary:

Established by Act No.11 of 1991 the National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago is the national agency responsible for safeguarding the tangible heritage of Trinidad and Tobago. The National Trust is part of the Ministry of Planning and Development of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The Trust is a membership based organisation responsible for the preservation of our natural and built heritage of Trinidad and Tobago. It engages the public and members by creating access to heritage sites through tours, publications and education and outreach programmes, as well as engaging volunteers. The National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago, has created a vibrant youth programme entitled “Heritage Keepers”. This project is designed and named to bring a sense of ownership and responsibility to the youth as a “Keeper” of Heritage. The project is being done in phases with the first phase completed in June 2018 which introduces the concepts of heritage and to local and national heritage sites using the Details Exhibition. Phase two, launched in September 2018, builds on the introduction through creative and educational contact through the establishment of heritage clubs. Phase three is to generate interest in the heritage sector and thus produce heritage professionals.

### Phase 1 – Introduction

- Introduction to the National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago
- What is a Heritage Keeper.
- Highlighting local heritage sites (sites in and around the community that the youth can help preserve)
- Activity- Heritage Hunt (focused on learning about heritage sites using the Details Exhibition)
- Creative presentation on their findings
- Call to action – How can you get involved?

### Phase 2 – Education

- Establishment of Heritage Clubs in schools across Trinidad and Tobago (use of social media to promote the Heritage Clubs). The role of the Clubs are to:
  - 1) Plan site visits to heritage sites
  - 2) Volunteer with the National Trust of T&T
  - 3) Plan school lectures relevant to heritage places
  - 4) Storytelling
  - 5) Heritage Photography
  - 6) Various Workshops on restoration, architecture and conservation.

### Phase 3 – Heritage for the Future

- Public Exhibitions of the work of the youth in Heritage
- Internships and volunteers in various Heritage based organisations/careers.

The Heritage Keeper project has both a theoretical and practical approach that has stimulated the minds of the nation’s youth who have already become involved in the project. The educational aspect of this

project is quite dynamic as younger children are approached differently to that of the older children. The tours and events that are part of the Heritage Keeper project seek to broaden the minds of the participants. The launch of this project occurred in June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in Charlotteville Tobago. The activity called "Heritage Hunt" was a part of the launch where the participants were invited to "hunt" for heritage architecture in a volunteer photography exhibition entitled *Details: A Closer Look at the Built and Natural Heritage of Trinidad and Tobago*\*\* which engages the youth in the visual, the written descriptions and the purpose of the architectural detail. Students were also asked to draw their versions of heritage architecture. The Charlotteville Methodist Primary and the Charlottville S.D.A. Primary Schools in Tobago were the first schools to be introduced to the National Trust's *Heritage Keepers* project.

The project is a perfect fit for consideration as the youth who are already involved have been exposed to tours and events and have influenced the teachers in their schools to establish a more permanent relationship with the National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago. The Heritage Keeper project is designed in such a way that the youth interface with the Heritage sites on a personal level. There have been tours, lectures and events tailored to the needs of the youth. For example, a tour entitled "Old and New Capital" took the participants around the First Capital of Trinidad, St Joseph, into the current capital which is Port of Spain. This has been the catalyst for the phase two of the project in establishing a Heritage Club at the St. Joseph R.C. School.

Heritage preservation is very important and should not only come to the fore when a site is in danger of demolition. Having the nation's youth involved in the Heritage sector would continue the conversation of heritage and its preservation and sites for generations to come. Informing, educating and advocating is what the Heritage Keepers project is focused on while giving the individual that sense of responsibility for their heritage and the site itself.

#### **Category Criteria:**

When analysing the various criteria for this award the Heritage Keeper project has shown success in the field of education with specific emphasis on the youth (18yrs and under). Also, the skills and talents of the staff and volunteers are employed to assist in the education and advocacy processes of the Heritage Keeper project. This project, even in its infancy has yielded success in keeping the work of the National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago relevant in this age where content is available at the click of a button.

The work of the National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago encompasses the preservation and conservation of our natural and built heritage. This occurs on several levels as our Heritage Preservation and Research Officers work assiduously on the listing of the heritage sites and conduct various site visits to ensure the proper upkeep on the sites. The Heritage Keeper project though it falls under outreach and education, employ the expertise of the staff attached to Heritage Preservation and Research in various ways to ensure the proper techniques are passed on the participants in the project.

The educational element of the Heritage Keeper project is the major focus of the project. Education about historic architecture, heritage sites etc is delivered in a fun and creative way to capture the youth. Working closely with the requirements of the national education syllabus, topics such as History, Social Studies and National Pride are used as points of entry for the youth to get involved and become a heritage keeper. Instead of learning about the Magnificent Seven in the class room, a Heritage Keeper has the opportunity

to visit each and have a tour of some of these heritage sites. Projects from the Resource Guide (Resource Guide explained in appendix) are used to engage the students. The glossary of 28 historic architectural terms in the Details Resource Guide is used alongside the Details Exhibition to expose the students to the terms and what they look like on a historic property.

Persons who have written extensively on the History of Trinidad and Tobago and whose work is used as part of the required reading are invited to lecture and take questions under the National Trust Youth Program. Students, having been exposed to lectures, tours and events have signed up as members of the National Trust of T&T and have advocated for Heritage Clubs in their schools.

The aim is to establish vibrant heritage clubs who can safeguard and protect the local heritage and become passionate about the preservation of the Heritage of Trinidad and Tobago in at least 20 schools in the country. On the island of Trinidad several schools and youth groups have been exposed to the Heritage Keepers and the numbers continue to grow as we are getting more requests for heritage clubs in schools.

Media Link: <http://ctvtt.com/ctv/index.php/c-news/news/item/56498-national-trust-s-heritage-keepers-project-in-tobago>

### **\*\*Appendix:**

\*The *Details: A Closer Look at the Built and Natural Heritage of Trinidad and Tobago* Exhibition is the culmination of a photography volunteer project where over three thousand images depicting the built and natural heritage of Trinidad and Tobago were submitted to the National Trust from volunteer photographers in 2015. From these, a select amount were chosen for the exhibition ensuring that each photographer was highlighted as well as displaying a wide geographical range of places.

The exhibition has travelled around Trinidad from 2017 to 2018, and was on display at the Sangre Grande, Rio Claro, Arima, Point Fortin, Couva and Port-of-Spain Public Libraries and has made its way around Tobago starting with the Scarborough Library Facility, the Roxborough and then Charlotteville Branch Libraries and the Tobago Museum in 2018.

The exhibition is divided into four categories:

1. Heritage Lost
2. Places of Worship
3. Private Residences
4. Public Spaces

The National Trust has also created a Details Resource Guide from the Details Exhibition that offers student activities and projects for learning about heritage sites and historic architecture. This Resource Guide is on sale for forty dollars at the Trust office and also available through the post. It contains a glossary of 28 historic architectural terms as well as lesson plan suggestions that are in keeping with the national curriculum for Visual Arts, Social Studies, History and Language Arts which can be altered for both Primary and Secondary School students.

The National Trust's mandate is to preserve, protect and provide information and access to the country's built and natural heritage. All 3,333 photos from the volunteers and those used in this exhibition are on the National Trust website [www.nationaltrust.tt](http://www.nationaltrust.tt).

Link to Exhibition: <http://nationaltrust.tt/details-a-closer-look-at-the-built-and-natural-heritage-of-trinidad-and-tobago/>

## Photographs



Education and Outreach Officer, Joseph Bertrand educating the students about heritage terms in Charlotteville, Tobago.



Heritage Preservation and Research Officer, Kara Roopsingh teaching students about historic architecture using the Details Exhibition in Charlotteville, Tobago.





Students showing their drawings of heritage sites in Tobago with the Details Exhibition in the background.



Education and Outreach Officer, Joseph Bertrand speaking to the students about heritage terms in Charlotteville, Tobago.





The new Heritage Keepers and staff of the National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago.



Students viewing the Details Exhibition at Heritage Keepers Launch.