

**DETERMINED BAHAMAS STUDENTS GIVEN FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM REGIONAL BANK CIBC
FIRSTCARIBBEAN**

Bridgetown, September 22, 2019 -- Despite many of them losing their homes and all their possessions, about twenty final year students from the hurricane-ravaged Abacos Islands and Grand Bahama are determined to complete their studies.

Mere days after Hurricane Dorian flattened their homes and entire communities they traveled back to Barbados to continue their studies at The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill campus, some with no more than a few personal items.

The University has embarked on an outreach programme designed to help students from the hurricane-ravaged communities with financing for basic necessities, purchase of text books and psychological counselling while on a broader scale, it will be allowing a deferral of tuition.

CIBC FirstCaribbean through its charitable arm, FirstCaribbean ComTrust Foundation recently made a presentation of USD\$10 000 to the campus to assist the students.

Trustee of the Foundation and Managing Director, Retail and Business Banking at CIBC FirstCaribbean Mark St. Hill in making the presentation to the President of the Bahamas Student Association, Tamika Roberts and the campus' Business Development Officer, Sonia Johnson, said the bank was happy to assist the students to help them complete their studies.

"Investing in these students is investing in their future and we are hopeful that this support will give them the encouragement to press on even though it will be hard," Mr. St. Hill said.

Ms. Roberts thanked the bank for the support "on behalf of all Bahamian students and those who are directly affected. It is because of your company that we will be able to finish our studies." She said most of the affected students were "A-students" from the faculties of law and medicine, including the top performing male and female students

She said the students, some of whom still have relatives missing, all "took that leap of faith to still come back not knowing what we would be up against". She was full of praise for the University for what it is doing to drum up support for the students.

Ms. Johnson also thanked the bank for being the first to respond to appeals for assistance for the students. "We are so grateful that you have been the first to respond. We have been receiving support in cash and kind as we try to give the students support for the rest of the year.

She said there are about 77 Bahamian students registered at Cave Hill and of that number, 17 to 20 were directly impacted by the hurricane. Of those affected, the majority are from Freeport, Grand Bahama and two from the Abacos Islands.

CAPTION: CIBC FirstCaribbean's Managing Director, Retail and Business Banking Mark St. Hill (right) making the presentation to Tamika Roberts, President of the Bahamas Students Association (centre) while Business Development Officer at UWI Cave Hill, Sonia Johnson shares in the moment.



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