



## THE NONPROFIT CONSORTIUM

### ST. CROIX NONPROFITS REBUILD AFTER THE STORMS Utilizing Collaboration as a Driver for Holistic Recovery in the U.S. Virgin Islands

*December 2017* - Three months after two category five hurricanes hit the Virgin Islands, the demand for services has expanded and our nonprofits have fewer resources than ever before. Today, through the Nonprofit Consortium and with your support, St. Croix Foundation is actively convening organizations and connecting them to critical resources.

The Consortium's first action item was to **survey over 30 nonprofit organizations to assess damages and needs**, providing information that identifies where and how support can help organizations for the greatest impact. Armed with data, the Foundation's Nonprofit Consortium has accomplished the following to date:

- 1. Established a partnership with the Danish Emergency Management Agency (DEMA)**, allowing us to make strategic project referrals that led to a number of nonprofit organizations receiving assistance as part of DEMA's mission. Overall, DEMA completed 24 projects on St. Croix, such as the following notable nonprofit emergency repair projects (to name just a few):
  - Installing blue tarpaulin roofs at the Boys and Girls Club of The Virgin Islands Christiansted Clubhouse (at right) and at the Whim Greathouse and Museum;
  - Repairing the roof at the Women's Coalition of St. Croix's shelter among other restoration efforts;
  - Conducting major flood mitigation and electrical repairs to the Queen Louise Home for Children of Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands.
- 2. Served as the steward of a \$25,000 donation of tools and supplies from the Danish Emergency Management Agency** for voluntary organizations to use in support of rebuilding missions; **secured funding for storage and security of the tools and supplies through ReVive**, a grassroots, charitable disaster relief movement. To view the full coverage of this generous donation, click [here](#).
- 3. Approved the Long-Term Recovery Group as a fiscal sponsored project (free of charge)**, allowing them to operate and fundraise under the Foundation's nonprofit umbrella.



4. Assisted in raising \$10,000 in funding for the repairs to the St. Croix Montessori School which resumed classes over a month before public schools on St. Croix through Global Giving.

Through the Consortium, the Foundation is also currently working to broaden funding opportunities and partnerships for all Virgin Islands nonprofits. Most recently, the Foundation and the Southeastern Council of Foundations are exploring how to allow nonprofits in the Virgin Islands to be eligible for membership in the Council, allowing Virgin Islands organizations to join a network of over 300 civic organizations.



And today, the Foundation is excited to report that the Nonprofit Consortium is finalizing plans and securing funding to hold the Second Annual St. Croix Nonprofits Funders Retreat, in which the Foundation and members of the Nonprofit Consortium introduce the Virgin Islands to national partners and make a case for future philanthropic investments in the Territory.



*Nonprofits say thank you to the Danish Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) for rebuilding support.*





## THE NONPROFIT CONSORTIUM

### MAKING THE CASE FOR CIVIC LEADERSHIP As a Driver for Holistic Recovery in the U.S. Virgin Islands

*March 2018 - As a nimble and innovative, place-based community foundation committed to equity, resilience, and collaboration (even before the storm), St. Croix Foundation is approaching disaster recovery differently! Having launched our Nonprofit Consortium (NPC) in September of 2016, St. Croix Foundation was able to begin convening nonprofit partners immediately after Hurricanes Irma and Maria to leverage our collective resources and meet the needs of the most vulnerable and underserved residents impacted by the storms.*

Today, by supporting and convening St. Croix nonprofit organizations through our NPC, we are developing comprehensive and progressive sector-wide cases for the recovery and transformation of our island community. Working intimately with local nonprofits who span every sector of a healthy society (from Health and Human Welfare to Arts and Culture), we are also clarifying *and holding up a vision of* sustainable, holistic rebuilding.



With many critical government systems on the verge of collapse before the storms, and completely broken afterwards, our Consortium of nonprofits has had to rely heavily on each other to restore their operations while also filling essential service gaps. In the six months since Hurricane Maria, our Consortium has begun to build a strategic framework and a collective vision for developing new approaches to stabilizing and strengthening St. Croix's nonprofit sector in order to successfully navigate the social and economic devastation of this and future disasters.

*After the Storm: St. Croix Foundation for Community Development is Doing Disaster Recovery Differently! Grounded in our commitment to social equity and holistic community development, we are nurturing resiliency in the Virgin Islands through strategic investments in our Nonprofit Sector.*

As we chart a radical new course to recovery for our community, we have drawn the conclusion that in small, isolated communities with unstable, dysfunctional governmental systems, directing investments to the civic sector is the most viable pathway to ensuring social justice, equity, and sustainable recovery outcomes. The overarching goal is to create redundant safety nets for the most vulnerable and underserved residents as infrastructure and systems are rebuilt.

#### CIVIC LEADERSHIP AT WORK

Undoubtedly, since September of 2017, St. Croix Foundation's Nonprofit Consortium has been incredibly busy and essential. Thanks to generous local and global partners, today the work of the Nonprofit Consortium is presenting a profound case for the critical importance of grounding our Territory's recovery efforts in the civic sector. The following demonstrates major accomplishments, made in just six short months, through our Nonprofit Consortium:



## Philanthropic Convening

In support of our NPC partners and to relieve local donors (and our beleaguered government) from the responsibility of supporting the civic sector, in February of 2017, St. Croix Foundation convened seven national philanthropic executives including the Southeastern Council of Foundations, the Association of Black Foundation Executives (ABFE), the Minnesota Council of Foundations, the Southern Education Fund and Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation (pictured at right) along with local thought leaders. Our short-term goal? To introduce more national philanthropic leaders to the Territory and open historically inaccessible funding streams for our entire civic community. Because of that convening, immediately after the September 2017 hurricanes, St. Croix had seven fierce champions on the mainland who knew St. Croix Foundation, knew our nonprofit landscape, and knew the passion and potential of our civic leaders to meet the immediate needs of the most vulnerable residents in our devastated community. *Our fundamental belief is that, in the absence of healthy governmental systems, it is philanthropy's role (and obligation) to be responsive and strategic in supporting the civic sector so that they may effectively fill critical service gaps!*



*During the 2017 Philanthropic Retreat, Sonia Dow, Executive Director of the St. Croix Landmarks Society, provided cultural context for the unique resilience and shared history of St. Croix's colonial past with 7 African American Senior Philanthropic Executives.*

## Getting St. Croix on the Map

As yet another goal of the Consortium when launched a year and a half ago, St. Croix Foundation has sought to expand opportunities to get the Territory and U.S. Caribbean 'on the map' and recognized as a relevant and legitimate funding priority for national and global funders. An ongoing challenge, many national foundations and membership organizations have historically considered the U.S. Caribbean either international or *irrelevant*. In fact, before the creation of the Consortium, St. Croix Foundation was notified by three of the largest national foundations that the Territory was simply not on their radar and that this probably wouldn't change any time soon. Hurricane Maria overturned that position and we are committed to leveraging this new opportunity and ensuring that our nonprofits benefit from the shift.

Today, after countless hours of advocacy, networking, and partnership building, and as a direct result of our 2017 Philanthropy Retreat, **on March 6, 2018, it was officially announced that St. Croix Foundation had successfully made the case for inclusion and membership in the Southeastern Council of Foundations (SECF), which boasts a network of over 300 foundations serving the U.S. southeast. SCF was also awarded a major grant from W.K. Kellogg Foundation in March of this year to support St. Croix nonprofit recovery efforts.** That grant and the SECF membership represent 'firsts' for the U.S. Virgin Islands and notable achievements for the St. Croix Foundation and our Nonprofit Consortium.

.....*new members of the* **SECF family**.....

*The following organizations have joined or reconnected with SECF since our previous issue. Look forward to seeing them at our events and programs – and give them a warm welcome!*

The **Alamance Community Foundation**, which recently spun off from The Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro, is based in Burlington, North Carolina. Gavin Sands Stevens is the executive director.

The **Asian Foundation** has reconnected with SECF. The independent foundation, based in Knoxville, Tennessee, focuses its grantmaking on arts & culture, community & economic development, education, the environment and health. Andrea Bailey Cox is executive director.

The **Bobbie Bailey Foundation** is an independent foundation based in Atlanta, focused on arts & culture, human services and education. Its chairman is Audrey Morgan.

The **Fred B. and Ruth B. Zigler Foundation**, a family foundation based in Jennings, Louisiana, has reconnected with SECF.

The **Greater Pinebluff Community Foundation**, based in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, has reconnected with SECF. Mike Dixon is the executive director.

The **John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation**, based in Chicago, is expanding its work in the Southeast. The independent foundation's priorities in the region include climate solutions and housing.

**Methodist Health System Foundation** is a health legacy funder based in Slidell, Louisiana, dedicated to the support, development and management of health-related programs and services for the benefit of the citizens of East New Orleans and beyond. Wendy Beron is the president & CEO.

The **St. Croix Foundation for Community Development** is the first SECF member from outside the mainland U.S. Located in Christiansted on Saint Croix, part of the U.S. Virgin Islands, the community foundation serves as both a strategic grantmaker and a direct services provider. Deanna James is the executive director.

The **Zalik Foundation** is a family foundation based in Sandy Springs, Georgia, focused on arts & culture, community & economic development, education, the environment and health. Amanda Abrams is the executive director.



### Hosting the Second Nonprofit Philanthropy Retreat

Following those major accomplishments, the Foundation hosted our 2nd annual philanthropic retreat with six national foundation executives, including representatives from the Council on Foundations, the Center for Disaster Philanthropy, Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation and the philanthropic arm of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Our staunch ABFE and SECF partners, from our 1<sup>st</sup> retreat in 2017, returned to solidify their support for and commitment to St. Croix and our nonprofit sector. The outcome of this most recent convening is that the Foundation and one of our Consortium partners have been invited to present at two national conferences, further increasing our exposure to a broader national philanthropic network on behalf of all nonprofits in the Territory. With dwindling local donor pools and contracted local government funding, these achievements present one of the most significant philanthropic efforts in the USVI, which is building measurable capacity for our nonprofit community at a time when it is most needed!



*St. Croix Foundation convened over 30 nonprofit leaders during our 2018 Nonprofit Consortium Philanthropy Retreat from March 9th – 11<sup>th</sup>, where nonprofits presented sector-specific positioning and vision statements for the future of St. Croix. With Education, the Environs, Health & Human Services, and Arts & Culture organizations represented, nonprofits made progressive ‘cases’ to senior philanthropic executives.*

### A Cohesive Vision for St. Croix

At our recent Nonprofit Consortium Philanthropic Retreat, the Foundation also brought together over 30 organizations that had previously worked on positioning statements that serve to ground the Consortium in making a collaborative ‘case’ around equity, sustainability, *people-power*, and policy. In partnership with their peer organizations, nonprofits presented positioning statements and visions for the future, laying the groundwork for a unified, strategic recovery plan that includes the following:

#### **The Environmental Sector: A Matter of Wealth**

The Environmental Sector supports the protection, conservation, mitigation, and restoration of our island’s natural resources (including historic, built environments); helping to build environmental and, in turn, community resilience, while reconnecting our community with nature.

#### **Arts & Cultural Heritage Sector: The Conduit for Community Development**

The Arts and Culture Sector serves as artistic and culture bearers for St. Croix by documenting our culture, caretaking our cultural archives, and creating the social fabric that feeds the young and old. Our sector bridges societal gaps through connecting and convening diverse populations as a vehicle for public health, a powerful economic force, and the grounding factor of a healthy St. Croix.

#### **Health & Human Services Sector: Revolutionaries for Social Justice**

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma & Maria, social inequities on St. Croix have been exacerbated by the reduction of resources and lack of accessibility to relief. The Health and Human Services Sector empowers our community by advocating for justice, equality and well-being. We serve as champions for underserved and unserved populations by transforming social norms, embracing collaboration, promoting education and being an example of compassion, love and healing.

### Youth & Education Sector: Change Agents

Although the Education Nonprofit Sector has faced fiscal, leadership, and infrastructure challenges, and our families have experienced the devastation of two Category 5 hurricanes, we are responding by providing collaborative, adaptive strategies and embracing opportunities to create new paradigms for the development and education of all of our children.

### Building Trust for Collaboration and Collective Impact

Overall, the Nonprofit Consortium is creating a safe space for our nonprofits to engage in transformative dialogue and strategic planning. With budget cuts, including a recent announcement that the local government intended to cut funding allotments for nonprofits in the Human Services Sector - a critical sector facing greater demands - *the opportunity that our Nonprofit Consortium has before it to demonstrate a new framework for disaster recovery is profound.* With growing appreciation for the ingenuity and courage intrinsic to our sector, the Consortium is amassing people-power, exemplified by the collective advocacy and organizing power that led to the reversal of the government's decision to cut critical funding. In as much as the Foundation is supporting the Consortium, this effort is also helping the Foundation reframe our own narrative about this cadre of *community warriors* who are shepherding social transformation amid crisis. Because here's our reality: our civic partners not only represent a steadying force in our community, but they are also consistently filling critical service gaps while moving the needle forward on equity and social justice issues for the most vulnerable and underserved residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands.



*Acknowledging the weight of their work, nonprofit leaders shared a quiet moment of reflection during our recent Philanthropy Retreat to take a deep breath, recharge their spirits and steal their resolve to chart a radical and unified new course for recovery, grounded in civic leadership, equity, social justice, and a love for St. Croix. St. Croix Foundation is clearing the path!*

## Nurturing Resilience, Supporting Nonprofits

As needs increase and resources become scarcer, in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, leveraging the strengths and staying power of the civic sector through the St. Croix Foundation's Nonprofit Consortium has become more critical than ever before. Consider the following realities even six months after the storms:

1. Eight of thirteen public schools on St. Croix are condemned, requiring every single public-school student and teacher to endure grueling double sessions. Public school students now receive only 4 hours of instruction every day after having lost almost 3 months of school directly after the hurricanes. Because of reduced time in school, our nonprofit sector is filling service voids, providing before *and* after school programming, bussing students, and providing safe spaces for children and families.
2. 60% of all tarped 'blue-roofs' in the four islands of the Virgin Islands are on St. Croix, the poorest of all the islands even before the hurricane. The multiplier effect of this will be felt in every sector and will require that our Long-Term Recovery Group, a sponsored project of the Foundation, combine its efforts with our nonprofit organizations to achieve true resiliency.



*Today, the Caribbean Centers for Boys & Girls is providing public school students academic and extra-curricular programming as well as bussing students to and from school despite losing the roof on their main facility.*

Through our CARE Fund, St. Croix Foundation is awarding strategic grants to our Nonprofit Consortium to enable them to provide critical social services to the most vulnerable residents in the Territory. With significantly fewer resources available to support their work, SCF is awarding grants to organizations like the Boys & Girls Club that lost their roof yet continues to support over 170 students daily and the St. Croix Montessori School that opened their doors to public school students at no charge immediately after the storm. Through our grantmaking, SCF also seeks to build the operational capacity of local nonprofit organizations serving children and families back to pre-hurricane status and to assist them in expanding programmatic services to meet post-hurricane needs.

## For Every Challenge there is an Opportunity.

During this recovery period, our opportunity lies in the strength, innovation and passion of the nonprofits on St. Croix. To help build operational capacity, St. Croix Foundation is committed to providing the Nonprofit Consortium with professional development and organizational development training as well as collaboration skill-building. SCF will also help to develop and improve financial and operational sustainability of nonprofit grantees by providing training on how to utilize data gathered in the reporting process for their own outreach and case-building.

St. Croix's nonprofits have illuminated this one fact: everything really is connected to everything! When seemingly disparate organizations sit at one table and gain understanding of each other's work and vision, the intersections where missions and visions meet is unearthed, and bridges are built. We seek to continue directing resources at those joints to support collective impact and sustainability. These investments in our civic sector are already paying off and we can report that we now have personal champions who know St. Croix, who know St. Croix Foundation, who know the passion and potential of our civic leaders, and who are working to open doors of opportunities for St. Croix.

As we move into the next phase of our Nonprofit Consortium, the Foundation seeks to support operational needs and build sector-wide capacity by leveraging resources for collective impact. We hope you'll join us in creating a model for transformational, resilient leadership.

***For more information on how you can participate and support in St. Croix Foundation's Nonprofit Consortium, please contact our Executive Director, Deanna James, today at 340.773.9898.***