

TEEN TIMES

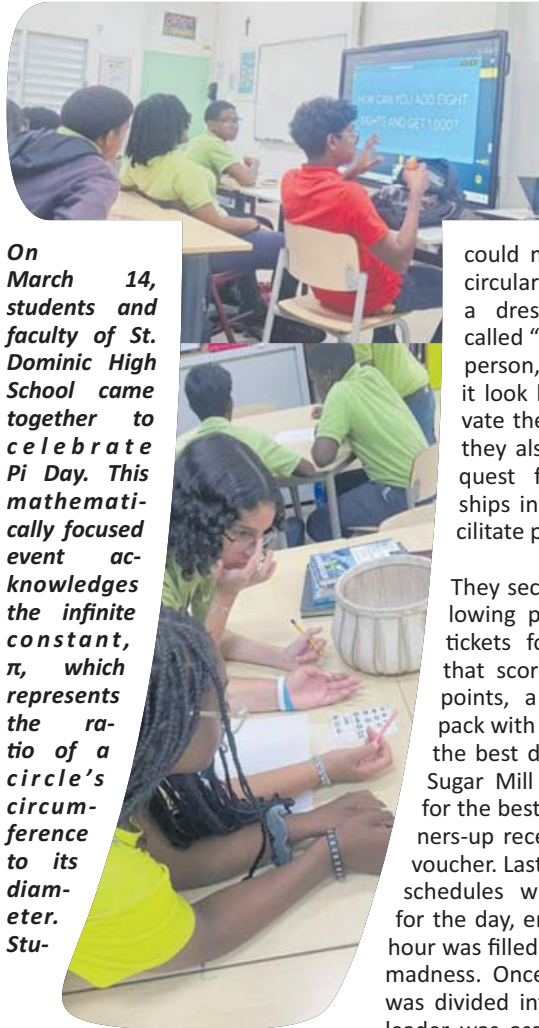
FOR THE YOUTH, BY THE YOUTH!

APRIL 2024

Under SXM with Teen Times



BY SUHANI NATHUMAL AND LEHAR MARATA



On March 14, students and faculty of St. Dominic High School came together to celebrate Pi Day. This mathematically focused event acknowledges the infinite constant, π , which represents the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter. Students

could make the best circular dish" and a dress-up contest called "If math was a person, what would it look like?" To elevate the experience, they also went on a quest for sponsorships in order to facilitate prizes.

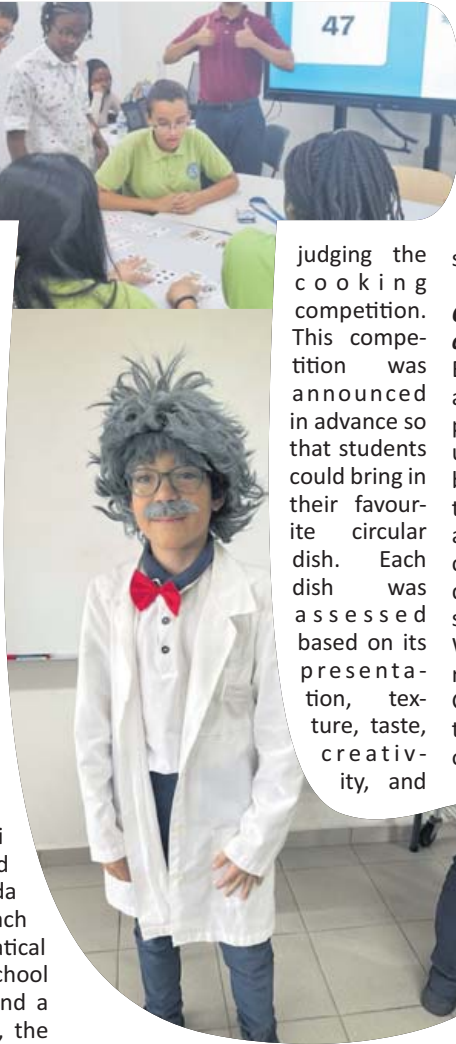
They secured the following prizes: Movie tickets for the team that scored the most points, a Levi's backpack with stationery for the best dressed, and a Sugar Mill Cafe voucher for the best dish. The runners-up received a Zhaveri voucher. Last, they prepared schedules with the agenda for the day, ensuring that each hour was filled with mathematical madness. Once the entire school was divided into 15 teams and a leader was assigned to each, the preparation for Pi Day was finally over.

The Big Day

On March 14, St. Dominic High School's auditorium was filled with excitement as all the students gathered in their teams for the opening assembly. During the assembly, the group of initiators gave their opening remarks, and the team leaders got their schedules and attendance sheets. Thereafter, each team was directed to their rooms, marking the start of an exciting day.

Throughout the day, the teams rotated from room to room after spending 17 minutes in each room. Students enjoyed the activities

judging the cooking competition. This competition was announced in advance so that students could bring in their favourite circular dish. Each dish was assessed based on its presentation, texture, taste, creativity, and



this competition, the initiators had some trouble since everyone's outfit was so creative and unique. However, there was a unanimous agreement that the winner was Jaden Rumnit, who dressed up as Albert Einstein. Coincidentally, Pi Day also falls on the same day as Albert Einstein's birthday!

Our experience as team leaders and judges:

Being a team leader for Pi Day was an extremely gratifying and empowering experience for both of us. Leading our team of 15 members each and encouraging them to do their best during challenging activities provided a sense of accomplishment. Despite a few students skipping school, our teams still made the most of the event. We shared lots of laughter in the rooms, especially in St. Dominic's Got Talent, where we got to see the creative and artistic abilities of our members through their dancing, singing, and acting.

We communicated with each other to come to a unified decision when we found ourselves faced with clashing opinions. Transitioning from a team leader to a judge added more exhilaration to the day. We tried various delicious dishes which were a task to rank, considering they were all mouth-watering. Overall, being both a team leader and a judge for Pi Day was an amazing experience, and we would definitely do it again! As each team completed their last activity, the celebration of Pi Day left a positive impact on everyone who participated. Students were able to establish friendships with team members, flaunt their skills, and express themselves through baking or creative outfits.

"Pi Day allowed me to engage the students with mathematical concepts and gain a new viewpoint of mathematics. I was happy to see that my hard work paid off from the enthusiastic responses of the students who participated in Pi Day," said Natasha Vaswani, one of the initiators. This experience provided a way for students to appreciate the importance of math in our daily lives. Through various activities, students were encouraged to approach math with eagerness and courage, rather than fear. The celebration demonstrated the school's dedication to stimulating a passion for learning in its students.

imposed themselves in a day full of enjoyable activities, bringing the spirit of mathematical appreciation to life.

What is Pi Day?

Pi Day is a mathematical celebration annually observed on March 14, as the date corresponds with the first 3 digits of pi. This celebration was founded in 1988 by the famous physicist Larry Shaw. He made the connection between the date and the first three digits of Pi at an exploratorium retreat in Monterey. Since then, Pi Day has grown in popularity, and we now honour mathematics' real-life applications around the world on March 14.

Behind the scenes – preparing for Pi Day

The preparations for Pi Day began weeks in advance by a group of seven first-year IB students. They made a simple pitch to the teachers to transform a typical school-day into a celebration within the mathematical realm. Once approved, the excitement grew stronger, and the workload doubled as the students worked tirelessly to complete numerous tasks within a short period of time. They were challenged to come up with 15 innovative games that would take place in the different classrooms.

Teachers and student volunteers collaborated to craft an engaging and educational experience for all participants as room coordinators, whose task was to create the game and supervise it on the day of. The initiators cleverly came up with various contests, including "who

in each room allowing them to have loads of fun in each math activity. The activities ranged from worksheets and quizzes to making Pi Art and creating dances and songs using mathematical terms. There was also an escape room as well as an area dedicated to physical activities, to display the various ways in which Math is used in real life.

During the break, which was at 10:20, a few first-year IB students also participated in



UNDER SXM – SCULPTURE SNORKELLING ADVENTURE

BY SUHANI NATHUMAL AND SAHELI KIRPALANI



Everyone is aware that St. Maarten is a jewel with crystal clear waters, vibrant culture, and rich history. The new underwater museum, located in Little Bay, has magnificently incorporated all three aspects using more than 300 intricately made reef sculptures. The sculptures depict a fascinating blend of Taino heritage, Ponum symbolism, resilience, and the lively spirit of Carnival.

The first scene reveals more than 100 sculptures that are expertly arranged to weave a tapestry of the Taino heritage. It features the musicality through drums, the art, and the beauty of this tribe that once thrived in the region. A little further, an additional 41 sculptures reveal the captivating history of the Ponum dance. The details on the sculptures convey expressions of strength, resilience and hope, portraying individuals holding their skirts and their scarfs – a symbolic representation of the powerful dance that emerged during the emancipation of the island's people.

Continuing the journey, a huge metal art piece represents the resilience of the island. The art piece is shown to have two hands holding each other, symbolizing the unification of diverse communities in the face of adversity. Both the Dutch name and the French name for the island are written below the hands. Above it is the saying, "SXM Strong", a popular hashtag that was used after the catastrophic hurricane, Irma, hit the island. This hashtag stands not only as an artistic expression, but also as a symbol of hope, resilience, and transformative power, mirroring the island's strength to reconstruct and evolve in difficult times. Surrounding the wall lie 30 sculptures of different nationalities living in unity and harmony.

The last set of statues unfolds the joyous celebration of carnival on the island. Huge speakers, people dancing with feathery wings on their backs, and local musical artists, such as King Beau Beau and King James, are all



employed to re-enact the parades. The underwater world is transformed into a dynamic dance floor as the ecstatic statues dance for their country. These four topics portrayed in the underwater exhibit deepen the narrative of St. Maarten, giving the tourist a glimpse of the history associated with the island. Additionally, it offers a visually compelling testament to the endurance and optimism rooted in the cultural heritage of our friendly island, St. Maarten.

with mere words.

After this visit, we were taken on a very thrilling boat ride through the town area before heading back to the pier at Divi. Overall, it was a very exciting and interesting experience that I will always cherish, as I had the opportunity to connect with and learn more about St. Maarten's history through its natural beauty. I would have loved to learn more about the process of creating this underwater adventure and what each statue was made to represent, but hopefully that can be further expanded on and explored with the help of a tour guide during the intriguing sculpture snorkel adventure.

Suhani's experience: Exploring the underwater museum in Sint Maarten for the first time was a captivating experience. From the moment I entered the water, I was astounded to discover an enchanted world of artistry and history. The sculptures were nothing short of breath-taking, displaying the creative talents of those who made them. The attention to detail, emotions, and effort put into each statue were

evident, even with medium visibility, creating a mesmerizing underwater gallery.

As I transitioned from one scene to another, a sense of pride surged through me, knowing that I was born and raised on this beautiful island. The museum provided a unique opportunity to visually witness the pre-Columbian history of St. Maarten through Taino sculptures, relive the struggles of slaves through the Ponum dance, reflect on the unity of the island during Hurricane Irma, and feel the excitement of carnival dancers. Each sculpture told a story, developing a connection between me and the culture of my homeland. The experience extended beyond the museum.

We were brought to Divi Bay to view a sunken helicopter, which unveiled yet another aspect of the island's beauty. The marine life surrounding the wreckage was unlike anything I had seen before. Schools of colourful fish, swimming so close to the surface, followed me wherever I went in search of food. My fear of these gorgeous creatures led to panic, but with words

of wisdom from my snorkel buddy, I managed to calm down and take in the serene surroundings. Once I had said bye to my new fish friends, we set out on a tour of town, where we were able to see the vibrant colours of beach umbrellas and the magnificent buildings, and shortly thereafter headed back to Divi.

As we bid farewell to the guide, I left with a sense of appreciation for the cultural richness that the island holds. I do wish there were more explanations about the different sculptures; however, this experience was still one for the books. Before we concluded the day, we were fortunate enough to get an opportunity to ask our guide a few questions. From that, it was revealed to us that the sculptures are made from an inert, pH neutral artificial reef compound, which fosters a suitable environment for marine life. This showcases the team's commitment to environmental sustainability and conservation.

Additionally, the sculptures were inspired by members of the local community, which enhances the cultural and historic value of the museum. It became clear that the UnderSXM team is not only a tourist attraction, but also a living testament to the unity, creativity, and resilience of the island's people. Before we parted ways, the enthusiastic response to the idea of future collaborations with local schools to provide insight and historical knowledge left us with a sense of excitement for the ongoing celebration of Sint Maarten's unique heritage.

*Underwater Pictures taken from: <https://undersxm.com/>



Experiences of Teen-Timers

Saheli's experience: This underwater snorkelling adventure was truly incredible. It was a beautiful experience to be able to have had the opportunity to explore St. Maarten's diverse, rich history with our very own underwater museum, consisting of meticulously crafted sculptures that convey a message of true resilience, strength, and a cultural renaissance. Although we couldn't see the sculptures up close, the level of detail that each sculpture was crafted with is unimaginable and truly a work of art.

The first part of this trip consisted of a snorkel swim around the area of the underwater museum, which allowed us to explore the range of diverse statues that encapsulated our island and its people. The second aspect involved another snorkel swim at a different location in Little Bay, where we had the opportunity to feed some very cute and curious fish with cheese, witness the helicopter site underwater, and experience the beautiful waters of our island. There were various fish that looked unbelievably unique and cool, such as rainbow fish and ones with a very pointy nose. Being underwater brings me a sense of true peace and tranquility that feels indescribable





As we celebrate Women's Month – a month where we acknowledge the impacts, contributions, and achievements women have made in society all around the world – I would like to highlight a specific event that is taking place here in St. Maarten by one of our very own: the 2nd annual Women in Leadership Gala Dinner hosted by Mrs. Angelique Romou.

Angelique J.G. Romou is an inspirational role model for all St. Maarteners. She has dedicated much of her time to public service and the betterment of St. Maarten. A former Member of Parliament, she is a respected advocate for change and progression in St. Maarten and a powerful force in the political arena, standing up for social issues, especially for education, youth, women, and for our dear seniors. Mrs. Romou proudly holds a bachelor's degree in English and a Master's degree in Educational Science & Technology. She is an entrepreneur, who has so many other accolades, and is the proud mother of two angels: Malachi and Mai-Angel Martis.



1. Can you give a brief explanation as to what this 'Women in Leadership Gala' is?

The Women in Leadership Gala is a fundraising event where women come together to celebrate, empower, network, and socialize with each other while helping to raise funds to empower the next generation of female leaders. Proceeds from the event will go back into the community towards women-focused initiatives. This year our event will raise money for young girls to attend an all-expense

to become all that they have ever dreamed to be. Women in attendance can expect great conversation, meaningful discussions, a four-course dinner, entertainment, and life-changing inspiration.

2. What inspired you to start this annual event?

Always willing to inspire, motivate, and empower women inspired me to start this event, especially seeing how women in leadership in St. Maarten have evolved at an impressive rate over the past decade, with women holding many top leadership positions in the community.

From female Prime Ministers to the first female Minister of Justice, female Presidents of Parliament, CEOs, CFOs and the like, women in our community are breaking moulds. So the idea of incorporating more women empowerment initiatives, to inspire and empower other women to be the best version of themselves, and to create more "rooms" where women celebrate and uplift each other was a no-brainer.

3. What does the term 'Women in Leadership' mean to you?

The term "Women in Leadership" means women who are at the helm of whatever they are in charge of. Therefore, women in leadership are women who are leading by breaking barriers in their respective areas, going against the conventional way of thinking, and paving the way for others to follow; women taking up their roles in their households, communities, businesses, board rooms, world stages, and in politics.



paid trip to a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) summer program in the US.

4. Who were your panellists for last year's event and what made you decide to choose them?

Last year's event was two-fold. There were two panels: One that dealt with women in the corporate world and one that dealt with women in politics. These panellists were chosen, simply put, because they are "bosses".

This year the focus is on the Arts. Furthermore, it is an evening filled with inspirational women, a group of motivating panellists, guest speakers, and female entertainers that will leave the attendees in awe of their esteemed rise to the top, inspired, and motivated

The corporate panel comprised Ms. Brenda Wathey, Ms. Mayling Chun, Ms. Ichel Moeslikan, Ms. Ida Zin Ka-leu and the political panel comprised St. Maarten's Minister of Justice, Ms. Anna Richardson; Anguilla's Minister of Education, Ms. Dee-Ann Kentish-Rogers; Governor of St. Eustatius, Ms. Alida Francis; and Vice President of St. Martin Nord, Ms. Bernadette Davis

5. What was the event like last year?

Empowering Excellence Women in Leadership Gala Dinner

BY RAYNELLA ROMNEY

It was uplifting, inspiring, thought-provoking and for the most part, it was a night where sisters from all walks of life got to share, interact, network, and have fun as well.

6. What were the four awards given last year that were highlights of the event?

The first award went to our Honourable Prime Minister for leading our country through the most trying times of the Pandemic.

Humanitarian awards also went to the following persons:

- Ms. Maria Chemont for her dedication as a first responder dedicated to saving the lives of many.
- Ms. Asha Stevens in appreciation for her dedication to the advancement of Education in St. Maarten
- Ms. Avril Gumbs in appreciation for her dedication to making St. Maarten a better place by always giving selflessly to the community of St. Maarten.

7. Is the event solely for women; or can men also attend this gala?

It is an all-gender event so, of course, men can attend. As a matter of fact, we want to encourage men to attend because the men who attended last year were all impressed by the power and depth of all the women, who participated, and they enjoyed celebrating them.

8. What is to be expected at this year's gala?

Our gala this year promises to be another hit. The funds raised will send two girls to an art summer intensive at Bowie State University in Washington DC. We have as our keynote speaker, Ms. Raymone K. Bain, the highly acclaimed "Keeper of the Famed" – as called by The Washington Post, Media – Management Strategist, Philanthropist, and Entrepreneur; and there will be 10 panellists. The rest is a surprise.

9. Would you say that this year's gala would be better than last year's?

I think every year will be extraordinary because St. Maarten, the Caribbean, and the world are saturated with boss ladies who will bring the house down every year.

10. Who was the keynote speaker of last year's gala?

Our keynote speaker last year was Ms. Lisa Hanna a Member of Parliament and public figure from Jamaica.

11. What is something you would like to achieve with this year's gala?

That we are actually able to raise the much-needed funds and have fewer expenses through businesses supporting and donating to the cause in order to be successful in sending the young ladies to the summer intensive at Bowie State University.

12. What are some encouraging words you can give to young women or women in general who want to be leaders but are too afraid or don't know where to start?

First and foremost, everyone has leadership qualities, but some have it naturally and others need to be guided and moulded to bring out those qualities. So, I encourage each and every girl and woman to dig deep, separate yourself from the crowd, and figure out what your superpower is.

Do not let people define who you are, or where you are supposed to be. Map out your own path, walk through it, run through it, jump through it, but go through it the way you think best suits you. Traverse your own path, and if you need help along the way, always be brave and bold to ask for help, because this world is conquered faster when you actually understand your purpose.

The "Women in Leadership Gala" was held at the Belair Community Center this past Saturday, April 13. It was a black tie affair with tickets costing US \$200 per person or \$1,500 for a table for eight persons.





THE IMPORTANCE OF CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

BY ALISAH KIRTON

Women's History Month is an annual commemoration that occurs in March in many nations globally. This event emphasizes and honours the significant achievements made by women worldwide in the fields of history, culture and society.

Women's History Month originated in Santa Rosa, California, in 1978. The Education Task Force of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women organized and carried out a commemoration on March 8. The trend disseminated nationwide, prompting neighbouring villages to commence their festivities. In 1980, a coalition of women's organizations and historians, spearheaded by the National Women's History Project, advocated for acknowledging women's history at the national level. This resulted in President Jimmy Carter issuing the inaugural Presidential Proclamation on March 8, 1980, officially commemorating National Women's History Week. Annual proclamations establishing March as Women's History Month have been issued by each president since 1995.

Key highlights of Women's History Month:

- International Women's Day, observed on March 8, commemorates the accomplishments of women in the realms of society, economy, culture, and politics.
- Harriet Tubman Day, observed on March 10, pays tribute to Harriet Tubman, a prominent African American advocate for abolition and the pursuit of freedom.
- Equal Pay Day, which takes place on a variable day, represents the wage disparity between genders and emphasizes the necessity of equal compensation for comparable work.
- Ada Lovelace Day, which occurs on a variable day as well, commemorates women's accomplishments in STEM fields. Ada Lovelace is the world's first computer programmer.
- César Chávez Day, observed on March 31, pays tribute to César

Chávez, a prominent labour leader and civil rights advocate, who played a pivotal role in establishing the United Farm Workers organization.

The annual theme chosen and published by the National Women's History Alliance for 2024 is "Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion". This theme acknowledges women's awareness of the imperative to eradicate bigotry and prejudice from personal and societal spheres.

Women's History Month is commemorated through diverse activities, encompassing educational forums, exhibitions, film screenings, community gatherings, social media initiatives, reading and literary groups, workplace festivities, and community service endeavours.

Academic events encompass a range of activities, such as lectures, panel deliberations, and workshops, whereas exhibitions serve as platforms for presenting women's artwork and artefacts. The exhibition of films and documentaries showcases women's lives and accomplishments. At the same time, community events encompass a range of activities such as marches, rallies, concerts, and cultural performances.

Hashtags, such as #WomensHistoryMonth and #HerStory, are employed in social media initiatives to enhance awareness. Reading and book clubs offer a chance to delve into the viewpoints of women, especially through literary works written by women. Workplace celebrations serve to showcase women's

accomplishments and advocate for actions that promote gender equality. Women and girls benefit in a variety of ways from community service initiatives, like mentoring programs and fundraising events.

Women globally encounter a multitude of obstacles as a result of gender disparity and prejudice. These encompass issues such as the disparity in wages between genders, gender-based violence, limitations on reproductive rights, restricted access to education, underrepresentation in positions of authority, disparities in health, the simultaneous demands of work and caregiving, and stereotypes rooted in gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, and other social aspects. To tackle these problems, it is necessary to advocate for gender parity, dismantle prejudiced structures, and enable women to achieve their maximum capabilities.

Women's History Month is an ex-

tremely important period dedicated to commemorating the significant contributions, accomplishments, and challenges women face during history. This initiative facilitates the acknowledgment and prominence of women's contributions, fosters consciousness of their substantial influence on historical, cultural, and societal developments, provides inspiration and empowerment for individuals to pursue their aspirations actively, and advocates for advancing gender equality.

By emphasizing the accomplishments of women and increasing consciousness of matters such as prejudice, sexism, and gender-based aggression, it cultivates a dedication to establishing a fairer society for everyone. Overall, Women's History Month contemplates and commemorates pivotal historical events that have shaped the lives of women today.



SHADIRA PARROTE: 'NEVER GIVE UP'

Women in business are extremely important; they bring a fresh perspective and are inclusive of everybody. During this women's history month, we hope to highlight and appreciate young female entrepreneurs in St. Maarten – one of them is Shadira Parotte.

As a fresh MAC-CSE graduate at the age of 16, she assumed she would follow a career in accounting, as this was her area of interest while in high school. But as any normal teenager, she began to question if furthering her education in accounting was what she truly wanted for the rest of her life.

Shadira Parotte, an inspirational female entrepreneur in St. Maarten, continues to strive for success. She is a 20-year-old hairstylist who has created her own business, which offers hair services to the St. Maarten public.

During the pandemic, she began to perfect the skill of braiding hair by practicing on her little sisters, her mom, and especially on herself. As time went by, with practice and consistency, she began to fall in love



with making women feel beautiful. She began to receive professional training from a fellow hairstylist, who had already built her business, and Shadira's career took off from there.

She was offered the opportunity to work in the salon where she continued to sharpen her skills as her love for beauty grew. Unfortunately, in March of 2022, the salon where she learnt the art of doing hair shut down. However, destiny had other plans for Shadira as this marked the start of an even greater success story. It forced her to take the risk of

because she was passionate about making women feel beautiful and confident no matter what. Due to her undeniable talents, she saw amazing results after working on clients' hair. Her clientele grew and soon enough she became one of the best hairstylists on the island of St. Maarten.

Shadira is determined to not only become successful, but to expand her range of talents and offer more services. Not only does she now offer hair care products, such as bonnets and claw clips, but even her very own hair product – a hair-growth oil called "Sha's main essentials". Her product has already helped numerous women in St. Maarten. In addition to her expertise in hairstyling and hair products, she now has taken up the art of doing lashes

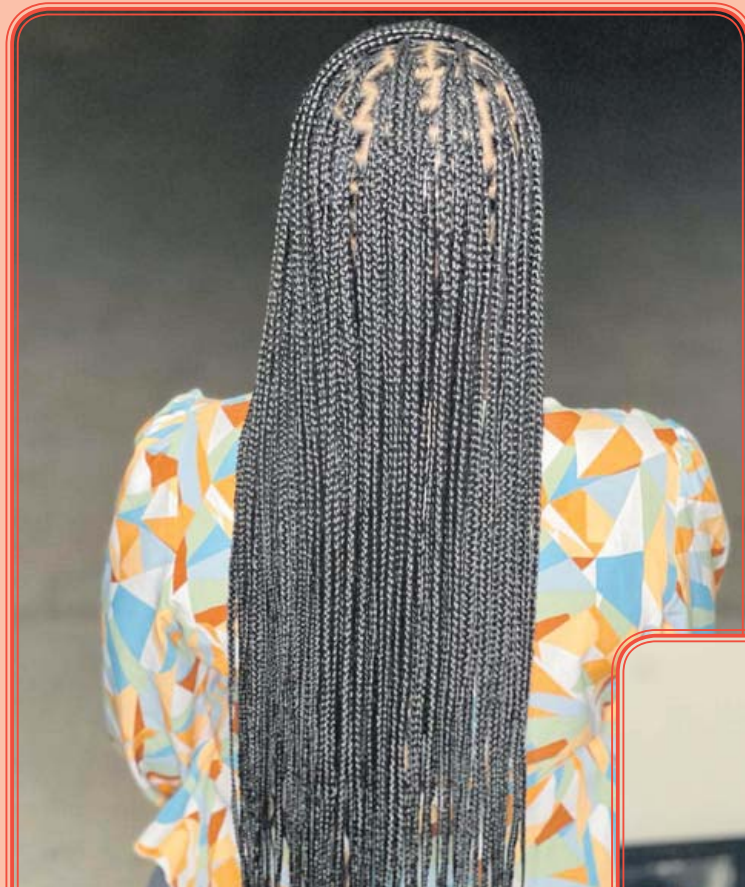
"Shadira never disappoints" is said by multiple clients. "She makes getting your hair done an experience."

"I love to make women feel confident and beautiful, whether it's through clothes, hair or accessories," says Shadira. Her passion for wanting other women to feel beautiful is what motivated her to expand beyond hair. Through her determination and hard work, she now has her very own boutique. Shadira's long-term goal is to have her very own products sold in retail stores and to open multiple hair salons around the Caribbean.

starting her own business from the bottom, with not many supplies and clients, but with her skill and the unwavering support of her family.

At the beginning of this year, Shadira began to invest in her business by using her garage at home and purchasing some appliances. Shadira didn't mind the long hours of work

Shadira's determination, faith, and consistency are a testament to never give up on your dreams and to always have faith in yourself, even when friends and family don't. Shadira continues to be an inspiring young entrepreneur to the young females on the island of St. Maarten.





Highlighting

In today's feature, we meet Leann, a dynamic young entrepreneur, who has navigated the worlds of business and beauty at just 24 remarkably. Founder of Alpha Allure, Leann shares her journey from launching a swimwear brand, to mastering the art of "lash and nail" services. With a passion for music and a vision for empowering future generations, Leann's story is a narrative of ambition, skill and success.

1. Can you please introduce yourself and share a bit about your background, education, work experience, and any hobbies or interests you are passionate about?

My name is Leann. I'm 24 years of age and grew up on the beauti-

ful island of St. Maarten. I attended the Milton Peters College and then pursued my studies in the Netherlands for three years, with a focus on bilingual marketing and communication, as well as one year of logistics. I have a deep love for music and dance, which have both been hobbies of mine growing up. I also love swimming as well.

2. Can you tell me about your journey as an entrepreneur and what inspired you to start your Alpha Allure business?

My journey has been a journey to say the least. My first business venture was my swimwear brand, Leekinis, which I started at the age of 19. My love for the beach, swimming, and swimwear made me start up that business by reselling swimwear. From a young age, I have always found ways to start little businesses by selling different things to make an income. I have always been very ambitious about hav-

ing my own things and starting my own business.

The Alpha Allure is a brand of its own, with a focus on beauty. Over the years, the beauty industry has grown tremendously and since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, a lot more people have been focusing on cosmetology. Knowledge is power, and I have always enjoyed learning new skills while I can. Because of this, I decided to take a lash course in 2023 to be able to have the skill under my belt in case I ever decided to start a "side hustle" or lash business of my own.

After taking the course, I left my fulltime job with no backup plan. Thankfully, I have a friend who is a nail tech and owns a beauty salon. She encouraged me to start my lash business at her salon and build my clientele. With no actual desire to do lashes, I procrastinated, but she was right there motivating me and setting up the lash room for me to begin my journey.

"The Alpha Allure" was originally "The Alpha Lash". While spending more time at her salon, and watching her do nails, I became interested in wanting to learn to do nails and asked her to teach me. She began with letting me practice acrylic sets on myself, and I took on my first client after two weeks. That is when I decided to start The Alpha Allure.

3. What services does your business offer?

Currently, just acrylic nail services and eyelash extensions. I am working on adding a few more services this year.

4. What challenges have you faced in building your business, and how did you overcome them?

Beauty has never really been my thing, or should I say an area that tweaked my interest to work in. I love getting dolled up and pampered; however, providing the service is the other end of the stick. It takes a lot of focus, patience and practice. At the beginning, I was very self-conscious about my work and not wanting to post it because I did not feel like my work was as good as I wanted it to be for others to see, and I was completely disregarding

the fact that I am a beginner, comparing my work to that of others with more experience.

Staying motivated while trying to build clientele has been my biggest challenge, especially because the field of work is not something I am passionate about. Nevertheless, over time, the drive is growing. Building clientele is really just a matter of continuous practice to perfect your craft, while properly marketing and promoting your work, as well as providing great service so that you have returning clients. I am slowly overcoming it the more focus I put into it.

5. How do you stay motivated and resilient in the face of setbacks?

I stay motivated and resilient by reminding myself that nothing worth having comes easy and by remembering how far I have come. Setbacks help build character, but most importantly, it is preparation for the success that comes with the "comeback". Anything you want in this life, you have to go after, regardless of the challenges. Every day won't be a great day, nor the best day, but you have to put your mind to it every day and push yourself. You've got to be your biggest cheerleader. After all, whatever you do in this life, you're doing for yourself. That should be enough motivation to fuel you to keep going.

6. How do you manage the work-life balance as a young entrepreneur?

As an entrepreneur, there are no days off; you have to be able to balance it all. Over time, it becomes easier once you start developing structure. As one person playing multiple roles, you are responsible for everything. I try to schedule my days around my work life. As I grow older, I understand the importance of balance more.

I try to balance everything out without overworking, overwhelming, and exhausting myself. I am the vessel; I won't be able to do anything without making sure I am mentally and physically good and capable. I try to manage everything by having proper time management, preparation and scheduling. Most importantly, I always remember to rest, even if it's just one day



Alpha Allure

away from it all, just to rejuvenate. "Team no sleep", but rest is important. Disconnect, unwind, re-centre, recharge.

7. What is the most important lesson you have learned so far on your entrepreneurial journey?

Nobody else is me, and that is my power. It is not a race; it is a journey. We tend to expect success "overnight" and be hard on ourselves when we don't meet certain goals and expectations, but life itself is a process of learning. As an entrepreneur, there will be many obstacles you will face, so be open to learning and growing, regardless of the speed. Your business is only as good as you want it to be and the energy you invest in it.

8. What advice would you give to other young individuals who are considering starting their own ventures?

Go after whatever you want to do in this life. Don't let people's opinions cloud your judgement or make you self-conscious about the things you want to do. Take your time; don't rush the process; but also don't be intimidated to start. Always remember that what makes your business stand out from the rest is the fact that it's yours. There is only one you in this world. Find unique ways to make your business stand out and attract the audience that's for you. Whatever venture you decide to do, let it be something you are either passionate about or have a vision for.

Having a vision is very important. We're in a time where becoming an entrepreneur can happen overnight, but with that comes a lot of responsibility, focus, time and dedication. Along the way, you might be discouraged, but keep in mind that there are highs and lows to everything. The storm never lasts forever, and you are not the only person who will experience difficulties. Nothing worth having comes easy. You'll only get as far as you want it for yourself.

9. How do you manage both your business and music career without compromising on the quality of your work in either of them?

Balance. Doing everything on my own without a team is a lot; but I prefer that, as it allows me the time to choose and switch caps on my time. I do not com-

promise. I stand on business. I know my worth, my ethics, what I'm capable of, and the value of my work. I refuse to compromise anything to suit anyone's expectations.

My self-confidence, hard work, discipline and dedication are what got me to where I am today, with everything that I have and have already accomplished. That alone is enough for me to stand firm on whatever decisions I make. Some people consider it ignorant, but I'm okay with that. I do not expect everyone to understand or to agree with me. I don't expect to be everyone's cup of tea.

10. How do your music endeavours influence your entrepreneurial ventures, and vice versa?

I stick to my brand – personal branding – I am the brand; everything else is under the umbrella. I make music about my life, and my life is what it is. My entrepreneurial ventures are a reflection of things that I love, my way, with my style. I am me before I am an artist or entrepreneur, but I am also both. I intertwine everything that I do, in any way that I can. I'm able to market my music while marketing and pushing my brands and businesses, and market my brand while marketing my music. It's a win-win situation for me. That's the benefit of me being my brand.

11. Based on your experience, what key traits or skills would someone need in order to succeed in both entrepreneurship and the arts?

Discipline, self-confidence, and resilience. Confidence is motivation of its own; discipline is what it takes to grow; resilience is how you grow. The journey itself is not easy and you will face many obstacles in both, but perseverance is key.

12. How do you envision the fu-



start) the opportunity and place to do so in order to help build and create an income for themselves. I also envision taking the business from a solo business to a "company" of its own, which is just one of the many visions I have for the brand.

If I am in the position to do so and have the resources to be able to get it done, I don't see why I wouldn't.

The world would be a better place if we took our visions from being egocentric and not only build ourselves, but also help others to do the same, or at least that is just how I feel about it.

ture of your business, and what steps are you taking to achieve your vision?

Honestly, I have different visions for my business and the brand on a whole. I eventually want to give younger girls and boys, who might have aspirations of becoming a nail or lash tech (but are not fortunate enough to do so or even



AKEEM PHILIPS: REALTOR, YOUTH ENTREPRENEUR

~ 'YOUR OPPORTUNITY AWAITS YOU' ~

BY JAHZARA PAYNE

As a youth organization, Teen Times always likes to highlight young entrepreneurs on this island. Akeem Philips is not only a realtor, who created his brand and logo, but he also works for Keller Williams on Sint Maarten. Philips is a person, who goes out of his way to create little business opportunities here and there for himself; he thrives in creating businesses that highlight and show his specialty.

About Akeem Philips:

My name is Akeem Philips. I am 24 years old and was born on the beautiful island of Sint Maarten. With a background as a former leader of a group of people, I learned from a young age to understand the

needs of others and build as a team. I founded and managed an esports organization that competed throughout the USA and a little of Europe. Prior to diving into the world of real estate, I specialized in branding, digital marketing, and digital arts. I spent seven consecutive years working on various creative projects. Entrepreneurship is all I know.

1. What is your career at the moment?

I am a young experienced real estate agent and I recently became a chauffeur in 2023.

2. What in your life made you decide to choose this career path?

My love for real estate grew from watching HGTV while growing up. As I grew older, I developed more of an entrepreneurial mindset. I enjoy creating my own schedule and working at different hours. Every wealthy person in my database has said: "You must love what you do." said.

3. How old were you when you started real estate?

I started at the age of 22 although I have been interested in this field since I was a

teenager.

4. Who or what was it that motivated you to keep going?

The main thing that keeps me going is personal development. I'm always looking for the next chapter. Once I do, I take on new challenges, master them, and then I get comfortable and slowly get bored, so I start looking for the next big project or challenge. The marathon continues no matter where we stop during the race.

5. What were the sacrifices that you had to make to get to this point in your life?

Honestly – no cliché responses on this matter – I've had to sacrifice my sanity for one. So to dive deeper into this, it's about learn-

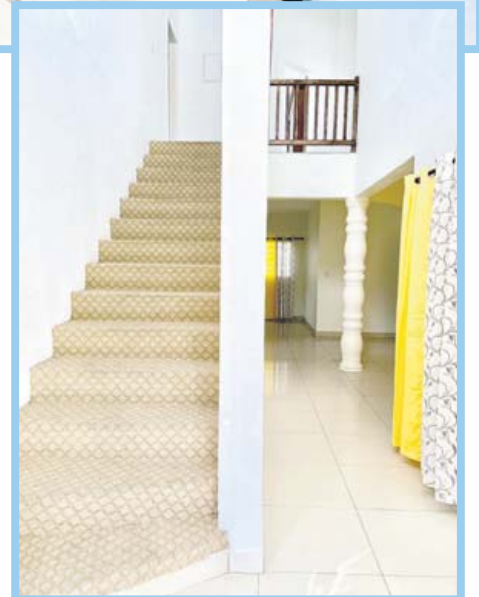
ing to get comfortable with being uncomfortable, making time for family, loved ones, professional life, and most importantly myself. You must take care of yourself first in order to keep helping others.

6. Who in particular would you thank for you being in this position?

Yes, Snoop Dogg once said on a live podcast that we, as individuals, do not thank ourselves enough for what we have gone through or have been through in life. So I want to thank myself for making it this far and for being who I am today and making the effort to become more.

7. What would you say to the ones who want to become young entrepreneurs?

My best advice is to remain a student – and I'm not talking about school, but merely life. It has the greatest lessons. Also, get rid of the washed-up facade that social media has created, that being your own boss means doing what you want and getting rich quickly. At school, you will face challenges that neither your parents nor anyone can ever prepare you for. Remain humble, be open to change, stay on the go.



TATIANA ILLIS' WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP JOURNEY TO QATAR

BY ASANTÉ PHILIPPS



If as a teen, you're part of a sporting group, such as swimming, soccer, basketball or baseball, and are feeling nervous about your competition abroad, take a look at how Tatiana Illis described her world championship competition journey and her experience being in a different environment. This article will provide you with deeper insight into how Tatiana was able to adapt to her new setting, her perspective, her process of training for the competition, and the new, yet exciting experience of her first competition.

In 2019, Tatiana Taffi Illis became the first female swimmer from the island of St. Maarten to be able to take part in the FINA swimming world championships. Tatiana is a graduate student of Nova Southeastern University, where she studied Digital media, rhetoric and

composition. Tatiana took part in swimming competitions internationally in 2016, and in 2022 was awarded the President of Parliament Award.

Tatiana's first competition got off to a rocky start as she was trying to organize how to get to her race on time with the time difference. She was aware of the competition's inquiries and strict timeline, which is why she tried to be on time. This was crucial seeing that the race would be televised, which meant that everything had to go according to plan. Thankfully, despite the rocky start, Tatiana was still able to compete.

Besides traveling to all the different countries where she competed in world championships, what also helped broaden Tatiana's perspective was that throughout these experiences, she was presented with the wonderful opportunity of speaking with so many athletes,



coaches, and presidents of various federations. This ultimately helped Tatiana succeed in her sport, allowing her to celebrate her unique journey to the top alongside various kinds of athletes, and opening Tatiana's eyes to different approaches to the sport.

The competition in Qatar was Tatiana's second time competing in the Middle East. Due to the structuring of the competition, she arrived early and was able to adapt to the time change, which is a crucial factor for a teen as the drastic difference in time zone makes it even more important to adjust, so that she was able to get enough rest to allow her to feel her best as she prepared to compete.

Luckily, Tatiana was able to adapt to the different environment. See-

ing that she was already familiar with the food that was provided, she was able to warm up, cool down, do her recovery, take cold showers, use the sauna, get massages, use the ointments, and take energy supplements, which made her feel confident about her preparedness to compete in the world championship.

During the period of the competition, Tatiana advises that one should train differently when in a different environment so that you do not tire yourself out before the competition. Tatiana says, "The main goal is to get warmed up, and not to expend too much energy," because you should focus and channel most of your energy into the race.

TIPS TO ENJOY CARNIVAL WITHOUT WORRY

BY ISABELLA CARAZO G.



Carnival has always offered vibrant and exciting opportunities to enjoy the celebration with loved ones and a place that create unforgettable memories. However, it is important to remain aware of your environment and to take safety measures so as not to ruin your experience. Here are some tips to help you and your Carnival companions to stay safe.

1. Stay with people you know.

It is important that you attend the Carnival with people you trust. Doing this keeps you safe from getting lost or encountering potentially dangerous situations that have been known to occur in big crowds.

2. Be aware of your surroundings.

You can go from having fun to being in a dangerous situation in a flash of a second, especially in big crowds. Be sure you are aware of any exits, in case you need to leave; and if something does not feel right, trust your gut, and take precautions.

3. Avoid hostility and confrontation.

If you see people start to get rowdy or look ready to start fights; do not intervene, especially if there is alcohol around. Step away or get help. It is not worth getting injured or worse over unnecessary confrontation.

4. Stay hydrated!

As with any other island in the Caribbean, St. Maarten is hot and humid; coupled with the fact that you will be walking around, dancing, and having fun, you can easily forget to stay hydrated. Make sure you stay hydrated to ensure your physical wellbeing; that way, you can stay active and enjoy Carnival to its full potential.

5. Be careful what you eat and drink.

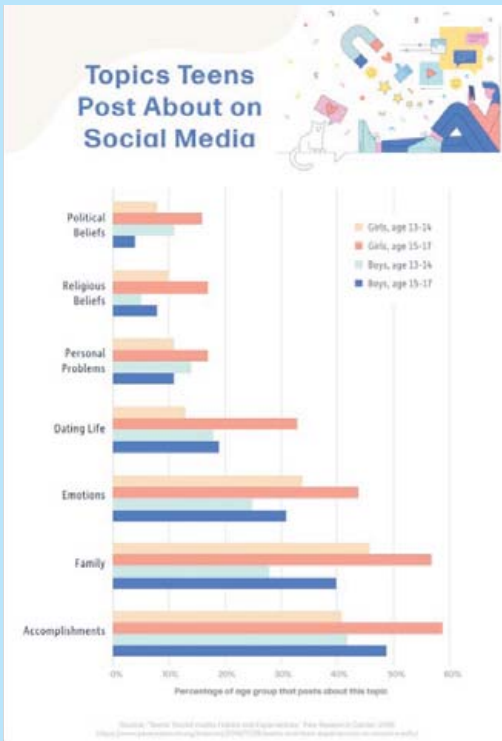
Even though there is an abundance of drinks and dishes to try during Carnival, it is important to take a second and pay attention to what you are consuming. To prevent any stomach issues, make sure the food and drinks you receive from food stands are being properly handled, and do not accept food or drinks from people you do not know.

Remember Carnival is part of our island and a great source of enjoyment, but it is important to stay safe. By following these tips, you can ensure a memorable, worry-free Carnival. Stay vigilant, trust your gut, stay with the people you know and, of course, have fun, because it is Carnival time, and we are going to have fun!



THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON TEEN-EXPERIENCES

BY MAKAYLA COOKS



Nowadays, teens quickly pull out their phones and record an event, instead of experiencing it live and making a fun, new memory or helping someone in need. Many teens feel pressured to present great aspects of their lives to show how exciting of a person they are, or how great a lifestyle they might have, just to impress someone.

Being heavily influenced by social media has its pros and cons. One of the pros is being able to relive and reminisce on previous events through photos that were taken. However, this pro fails to

As we enter a new social media oriented generation, many teens fail to fully grasp and physically experience heart-warming or heart-breaking moments due to the overuse of the virtual world.

overrule the cons as the concerns of “failing to live in the moment” continue to rise. We ask: How has this become such an impactful issue and how do we overcome it?

A meaningful article on hercampus.com about this matter states, “We are all competing with one another to represent the best version of ourselves.” This statement in particular stood out to me primarily because as a teen myself, I tend to feel the need to present and parade events or accomplishments through photos as proof of such, which I can definitely say that most teens can relate to. This often feels as if it can boost your “popularity” which may seem wonderful. However, in the end, it also diminishes your mental health, as social media can be a non-filtered and judgmental world that goes against what you portray on virtual platforms.

Despite that, the increased usage of phones to capture moments does not only affect the extent to which we live in the moment, but also how active we are in events taking place

around us. Many times, instead of helping someone in need, we tend to capture that helpless moment they experience through photos which can publicly humiliate the person in question and deteriorate one’s self-confidence, for example, through memes.

Now, how can all of this be solved? Well, momentarily straying from social media by taking breaks, setting time limits on your socials, practicing watching and living in the moment instead of using your camera, and taking human emotions into consideration are plausible ways to compact this issue. As teens, we cannot let social media get the best of us and ruin our view of the world itself. It is important to always remember what Dr. Seuss said: “Sometimes, you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory.”



A SHIFT IN MUSIC

BY JESSICA SU

"SO MANY OF THESE SONGS FEEL LIKE THEY ARE JUST ABOUT TO HIT SECOND GEAR AND THEN JUST... END."

The rise of short-form content in recent years has not only become an addiction for many within the realm of social media, but has also significantly influenced our music consumption habits. People are only interested in something for two minutes, and then they want to switch to the next thing, the next song, the next video, the next TikTok.

This shift in entertainment preferences has led to a noticeable trend for shorter songs. While this phe-

nomenon has been ongoing for years, it has been rapidly accelerated as of late. According to research by Billboard, the average song length has decreased from around four minutes in the 1990s to around three, regardless of genre. This is not unexpected, given that many recent chart-toppers clock in at under three minutes, like “As It Was” (2:48), “Old Town Road” (1:53), and “Kill Bill” (2:33).

However, this impact has not only been affecting the songs themselves, as albums are also becoming shorter, due to the song lengths contributing to the reduced album span. Take, for instance, Ariana Grande’s latest album release, *Eternal Sunshine*. Although the album consists of 13 tracks (including an intro and an interlude), seven songs (excluding the above two mentioned) were under three minutes long, resulting in a relatively short runtime of just 35 minutes and 32 seconds.



listeners to engage with entire songs since they pay artists per play, regardless of song duration. By making a song short, artists can anticipate that listeners will play it multiple times, thereby boosting streams. However, this trend is also intensified by TikTok.

As one of the most significant forces for discovering and amplifying music, both new and old, TikTok has had a substantial impact on the way music is consumed. TikTok has created new trends in the music industry. One such trend that is now the norm is that artists are uploading several different versions of tracks.

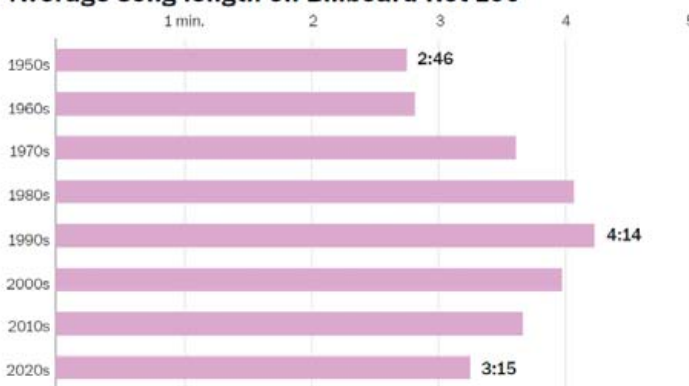
This trend was popularized by sped-up versions of songs on TikTok, with the fast-paced, high-pitched results of these remixes finding widespread viral success across TikTok and beyond, so much so that artists and labels have taken note, releasing officially sped-up versions, and more, of their songs

on streaming services in an attempt to hijack the phenomenon’s staggering popularity. It is not just new tracks either; these remixes of older songs are finding new audiences on TikTok and boosting the original tunes back into the charts.

In the grand scheme of things, whether it is a two-minute viral sensation or a sprawling masterpiece, there is a constant evolution in the way music is created, promoted, and consumed. Artists continually adapt to the demands of the digital era, leveraging platforms like TikTok and streaming services to forge new paths and redefine creative boundaries. Still, while shorter songs may cater to our increasingly fragmented attention spans, there is also a risk of sacrificing depth and complexity in favour of instant gratification.

Ultimately, the future of music lies in striking a balance between embracing innovation and preserving the integrity of artistic expression.

Average song length on Billboard Hot 100



Amidst these changes, streaming services and TikTok play crucial roles. Platforms like Spotify and Apple Music incentivize



STAY SAFE ON THE ROADS!

BY IVAN WU

After countless appointments, traffic theory sessions, and practical classes, you have finally received your driver's license. You should not build on the mindset that if you know how to operate a car, you will remain safe on the road. Although you were taught how to become a proper driver in practical classes, you will undoubtedly encounter various situations on the road where you will need quick problem-solving and analytical skills to avoid danger. With this new level of independence comes significant responsibility for your safety and that of others on the road.

Here are some essentials that you must be mindful of when you hit the road.

First, it is crucial to stay focused while driving; distractions, especially from mobile phones, are a leading cause of accidents among teens. Remember that speed does not equal coolness, especially if it endangers others. Observe speed restrictions at all times, as they are there to keep everyone safe.

Another necessary guideline is to buckle up. Seat belts significantly lower the possibility of fatal injuries for both you and your passengers. Although it can be difficult to

resist peer pressure, real friends will never put anything above safety. Additionally, it is smart to adopt a defensive driving style by foreseeing possible dangers and keeping a safe distance from other cars to avoid collisions before they occur, especially when many people on the island often forget to indicate when making a turn. This is very crucial as keeping a distance from the cars and observing how fast a car is going will give you clues that indicate what decision the driver will potentially make.

Driving at night on the island can be a massive struggle for some because certain drivers often forget to turn on their lights, have their high beams on, have lights that may not function properly, or have poor vision. An increased number of drivers may also be coming from extreme events, such as parties. Thus, it

is very important that you keep all of the above observations in mind. If you lack confidence driving at night, please do not force yourself to be in a difficult situation; it is a good idea to have a substitute method of transportation.

You are only starting out on your driving journey, and each step of the journey will be a chance to

learn and see something new. Being a good driver is not measured by the speed at which you reach your destination, but by the assurance that you and everyone else on the road arrive safely. Prioritize safety, drive carefully, and look forward to the adventure ahead with confidence.

www.harshaauto.co.in

#HarshaAutoSafety Stay Safe | Stay Healthy

TOYOTA RENAULT Hero



STEAM-POWERED MINDS: WHERE CREATIVITY MEETS SKILL

BY CHIRAG RAMCHANDANI

Just envision a classroom filled with anticipation, where learners enthusiastically gather around in a group/startup with objects such as wires, magnets, batteries, cameras and vibrant markers. What is their objective? It is to create a secure doorbell with sensors and cameras that can detect and allow for inhabitants to view who stands outside. As they create this ideal prototype to pitch to five angel investors on a TV show called Shark Tank, one question remains unanswered as they test with various designs as well as brainstorm ideas: How can STEAM education foster creativity and innovation in the classroom?

This group was known as RING and aired on Shark Tank in 2013, pitching their innovative product to the five sharks. Although investment was received, RING grew to become a multi-million dollar company, which was then acquired by Amazon for just over one billion US dollars.

STEAM education, a pedagogical approach, is one that combines the subjects of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics into an organized structure for learning. In contrast to traditional educational models, STEAM emphasizes hands-on, inquiry-based learning across disciplinary boundaries. It allows and fosters critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and a creative mindset, which are all very crucial for success within this ambitious and innovation-driven world of today. One technique that is heavily focused on as a method to foster creativity in STEAM is "Design thinking".

It is the methodology that is at the foundation of STEAM education; it enables students to think critically, come up with ideas and prototype solutions and test them. Design thinking stimulates risk-taking and innovation in students by immersing them in an organized process of creative problem-solving. To create a state-of-the-art doorbell prototype in the RING scenario, students applied design thinking principles that lay outside the circle of theoretical knowledge, which eventually stimulated creative thinking and encouraged group inquiry.

Another distinguishing feature in the renaissance of STEAM education is project-based learning (PBL), which is a newer technique that al-

lows and gives students an immersive practical experience that spans multiple fields of study. Here, students work together to design, for instance, sustainable ecosystems or program robots, as part of real-world projects that encourage innovative thinking. One clear example of this was my personal experience with the TU Delft Team Challenge in the Matching and Selection Procedure to attain a spot in the most competitive course of Computer Science and Engineering.

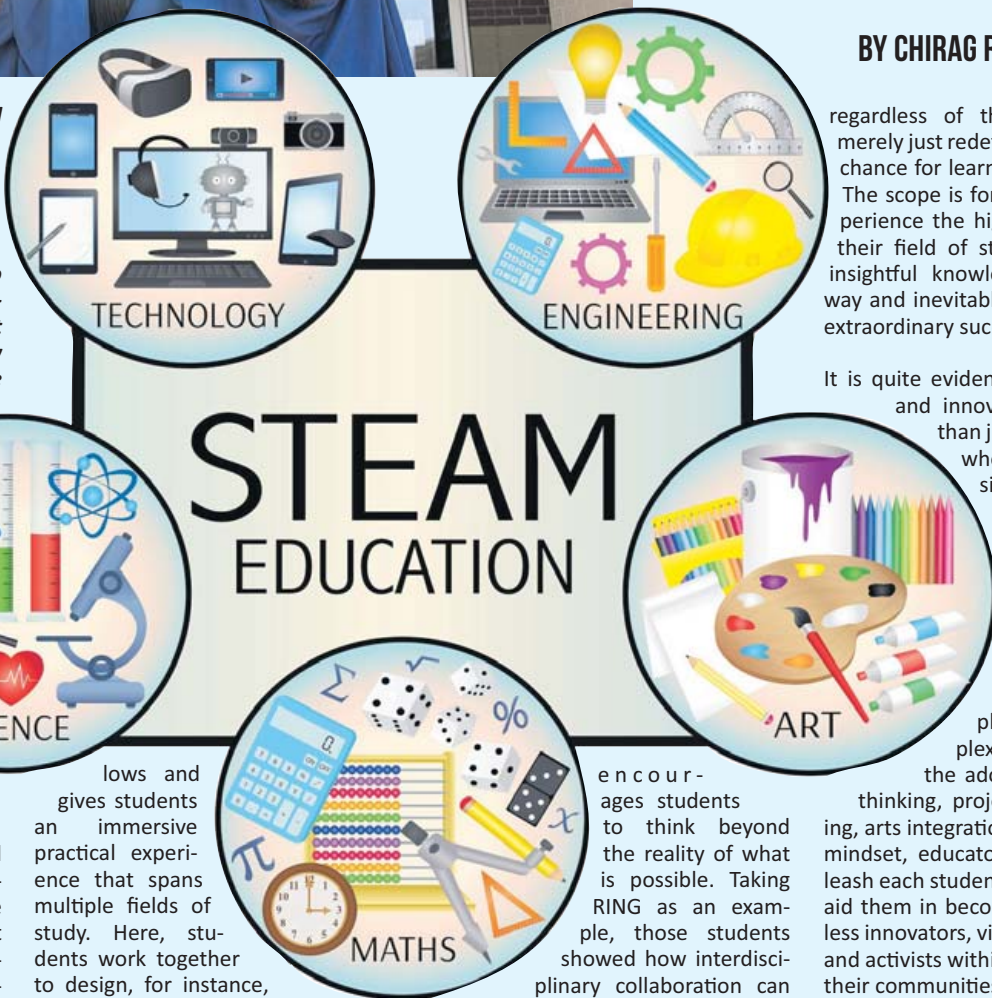
During this process, applicants globally were grouped into teams of five members to solve complex puzzles unitedly. As we worked through the challenges of communication and deep thinking, we, the students, developed our STEM abilities which will aid in going on a project-based learning journey to design solutions to global issues. Furthermore, students are also now being encouraged to pursue artistic expression by means of digital media, storytelling, and interactive design as part of STEAM education, which commemorates the fusion of arts and technology.

Through the incorporation of arts into STEM courses, STEAM stimulates an innovative and creative culture that

regardless of the setbacks by merely just redefining failure as a chance for learning and growth. The scope is for students to experience the highs and lows of their field of study, picking up insightful knowledge along the way and inevitably accomplishing extraordinary success.

It is quite evident that creativity and innovation are more than just catchphrases whenever we consider the potential of STEAM education; rather, they are vital skills for traversing a world that is getting more and more complicated and complex. Here, through the adoption of design thinking, project-based learning, arts integration, and a growth mindset, educators can now unleash each student's potential and aid them in becoming more fearless innovators, visionary thinkers, and activists within and outside of their communities.

Thus, we as members of society, must keep promoting STEAM education as a means of maximizing human potential and creating a more promising future for our future generations.





Teen Times Presents

ENCHANTED FOREST

Prom Night 2024

June 30 - 2024

Attire: Elegantly Formal

*"One Night,
A Lifetime of Memories"*

TICKETS - \$20/PERSON

CBA, MPC, SDHS, SXM Academy, Academy PSVE, SXM
Vocational, LU, CIA, Sundial, MAC High, French High Schools