



PRESS RELEASE

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SLOOP 2.0: UPDATE ON BERMUDA SLOOP FOUNDATION (BSF)

“Changing Lives, One Voyage at a Time, Over Time”

Introduction

Twenty-five years ago, STV *Spirit of Bermuda* was just an idea with A VERY ambitious mission. With generous and inspired help from the Bermuda community, BSF now owns (free of debt) an iconic 88’ three-masted sloop rigged schooner with an 18+ year track record of successful programmes, plus thousands of miles at sea. Originally based upon Experiential Learning (eleducation.org) for school reform, our mission continues to be providing access to transformative youth voyages aboard *Spirit of Bermuda*, now recognised locally as a national treasure and worldwide as a flagship for Bermuda.

The urgent challenge, in Bermuda’s current reality, is to continue with this mission.

Background

In September 2023, it was clear that a trend had developed where BSF’s expenses were outstripping donations and receipts. Staff changes were made to streamline operations, and in April 2024 we paused our regular programmes while a more sustainable new model going forward was considered. With generous help from loyal donors, BSF completed all scheduled school voyages to July 2024 and successfully secured the required overseas 5-year safety inspection certificate for *Spirit of Bermuda* from August to October 2024.

The following challenges have all contributed to the need to pause for a rethink and reflection:

- rising costs;
- changes in the local donor environment;
- a shrinking pool of the required available talent to run an organisation of BSF’s complexity;
- increasing compliance requirements at all levels; and
- significantly reduced government support.

In November BSF engaged the Nonprofit Alliance of Bermuda in an Issued Based Strategic Review, which incorporated focus groups with all our stakeholders, culminating in a Strategic Plan for the upcoming three years.

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Goals and Future Plans

Our goal is to restart our signature youth development programmes aboard *Spirit of Bermuda* in the first quarter of 2026. BSF will explore new ways to partner with Government in contributing to education and school reform and career readiness for youth. In order for youth voyages to continue for the next generation, alongside regular fundraising, BSF will pursue income generating charters and events, including corporate team building events beginning this Fall.

A Legacy Renewed

For nearly two decades, *Spirit of Bermuda* has served as more than just a ship. She is a proven development platform - one-of-a-kind in Bermuda - where 8,500+ students have completed this “rite of passage” onboard this floating classroom where teamwork, resilience, and real-world learning replace desks and screens. Under sail, teenagers navigate not only the ocean, but also essential life skills including personal responsibility, problem-solving, environmental stewardship, and an appreciation of Bermuda’s unique shared maritime history.

Spirit of Bermuda provides young people a chance to disconnect from technology and distractions and reconnect with themselves, their peers, and their island. This programme is vital - especially today - where students need experiences that build character, courage, a meaningful sense of community, along with a step outside their usual comfort zone.

Talent Required

To restart our educational programmes and ship operations at the world class levels required, BSF is seeking qualified candidates for the following positions: Executive Director, Programme Co-ordinator, Ship Captain, Engineer and First Mate.

If Bermuda wants a tall ship for its youth, and an icon around which the whole community can rally and celebrate, BSF has and can continue to provide this, providing we have the support of the community. Donations can be made at www.bermudasloop.org.

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