



UNION of JAMAICAN ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS U.S.A., Inc.

Education is Empowerment, only the Educated are Free

2022 UJAA High School Graduate Awards

June 27, 2022, saw the staging of UJAA's 32nd Annual High School Graduate Awards (HSGA) Ceremony. Due to continuing concerns around COVID-19, this was once again held virtually.

UJAA is proud to salute this most impressive group of 26 young Jambassadors who graduated from high school and are preparing to embark on their college and university journeys. This year's graduates hail from all across the USA. In addition to apply for an award, 14 of the students participated in the Essay Competition.

Over \$25,000 was awarded to our graduates. 25 UJAA member organizations contributed to these funds, including a cohort of our Primary School members. There were also several external sponsors and donors including Presidential Sponsors Caribbean Food Delights and Creative Leasing and Funding, and Presenting Sponsors M&T Auto Collision Inc., Alltime Printing, 3TEN Events Inc., Hudson Valley Caribbean Promotions, Natural Fountain Juices/The Outside Lounge and Caribbean Business Connections. There were also individual sponsors – Natasha Davids, Dr. Garfield Clunie and former High School Graduate Awardee, Chevron Christie.

The event opened with a digital procession of graduates, led by HSGA Chair, Natasha Davids. This was followed by a moving and meaningful prayer by UJAA Director, Evelyn Godden, which set the tone for the evening.

Our Mistress of Ceremonies, Sharon Gordon kept the ceremony flowing with wit and humor. UJAA president Lesleyann Samuel brought greetings, and introduced Vice Consul, Iyeeka Walters, who spoke on behalf of the Consulate General of Jamaica, New York.

Dr. Karren Dunkley, NorthEast USA Representative for the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council congratulated the scholars and applauded UJAA for continuing to be a gold standard in the diaspora.

Our graduates were then able to hear from current and former UJAA High School Graduate Awardees: Daniel Carty, UJAA HSGA Alumnus 2018, and Summer Smith, who provided greetings on behalf of the Class of 2022. We continue to be impressed with these young people and will strive to keep them involved with the Diaspora community.



UNION of JAMAICAN ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS U.S.A., Inc.

Education is Empowerment, only the Educated are Free

We then moved to the essay competition awards, which were presented by Jennifer Brown, UJAA Director, and Ms. Shakira Chin, who represented Presidential and Essay Competition Sponsor, Caribbean Food Delights. The Essay Competition Grand Prize Winner is Jeronique Campbell from Fordham High School for the Arts in New York. She received a trip for two to Jamaica.

The next item was the presentation of cash awards, again led by Karlene Largie, UJAA Corresponding Secretary and Education Committee Co-Chair. Sponsors were spotlighted on screen along with their awardees and gave brief words of congratulations and encouragement. Once again, our scholars impressed us, not only with their academic achievements, but their dedication to community service and volunteerism, while being involved in sports, music, and the arts.

The top awardee is Summer Smith from Teaneck High School in New Jersey, who will be attending Rutgers University where she will be majoring in Psychology and Engineering. Special mention too to Ashley Singh, from Archer High School in Georgia, who will be attending Georgia Institute of Technology where she will major in Environmental Engineering. Both young ladies had averages over 100% due to the high concentration of AP classes that they took. We salute our scholars.

Donovan Wilson, UJAA Vice President brought the Vote of Thanks and expressed appreciation for our sponsors, speakers and all others involved in the event. Event Chair Natasha Davids closed the event recognizing the importance of honoring our young awardees, urged them to remain connected to UJAA and their Jamaican Heritage.

Please join us in wishing our 2022 graduates the very best!