

Little Caesars Pizza
OAKES FIELD SHOPPING CENTER

Try Our **LARGE** SPECIALTY PIZZAS

\$8⁵⁹ **FRESH HOT-N-READY LARGE** Pepperoni

\$11⁹⁹ **SUPREME**

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- 3 Meat Treat
- Veggie
- Hula Hawaiian

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DANIEL and Peta Murray taking part in the Waterkeepers training.

Waterkeepers seek to safeguard our seas

IT'S The Bahamas' greatest treasure - crystal clear waters which surround our islands.

Millions of tourists visit us every year to swim and play on our beaches, to swim, snorkel and sail.

The most vital thing of all is making sure the thing that brings the visitors here remains as pure as possible.

Rashema Ingraham spends hours at beaches in The Bahamas every week, but she isn't splashing in the water, combing for shells or searching for treasure.

As executive director of Waterkeepers Bahamas, Rashema is part of a team that tests water at 16 public beaches on a regular basis. The monitoring is a partnership between Waterkeepers Bahamas and an international organization called Swim Guide which maintains an up-to-date beach and water condition report on 7,000 beaches around the world. Reports are available at SwimGuide.org.

With the agreement between SwimGuide and

Waterkeepers Bahamas signed in August, the monitoring duties have been so time-consuming that Rashema has had to ask for volunteers. This week, they began their training.

"Getting volunteers to hang out at the beach filling vials with water samples is not the most difficult task," said Rashema. "So while it sounds glamorous, once you start the work you appreciate how serious it is and how valuable a service you are performing."

Testing is very time-sensitive. Collected samples are run through specialized equipment within an eight hours window of retrieval and uploaded on the SwimGuide website within 28 hours for public access. For accurate comparison, every sample is collected at the same GPS coordinates as the previous one at every beach.

"Timing and scheduling can be challenging," said Rashema. "If one of us is in Nassau and we need to get back to the testing

equipment in the office in Grand Bahama, we have to time our collections and our flights to the minute."

The good news is those beaches in The Bahamas which have been tested have never been found to pose health threats to swimmers unlike many other beaches around the world.

"We have found traces of faeces, usually after a storm or after a holiday when beaches are very crowded," said Rashema. "But most of our waters enjoy excellent tidal flow and the tides and currents keep the waters surprisingly free of perils. We cannot say the same for beaches and mangroves which are not respected. We are a country that continues to litter and we should be ashamed of ourselves. That's why it is so important to get the message across to boys and girls when they are young."

Among the beaches monitored in New Providence are Jaws Beach, Montagu, Adelaide Beach, South Ocean and Coral Harbour.

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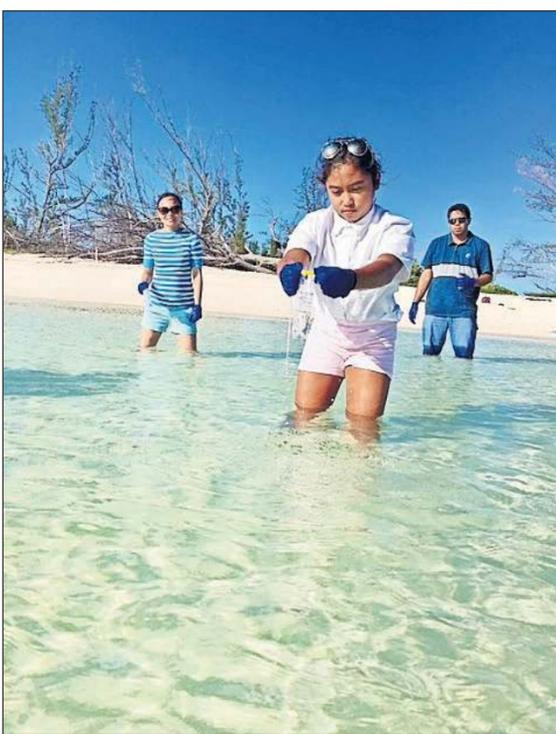
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VERNICE FLORES, above, taking part in the Waterkeepers training and, below, Joseph Darville collecting samples.

