

THE DAILY **Observer**

"Let There Be Light"

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80 per of A&B's population could be vaccinated within weeks

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Nurses threaten to take industrial action

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Despite the complexities brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Sailability Antigua initiative which is geared towards the differently abled, continues to gather momentum with over 2,500 launches registered in 2020. National Sailing Academy's head instructor Sylvester Thomas supervises the hoisting of Alexandria Looby with the assistance of Kayon Guiste and Jah Marley Edwards after a morning of fine sailing in Falmouth Harbour. (Photo by Edwin Gifford) More on page 22.

Sailability Antigua paddles on despite challenges brought on by Covid-19



National Sailing Academy (NSA) instructor Sylvester Thomas (center) conducts a session. (Photo courtesy Edwin Gifford)

By Neto Baptiste

Despite the complexities brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Sailability Antigua initiative continues to gather momentum with over 2,500 launches registered in 2020.

Director of Sailability Antigua **Bob Bailey**, said the programme which is geared towards the differently abled, underscored the importance of the programme for what is a growing list of participants.

"Last year, we took just under 3,000 people sailing in one year, testing this water down here and that's not 3,000 people, that's 3,000 launches. We take all ages and we take all colours if

you like and we had some people from the Friends of the Care Project last week who had cerebral palsy and they have all the hoist and the craft and the expertise to deal with that, and they we have some people who are just from the spectrum of having problems and deal with those, too, and each person is treated as an individual," he said.

Bailey, who was speaking on the Good Morning Jojo Sports Show at the time, highlighted that the kind donation of a minibus from the Jumby Bay Fund is allowing Sailability to reach more people across the length and breadth of the country.

"I have been given a new minibus by the Jumby

Bay Fund with wheelchair accessibility and only yesterday [Tuesday] for the first time in seven years we were able to go out to Potters where we picked a young lady up in a wheelchair who just sits in her house all day. Every day, we brought her down to Falmouth and she went swimming for an hour and then swam in a little bit of water and then we took her home in our new minibus," he said.

Despite the success stories, Bailey said there is a need for more contributions to keep the initiative going.

"We do training for school children to get into this industry of sailing and it is hugely successful, so that's given free and the pro-

gramme we give is free and we have to pay, fundamentally for rent and all that stuff. But we also pay instructors and all of our instructors are Antiguan and very highly qualified, may I say, and brilliant too. So that's my biggest problem, raising money. It's a bad time for a lot of people and I understand that but it is a big challenge," the director said.

Typically, the programme targets individuals from the Victory Center, the Adele School and the rehabilitation center.

Individuals wishing to date to the programme or have someone enrolled, can do so by calling Bailey at 783-8553 or via the National Sailing Academy.