



OVERVIEW

The **West End Eco-Fishing Camp Association (WEEFCA)** has since 2009 provided summer camp for children interested in learning how to become caretakers of the environment. In addition, children learn how to swim, handline fish, snorkel, competitive sailing and feed wild stingrays. The organization also hosts the West End Jr. Regatta and Festival held each year to showcase the sailing skills of the sailors who compete for trophies and qualify to attend competitive sailing nationals throughout the Bahamas.

WEEFCA Founders, Keith and Linda Cooper were approached to start the youth camp by the Royal Bahamas Police Force who played an active role during the formative stages of the organization. With the assistance of corporate and private individuals the Coopers were able to receive seed funding to launch the initiative.

Their 2017 theme – **“Envision A Better Environment”** – will be in support of the ongoing efforts to develop and manage a number of community based programs from ecology and fishing to sailing and birding camps that are designed to keep the children of West End engaged in educational summer and after school activities. WEEFCA campers are also involved with the International Coastal Clean-up Campaign held each year in over 45 countries.

More than 150 children from West End, 8 Mile Rock and Freeport have benefited from the educational programs offered by WEEFCA. A majority of children are chosen from the West End Primary School. Principal, Mrs. Navidia Mills has played an integral part in encouraging children to have a keen interest in being educated about their roles as stewards of the environment and the community.

In the spring of each year WEEFCA, the Grand Bahama Sailing Club and the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism hosts the annual West End Jr. Regatta and Festival. Every summer a distinct group of youth are selected to be trained in competitive sailing in OPTIMIST, FJ's and LAZER sail boats. This event is held along the shoreline of the community and is open to national and international youth sailors.

Another sponsor of WEEFCA is the **Blue Marlin Cove Resort owner, Mr. Joe Rieger** along with his wife Sandy and daughter Giovanna who graciously allow the use of their pool to teach swimming to the youth. Blue Marlin Cove employee, Carl Rolle, a legendary Bone Fishing professional hosts a class on fly fishing to the campers as part of their learning program.

In October 2016, Hurricane Matthew nearly destroyed the settlement and displaced hundreds of residents. Blue Marlin Cove organized one of the most comprehensive relief efforts ever undertaken to assist the community. WEEFCA founders worked along with local Rotary Chapters, expats, Grand Bahama residents, Freeport business owners, and a Canadian businessman to distribute food and supplies to many who were displaced by the storm.

The West End Eco-Fishing Camp Association is delighted to continue our partnership with the **Blue Marlin Cove 3rd Annual Bahamas Wahoo Classic** slated to be held February 9-11, 2017 in Bootle Bay, West End, Grand Bahama Island.

WEST END ECO-FISHING CAMP ASSOCIATION

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“Preparing the next generation as caretakers of the earth and living seas.”™