



PRESS RELEASE FEBRUARY 3, 2016

Bermuda Sloop Foundation wins worldwide recognition, for the second time!

During the closing session of the Sail Training International Conference in Quebec, which concluded last Saturday, the Bermuda Sloop Foundation received the 'Vessel Operator of the Year- Small Vessels' award for 2015. The Foundation has received the award once before, in 2007.

The Citation reads as follows:

Vessel Operator of the Year (Small Vessels)

Awarded to a sail training organisation, operating smaller vessels, that demonstrates excellence in 'innovation' and 'best practice' in sail training for young people.

The Vessel Operator of the Year award goes to a Foundation that operates a purpose built and most impressive schooner that was launched in 2006. Their core programme provides 5-days voyages during the school year taking approximately 18 students between 11 and 14 years old and 2 teachers from the same school

They use Expeditionary Learning Design Principles, activities are connected to their school curriculum with inquiry based learning strategies. In addition to activities that connect to the middle school curriculum, with an ultimate goal of helping them to stay in school. Trainees learn the value of being healthy and the power of taking responsibility for oneself. Socially, they come to understand real teamwork, collaboration and become more self-aware.

At the end of a school year, follow-up, more challenging expeditionary voyages are offered.

Since 2006, there have been approximately 4000 student trainees and many have become School Voyage Watch leaders, others have boarded other Tall Ships, or pursued maritime careers, or engaged in post-secondary education and become professionals in other fields.

Post-voyage involvement with their young people also includes mentoring and identification of career paths. For example they recommend students for Marine Internship scholarship programmes at the Institute for Ocean Sciences.

They are rightly proud of what has been accomplished since 2006. The vessel and what it represents is now woven into the fabric of our community and is considered a National Icon. SPIRIT OF BERMUDA

Captain Stuart Birnie notes that the award is the best that an operation engaged in training under sail can receive worldwide. The Bermuda Sloop Foundation has now received it twice, which is rare.

Paul Bishop, Sail Training International's Chief of Race Directorate and one of those most responsible for the recent conference, had this to say 'The nomination was very strong and compelling, and the award well deserved- it's an excellent programme.'

The Foundation has thanked it's staff both on board 'Spirit of Bermuda' and ashore, the Board of Directors and working committee members, for their efforts.

Diana Martin, CEO of the Bermuda Sloop Foundation said it was 'Such an honour to be recognised by your peers.....' Ms. Martin also noted '... BSF's programme is offered at no charge to public school students, unlike most sail training programmes in other countries, and serves every student in the year group. BSF is able to do so through vigilant fund raising, grant applications, corporate and private charters, and special Foundation events (Pirates of Bermuda, raffles). We are very fortunate indeed to have such a supportive local community....'

Lauren Yelle-Simmons, Education Manager of the Foundation said 'This award is particularly appropriate in BSF's 10th Anniversary year. It is a testimonial to the visionary founders, to the many individuals who worked relentlessly over the last 10 years, and to those continuing the efforts to ensure the fulfillment of BSF's mission.'

Bermuda Sloop Foundation would like to acknowledge the efforts and donations of all those who have supported the Foundation and continue to do so, without which the achievement of the awards would not have been possible.

David Goodwin, Board Chairman, points out "...this is the 10th Anniversary Year for Spirit of Bermuda. Help us to celebrate it. Please visit our website: www.bermudasloopfoundation.org and our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/bermudasloopfoundation/?ref=bookmarks> where you can follow the school voyages, read about what the students themselves say during voyage weeks and keep up with special events and celebrations. Membership in Bermuda Sloop Foundation is available: call 737-5667 or email info@bermudasloop.org to join and be a part of "Changing Lives One Voyage at a Time, Over Time".

Be proud Bermuda, be very proud. In the Bermuda Sloop Foundation and 'Spirit of Bermuda' you have an operation which is of great benefit to Bermuda's youth and which continues to gain worldwide recognition.