



Annual Report

2023



A Message from our Executive Director



As we enter 2024 and look back at 2023, I am yet again amazed at how we have survived the pandemic and come out stronger. We continue to make improvements at the field station with the final remodel of our guest cabins set to be complete by the end of March. We have also undertaken a large (for IFS) donation campaign for our new boat! I am so grateful to our Board of Trustees who have given generously along with the VFW Ohio Charities and the Louise B. Cochrane Foundation. There is still time for you to be a part of IFS history and donate to get a say in the naming of the new boat!

While 2023 was the first year IFS was back on track after the pandemic, we did have some loss. In the Blanket Sound and Stafford Creek communities, we said goodbye to Ms. Mirley and Ms. Riley and our very own Ms. Elthymae Murphy. We are saddened to have lost these amazing women all too soon and they will be forever missed.

As we continue to move forward as an organization, IFS strives to improve the quality and educational outcomes of our programming and innovate and create new ones. We are offering an exploration of art and science experience and a field study teacher training program this summer. We continue to improve our partnerships and ties with entities on Andros such as the Bahamas National Trust (BNT), the Bahamas Agricultural and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI), the Reef Rescue Network, and the Ministry of Tourism to further our impact locally.



As a former student who experienced Forfar in high school and college, I am so grateful to be at the helm of IFS and continue the legacy that Dr. Ben Bohl created by providing experiential learning in a remarkable ecosystem. We are excited for the rest of the season and hope you will all join us in the years to come with a group of your own, for an Alumni Week, or Work Week and experience the new boat for yourself!

Thank you again for your continued support of IFS,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Lindsey Christ". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Lindsey Christ, Executive Director
International Field Studies

Programming

FORFAR FIELD STATION

The main operation of IFS is running week-long field studies for middle school through graduate level students at Forfar Field Station on Andros Island, The Bahamas. We are so grateful to have welcomed 44 groups to the field station this past year including a total of 1,017 international and local students, educators and alumni. We are seeing more and more returning groups and groups that are making sure they are on the calendar each year. We are already looking forward to next season and beyond as our schedule continues to fill up!

GAP YEAR - FMSP

Our 6-week Forfar Marine Science Program gives students the chance to learn how to scuba dive, take hands-on marine science courses, kayak, and gain wilderness first aid certifications. This past season, we safely and successfully hosted 3 cohorts reaching 29 students.

WEEK-LONG FMSP

In the summer of 2023, students joined us for our Week Long Forfar Marine Science Program. Students were each given 6 online lectures focusing on topics such as Marine Ecosystems, Conservation, and Climate Change. They were then able to experience the beauty of Andros where they had the opportunity to spend the week learning field skills, mastering hands-on field based research techniques, participating in a beginner's discovery scuba diving course, and more!

GUIDED TOURS

International Field Studies, Inc. offered two guided tours this year! We were so excited to introduce our Hawaii - Off the Beaten Path guided tour for the first time! Participants explored the beautiful, diverse landscapes of the Hawaiian wilderness while hiking, snorkeling, and camping. Kayaking the Exumas was a success as participants joined our Sea Kayaking instructor, Steve Harrington, on a beautiful 7-day journey kayaking around some of the most beautiful islands in The Bahamas.

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

We also hosted participants for our Alumni Week in July of 2023. They had the opportunity to revisit Forfar while bringing along their friends and family members to enjoy the week with them. In December of 2023, alumni volunteers visited Forfar to participate in our Work Week. Some projects they completed included cleaning the staff cabin areas, filling potholes in the driveway, landscaping and painting.



Giving Back

ANDROSIA SCHOLARSHIP

In addition to our programming, we aim to give back to the community and our students as much as possible to expand our impact and create equal opportunities for young scholars. One of the main ways IFS gives back is through our Androsia Scholarship Fund. All profits from the local Androsia wares and IFS branded merchandise sold at Forfar Field Station go directly to the Androsia Scholarship Fund. Since 2015, we have given out \$15,905 in scholarships to local Androsians. In 2023, two \$1,000 scholarships were awarded to two local Androsians.



The first \$1,000 scholarship was given to Lavon Butler. He was the class Salutatorian and recent graduate of Huntley Christie High School. He intends on enrolling at Talladega College in Alabama to pursue a degree in Computer and Information Systems. The second \$1,000 scholarship was given to Calvernique Marshall who is also a recent graduate of Huntley Christie High School and planning to become a meteorologist.



“WE NEED A BOAT” CAMPAIGN

In 2023, we focused our Giving Tuesday and End of Year Giving Campaign on raising funds to offset the cost of adding a new boat to our fleet. After many faithful years of service, Andros Rose, lovingly referred to as "Rosie" is going to be retired from our small fleet of boats used to take out groups. We set our goal high hoping to raise \$40,000 for our “We Need a Boat” campaign and as of March 1, 2024 we raised \$23,477.10. Donations will continue through the spring with a boat naming contest occurring in March 2024.

FORFAR MARINE SCIENCE COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS

As part of our Forfar Marine Science Program (Gap Year), each cohort participates in a service learning project as part of the course work. Students work with our various on-island partners (Bahamas National Trust or Forestry Unit) to give back to the local Andros community. Students in our program have donated 2,090 work hours since 2016 to the local community! Pictured is a Gap Year Cohort from last season.



A Letter from our Board Chair



As we are completing our 53rd year, we are celebrating the fact that we have welcomed groups back to Forfar at pre-pandemic levels. In January of 2023, the board traveled to the field station for a four day retreat. It was an opportunity for new board members to experience Forfar and Andros for themselves and for those who had been there before to see the progress that we have made since the pandemic.

While at Forfar, we were able to meet gap year students attending at the time, as well as, the wonderful staff that make the experience there so life changing. We were able to see firsthand the cabin remodels. The board was also able to experience some of the snorkeling trips and field trips around the island that our students do while there for a week. These experiences were very helpful as we planned for the future. As part of that, we were able to identify our needs and look at ways to implement improvements. We were able to set the acquisition of a new generator in motion while planning for facility improvements including installing solar electric panels as part of a needed storage building project.

Over the past nine years since joining the board, I have met numerous Forfar alumni from all over the country who were thankful for having had the experience that our founder, Dr. Ben Bohl created at Forfar. Soon after Ben's passing, the board created the scholarship that bears his name. Since then it has enabled 21 students who would otherwise not be able to afford to, come and learn at Forfar. It is the board's hope that all of the friends of IFS will consider contributing.



In closing, the board would like to thank our very talented Executive Director, Lindsey Christ, the wonderful staff, and the friends of IFS for making our program such a life changing experience for everyone that attends. - Jack Hedge, Board Chair

IFS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Degee Wilhelm

Financial Statement of Activities

	2023	2022
INCOME		
Contributions	6,519	5,844
Earned Income	927,312	651,604
EXPENSES		
Program Services	734,346	576,523
Supporting Services	100,783	87,931
TOTAL NET ASSETS	231,905	133,203

