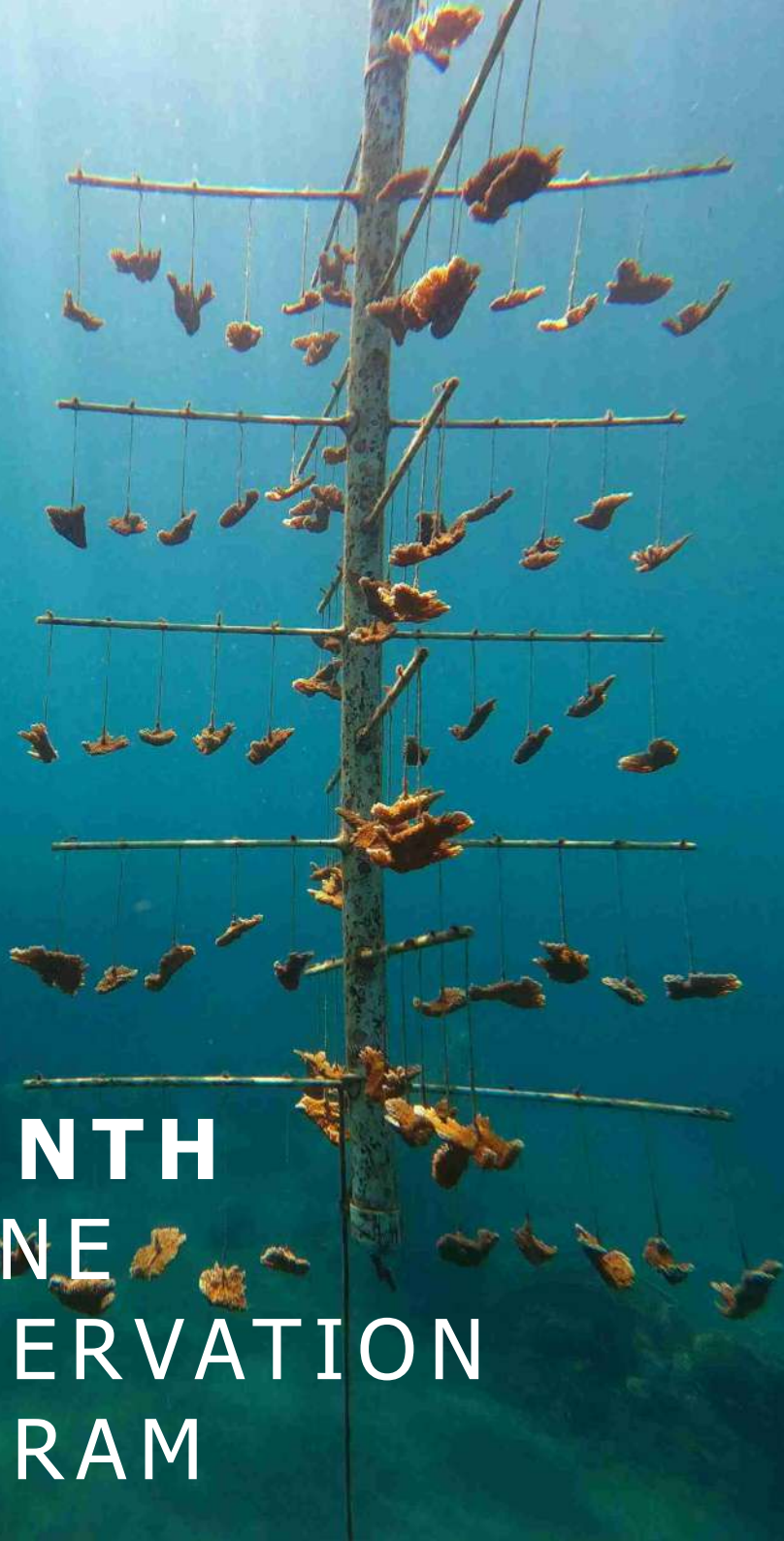




RICHMOND VALE
ACADEMY



3 MONTH MARINE CONSERVATION PROGRAM

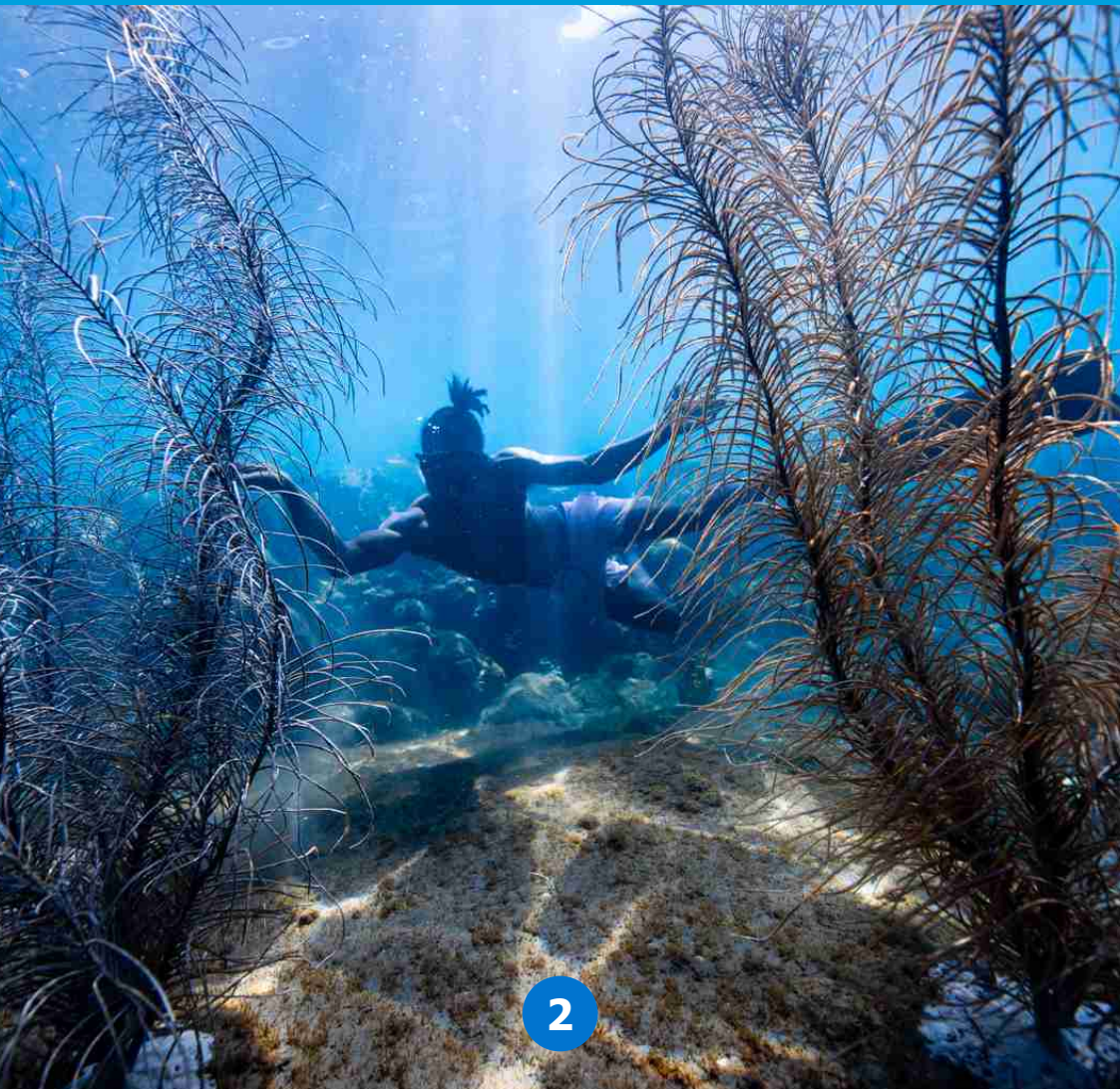
Welcome to Richmond Vale Academy

An underwater photograph showing three divers in black wetsuits and scuba gear. They are gathered around a piece of coral, with one diver using a tool to examine it. Bubbles are visible rising from the divers' equipment. The background is a clear blue ocean.

*What is happening in the ocean during climate change?
How are the world's coral reefs affected, and how does that
affect us?*

*What can we do to help protect and rebuild the coastal
ecology systems?*

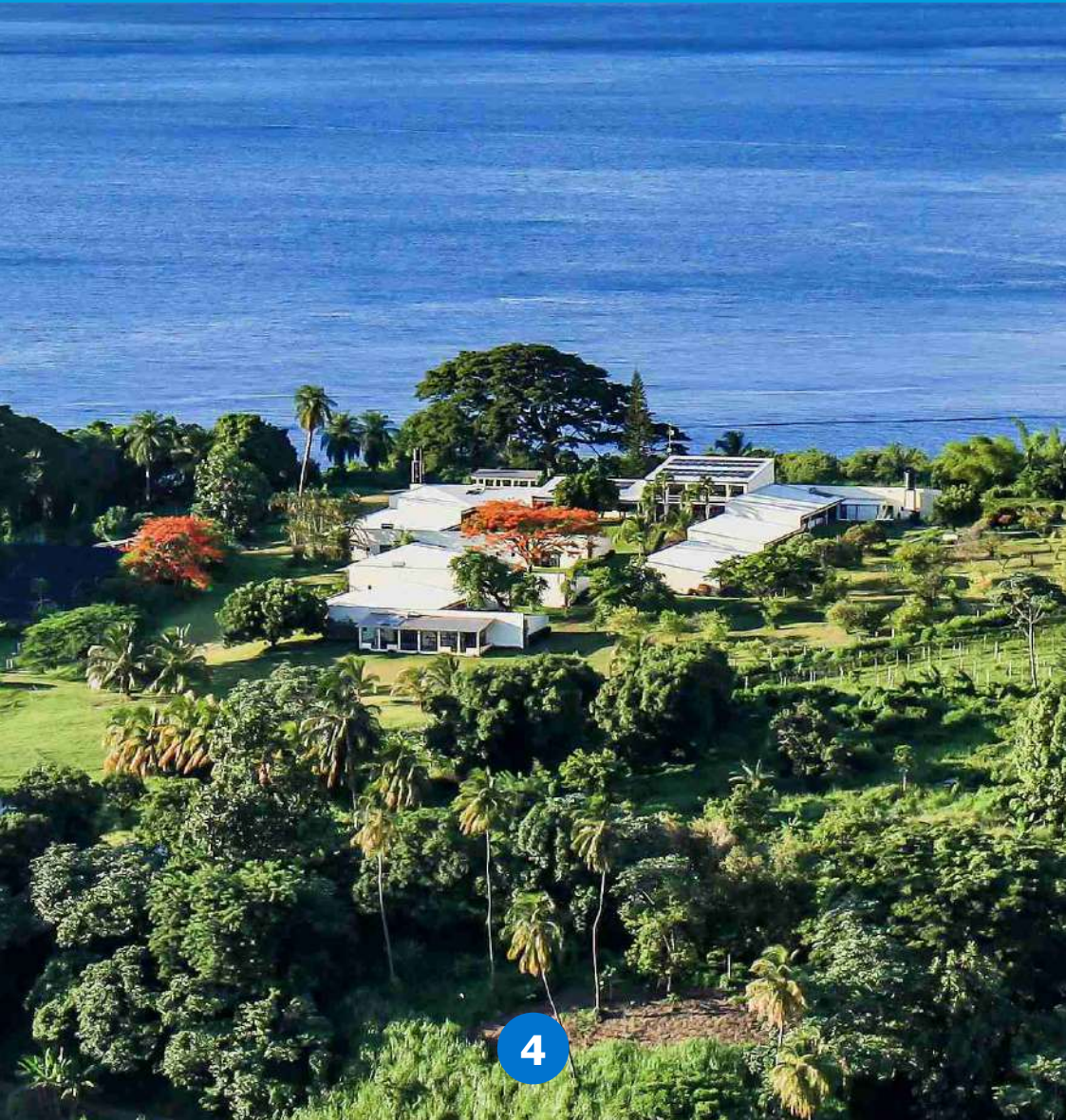
To begin to answer these questions, Richmond Vale Academy (RVA) has created a new training program that combine an understanding of the macro level of ocean ecology with practical and technical skills applied to preserving and restoring the coral reefs in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Participants will learn proven strategies and skills, will become certified PADI scuba divers, and will take these skills to work directly on the coral reefs surrounding the island.





Over the past four decades Caribbean coral reefs have been degrading rapidly because of overfishing, pollution, diseases, and climate change. Warmer sea temperatures associated with climate change are causing more frequent mass coral bleaching events and making corals more vulnerable to diseases and pollution. The loss of reefs has negatively impacted Caribbean coastal communities by reducing income from declining fisheries and increasing exposure to storm surges and coastal erosion. These trends are projected to accelerate in the coming decades unless urgent action is taken to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and strengthen the resilience of coral reefs.

Established in 2002, Richmond Vale Academy is perched on the western coast of St. Vincent in the Eastern Caribbean. The campus is a practical demonstration site for sustainability, growing its own food and generating its own energy. Set on the slope of the La Soufrière volcano, it is a dramatic and beautiful setting for transformational personal and professional growth.





You already know that Climate Change is real and is having dramatic impact everywhere. Increased global temperatures are causing an increase in storms, floods, drought, forest fires, and affecting the health and safety of all humans, animal, and vegetable populations across the globe. We only need to look at the past 10 years of weather driven disasters in the Caribbean to understand that this is happening now, and not in a distant future. The Marine Protection program focuses on what is happening in the sea, and what we can do to protect the delicate balances of marine life that are increasingly affected.

RVA includes adult people of all ages and nationalities, and there are all opportunities to grow your understanding of new cultures, work as a team with colleagues from all over the world and learn how you can become an active part of creating solutions for the future.

You can be a part of this change. Join us!



Overview of the Marine Conservation Program



Introduction (1 week)

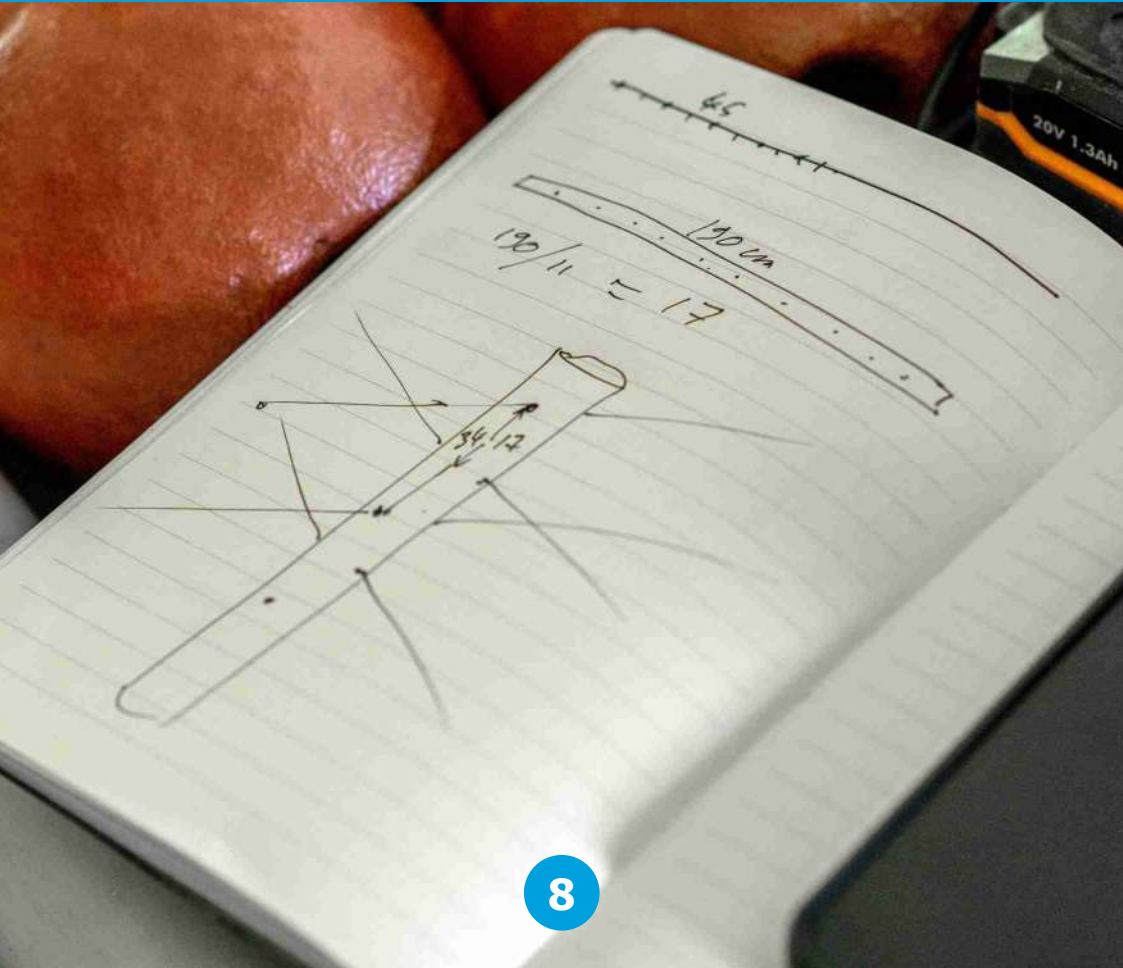
In this program period we are introduced to the Marine Protection program and RVA as a Climate Center.

We get to know the school, the place with its people, our local community, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and this region of the world. You will understand the history and philosophy of our school and become a part of its operations and life while you are with us.

Gaia Warns You (1 week)

Studies and courses on the basics of Climate Change.

Together we will gain knowledge and create an understanding of the 9 Planetary Boundaries for a safe life on the planet - how they have developed in recent years, their current state and to debate what actions are required to keep them within a safe limit for life on our planet, about the extinction crisis unfolding in our time and to consider what is causing this, what are some of the serious effects, and what can and should be done about the extinction crisis.





These sessions will include the understanding of core concepts and dynamics of the sea:

- Seasonal change on land and water
- Racing extinction
- Climate, a balancing act
- 9 planetary boundaries

Dive training/digging deeper (4 weeks • 1 Open Weekend)

Studies on coral and coastal protection.

Here you start your dive training and digging deeper studies specific on coral and coastal protection. This period will focus on a variety of coastal studies such as presentations, self-studies, practical classes, and documentaries. This will give much needed knowledge that will later be needed for the implementation and teaching the community groups/fisherfolk. You will also complete your basic and advanced PADI Open Water certifications to give you the abilities to become safe and productive in the ocean.





To prepare as part of the team, you will learn these core elements related to coral restoration:

- Coral ecology, coral biology, nutrition and symbiosis, coral reproduction, coral reef type and zonation, coral diseases
- Threats to coral reefs, climate and ocean change, coral bleaching, ocean acidification, local and regional threats, biotic threats
- Coral restoration practices
- Acropora coral
- PADI Open Water Certificate
- PADI Advanced Open Water Certification

Making SVG Climate Compliant (5 weeks • 2 Open Weekends)

Working with the local Coral Gardeners.

This will be the hands on experience as part of the team on an active coral restoration project on St. Vincent.



You will get to know and support the Coral Gardeners with a range of activities during this period:



- Assist with organizing and conducting community education workshops with the local Coral Gardeners on the importance of coral restoration. Local residents and fisherfolk who depend upon the sea for their livelihood and health are engaged to become active partners in the solutions and interventions
- Out planting of coral fragments to rebuild damaged reefs
- Maintain and monitor the coral nursery which produces new stock for the reef restoration
- You will learn how to carry out a Reef Check survey to monitor the health of the reef
- Installation of trees/table trees and populating coral fragments at the coral nursery
- Lionfish hunting and safe preparation as a source of food
- Fish ID training and certification
- EFR certification



Bring it to the public (1 week)

Consolidate and communicate what you have learned: By creating a video, you will share the voice of the many people you have worked with, the change you been part of, and will share how that has moved us as a group and as individuals. This will include an event at RVA with the participating community and fisherfolk for a conversation and sharing about the importance of reef preservation.





RVA Daily Life

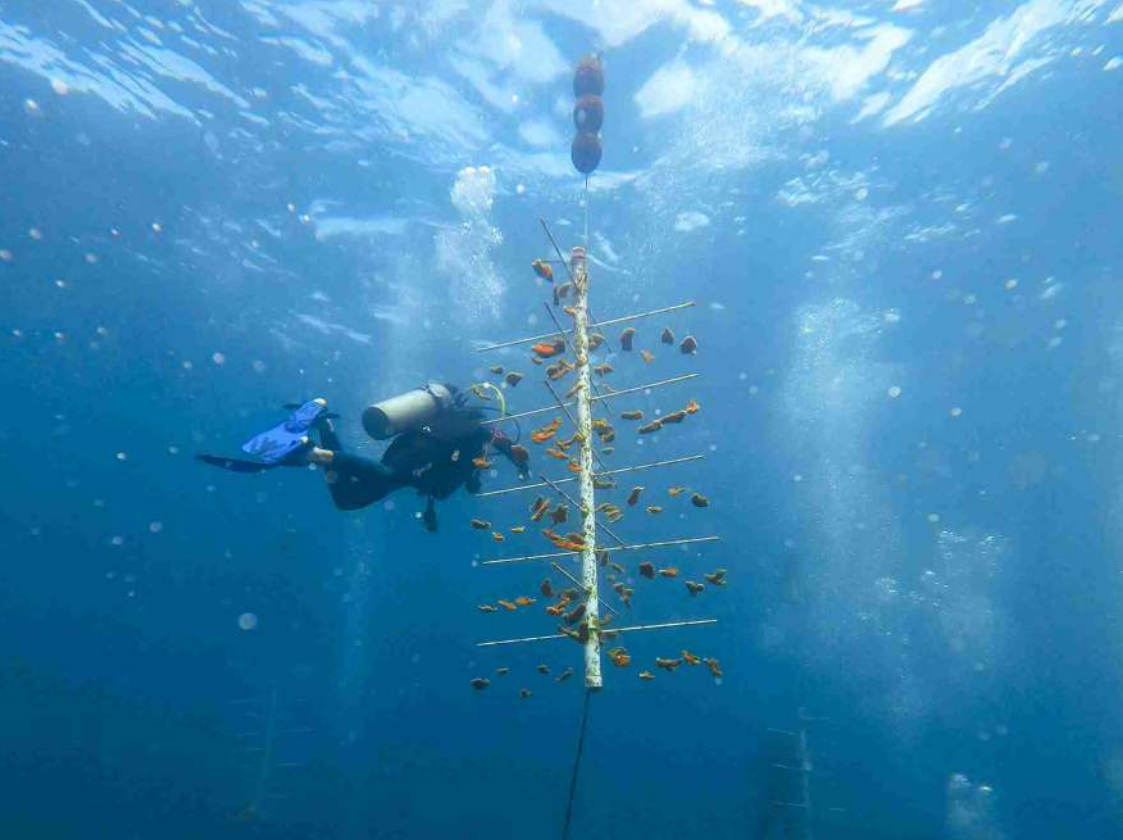
While you are a part of the RVA community, you are also a part of its daily operations. Students and faculty share common daily tasks in teams and will be responsible for a range of cooking and cleaning assignments. The kitchen staff will assign meal preparation and cleanup roles, and teams will be assigned responsibilities for routine cleaning of the dive center, workshop classroom and workshop bathrooms. Most classes for this program will be conducted at the Dive Center and Workshop buildings.

- *Minimum age: 18 years*
- *Group size: 4-8 participants*
- *3 months three times a year: February, May and September*
- *Equipment to bring: wetsuit, fins, mask and snorkel, dive computer, logbook*
- *3 Open Weekends*



Certifications Included:

- *PADI OW* • *PADI AOW* •
- *Fish ID certification* • *EFR certification* •



The Enrollment Process

Enrollment is a straightforward process that begins with an email to the marine project leader whom you will communicate with during your enrollment process.

Once you decide to apply to the Marine Protection program, we will have a final interview, and provide specific information about enrollment, preparation, planning and payment options.

A USD 1,000 deposit will reserve your spot on one of our teams.

Our team will support you throughout this process.

Finances

The participant cost of the Marine Conservation Program is **USD 5,500**, which covers all expenses connected with the program as well as supporting the continuous coral restoration work by local Coral Gardeners.

The participant cost includes room, board, educational materials and coral reef preservation experience, along with the four certifications. Participants are responsible for their travel to campus, their health insurance, and recreational expenses.

Why a Coral Gardener Fee?

The RVA Coral Restoration Program depends on local Coral Gardeners who maintain and develop the coral nurseries on a weekly basis. In order to keep the coral restoration efforts going it is essential to generate income to keep the coral gardeners employed and the nurseries well maintained.

The Coral Gardener Fee is helping to cover these expenses.

• Program fee USD 4,700 • Coral Gardener Fee USD 800

*Flight not covered; airport pickup arranged,
but not covered*



CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Marine Project Leader Email: tobias@richmondvale.org

Website: www.richmondvale.org