



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

CAMP EMPLOYING MINDS 2026: GRADUATION WITH A DIFFERENCE

Bridgetown: August 24, 2026: Camp Employing Minds 2026 closed recently with a graduation ceremony unlike any other. Instead of the traditional guest speaker, the campers, aged 15 to 17 years, held the spotlight, taking their audience on their journey of growth and learning from “just four short weeks.”

The first sign of change came when Cameliah Taitt-Jones, earlier described by Camp Director, Sequoia Roach as the quietest camper on her arrival, confidently assumed the role of Master of Ceremonies. Her expert handling of the task illustrated the effectiveness of the camp’s public speaking sessions, impressing parents, guardians and officials in attendance.

Ashere Larrier candidly shared his camp experience. He admitted his initial reluctance when his mother first suggested it, especially on hearing about topics like time management and goal setting, neither of which appealed to him. But he said that his perspective quickly changed on joining the camp, and he was thankful that he attended. Among his highlights were a whole-day workshop with CIBC Caribbean staff on effective communication, résumé writing, interviewing and professional etiquette; a visit to Gregg Farm that emphasised agriculture and nature, and an etiquette-focused session at Mango Bay Hotel. “It was learning that didn’t feel like learning; not like school learning,” he said.

Taitt-Jones referred to the importance of goal setting, together with forward-thinking, which was another major theme of the sessions. Campers wrote *Letters to Future Self*, one of which was read aloud by Elijah Griffith. His aspirations include attending Barbados Community College to become a pharmacist, while keeping his trombone playing as a side pursuit. He also mentioned saving money, but cautiously avoided setting a target amount, due to inflation’s unpredictability.

The campers showcased their skills through a skit on dressing for success and interviewing. In addition to how the camp had personally changed them, the graduation ceremony also reflected their broader vision: what Barbados means to them, and their hopes for its future. Two campers, Destiny Davison and Jazara Ward, shared their own letters, emphasising national pride and youth empowerment.

Davison reminded the audience that, while Barbados is often celebrated for its beaches and famous figures, its greatest treasure is its resilient, creative people. “I have hope for Barbados,” she said, pinning that hope on the island’s youth who dream big, hardworking parents, inspiring teachers and ordinary citizens doing extraordinary things. During her contribution, Ward added that young people are not just the future; they are already making a difference through creativity,

sports, and entrepreneurship. She acknowledged that young people face many pressures and challenges, but urged the country's continued investment in them, stressing that, "One day, we will be in charge of carrying Barbados forward, but that day starts with us right now." Her advice to peers was clear: respect one another, work hard, protect the environment, and use your talents to strengthen communities.

The ceremony also honored Jahzara Gibson and Kaliq Wiltshire as Campers of the Year, and each received winning prizes from CIBC Caribbean. Gibson, who aspires to become an obstetrician-gynecologist, praised the camp, and singled out the bank's interview simulation as a valuable experience that offered her a glimpse into how the 'real world' operates. Wiltshire, a Lester Vaughan student described by Camp Director Roach as quiet, but well-spoken and artistic, spoke highly of the camp as he gave the Vote of Thanks, expressing gratitude to all who made it a success.

Roach concluded the event with heartfelt words to the campers. Leading over 30 teenagers in her debut as a camp director, she admitted that the experience taught her a great deal and strengthened her confidence. Adding that her investment extended beyond their success at the camp, she expressed a genuine interest in their future endeavors, reminding them of their *Letters to Future Self*, and added, "I want you to hold yourselves accountable and I want to see you achieve your goals."

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The audience, sitting on the left, were engrossed as campers spoke of their experiences. Officials in the front row from right are: Camp director, Sequoia Roach; Camp Official, Elizabeth Bowen; CEO, Do it Best Barbados, Katrina Lowe; ERS Group Specialist, Mango Bay Group, Jermaine Bourne; Manager of Talent Acquisition and Development at CIBC Caribbean, Kathleen Hall, and Content Coordinator, Chukka Foundation & Harrison Cave, Isiah Gibson.



Campers of the Year, Kaliq Wilshire, left and Jahzara Gison, right received the winners' shield from Kathleen Hall, Manager of Talent Acquisition and Development at CIBC Caribbean.

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