

# Believe... St. Croix Foundation

*Since our inception, St. Croix Foundation has been empowering and mobilizing residents to tackle critical issues affecting our community. With over 25 years of Leadership in Service to the Virgin Islands under our belt, today we invite our Community far and wide, to join us as we embark on an ambitious new course that seeks to position the Foundation as an innovation hub and the epicenter of socioeconomic transformation in the Virgin Islands! In the meantime, here's what we've been up to...*

## St. Croix Foundation Celebrates 25 Years with a New Format for Philanthropy!

In September 2015, St. Croix Foundation celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary! As we pause to reflect on our journey to this milestone, we are simply awed by what the Organization has been able to accomplish in two and a half decades. In total, over the past 25 years, the Foundation has been a conduit of over **\$37 million private and public sector dollars invested into the Virgin Islands Community**. We have also received national recognition in almost every priority area - from economic development and community revitalization to public health and safety, education reform, and nonprofit development.

As we look ahead, **we are focused on advancing a new format of philanthropy**. Our theory of change? We believe that by strategically linking each key priority area, we can leverage resources in more strategic ways, ensuring *deep impact* and positive outcomes. Today, we are embarking on some of the most ambitious work in our history - challenging the status quo, pushing for radical policy reforms in each priority area, and holding our partners *and ourselves* to higher standards of innovation and accountability. The Foundation invites you to visit our website or contact us on how you can join us and support our efforts!



*At the Foundation's 25th Anniversary block party, founding board members Claudette Young-Hinds (far right), Lee Rohn (center), and Bill Taylor, architect of Sunday Market Square, join the revelers in celebration of the Foundation's 25 years of service to the Virgin Islands Community.*

## The Foundation Grants Over \$30,000 and... *Ricardo Richards' Scores Jump High!*

In 2015, the Foundation awarded St. Croix's Ricardo Richards Elementary School (RRS) a \$20,000 Sprint to Excellence grant for their Berry Core Ready project. With the goal of providing teachers with targeted professional development, Berry Core Ready is assisting teachers with designing Common Core lessons that are compliant with new national student learning standards. The result? **RRS students scored 33% higher in reading proficiency and 20% higher in mathematics proficiency when compared with the territory-wide rates for elementary students.**

Grants were also awarded to the Department of Education's Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) Program, the Arthur Richards Junior High School for its Classroom Management Initiative, and VI Ja Goju Jitsu-Ryu Federation St. Thomas Parental Committee for the Charles H. Emmanuel Afterschool Education Connections Program. The Foundation also awarded Dove Art Scholarships totaling \$3,000.00 to Tariq Lionel, Keyshawn Hardy, Kaylisha Ann Jerris and AnutMeri Kahina Christopher.

Having **granted over \$30,600 for the 2014-2015 school year**, the Foundation's grantmaking strategy is simple: provide community stakeholders and businesses with targeted opportunities to impact the most pressing social needs through *strategic grantmaking*. With our strict reporting standards and ongoing support to grantees, we are ensuring the success of our grants while also capturing valuable data to inform our programmatic work.





## WE ARE RECRUITING!

*Do you know any future members of the Foundation's Nationally Recognized Youth Advisory Council?*

St. Croix Foundation's Youth Advisory Council (YAC) is looking for a few new recruits! Launched in 2009 as a pilot program seeking to engage our most important stakeholders - our youth - YAC has blossomed into an impressive vehicle for youth leadership and empowerment. Since its inception, council members have been busy awarding grants to youth groups, developing a web-based portal to engage and motivate their peers, and presenting their projects at national youth conferences. Today, YAC is looking for a few dynamic young people committed to making a positive difference in their community. If you know a high school student who is interested in learning about philanthropy and effecting positive change in their community, please contact the Foundation at 340-773-9898.

The Foundation would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of our outgoing members as they head off to college armed with the tools for real leadership *and for service*. **A special CONGRATULATIONS goes out to member Iris Baptiste (below), whose focus and persistence earned her a four year, full scholarship to the University of the Virgin Islands!** Iris is just one example of the future of a YAC member.



## Frederiksted Health Care Receives \$75,000 Loan from Donor Fund

Utilizing innovative strategies to fill critical gaps and leverage scarce



resources continues to be the guiding principle of the Foundation's Donor Fund portfolio. In July 2016, the St. Croix Foundation approved a loan for the Frederiksted Health Care Clinic in the amount of \$75,000 through the Denali Asset Management Reimbursable Health Fund.

Created in 2007 to support critical services for under-served and at-risk populations within the St. Croix community, the Denali Fund was designed to grant *and loan* flexible funding, primarily for reimbursable distribution, to private and public sector providers that offer care to individuals afflicted with HIV/AIDS. With 609 known cases of people living with HIV/AIDS in the Virgin Islands, half of which reside on St. Croix, the Foundation and Denali believe it is of grave importance to provide the optimum level of care to our at-risk populations. The St. Croix Foundation would like to thank the Frederiksted Health Care Clinic and Denali Asset Management for working collaboratively to ensure healthier outcomes for some of our most vulnerable residents!

## Summer Interns Making a Difference!

For the summer of 2016, St. Croix Foundation is walking the talk about the importance of workforce development and providing rich, on-the-job opportunities for our young people. Jonathan Williams, Malli Mastori, and Leandra Kent (*below*) joined the Foundation for 2 months to assist with everything from the Food & Wine Experience planning and marketing to educational research and data collection. While the Foundation's staff has been mentoring these talented young people, they are providing fresh insight and perspective to us every day. By simply reaching out to the University of the Virgin Islands, we were able to identify our summer interns and do our part to nurture the next generation of leaders. We know we will see great things from them in the future, and we thank them for helping us to make a difference!!





## St. Croix Foundation Convenes 31<sup>st</sup> Legislature on Education Policy

As the Foundation redoubles our push for system-wide education reform, we have shifted our focus from programs to policy. At the start of 2013, we convened a Steering Committee comprising a cross-section of local stakeholders including business leaders, educators from public, private, and parochial schools, and the University of the Virgin Islands. Led by a highly competent Education Policy Officer, the Committee is examining VI Codes and vetting the laws and policies that govern the Territory's school system in 5 priority areas: (1) student support systems, (2) instructional management and teacher quality, (3) facilities management, (4) funding, and (5) organizational design. Our Steering Committee has now spent the past 3 years mining through a maze of VI codes, organizational charts and operating policies illuminating incongruences and incoherence in our system. As a first-of-its-kind initiative, the final output of our analysis will be a web-based, interactive Policy Map that will empower policymakers to make balanced and fully informed decisions. It will also serve as a model for comprehensive systems analysis in other governmental instrumentalities.



*Above: Senators from the 31<sup>st</sup> Legislature convened in the Foundation's Conference room in May 2016 for a 3 hour deep dive into "The Organization and Structure of the VI Public Education System." Moderated by the Foundation's Policy Officer, the meeting served to highlight outdated and incongruent educational statutes and generated an open and honest conversation on viable policy reforms. To date, the Foundation has hosted similar meetings with key policymakers and stakeholder groups from the Board of Education, the State Office of the Department of Education, representatives from the St. Croix American Federation of Teachers, teachers and University of the Virgin Islands!*



### Education First Makes Impact!

In June of 2014, leading up to the Territory's 2014 election season, St. Croix Foundation launched a five-month editorial series entitled "Education First!" that urged citizens to elect candidates committed to making education their top priority.

Our editorial series discussed a myriad of issues ranging from teacher preparation and student discipline to classroom management, charter schools, common core and international models of educational excellence. Editorials ran every Wednesday in the local *St. Croix Avis* for 19 weeks right up to Election Day in November 2014, and are now available on our website.

In June 2015, as testimony to the Foundation's impact in our community, Freshman Senator Kurt Vialet (pictured above), launched his own "Education First - Everything Else Can Wait!" Campaign! ***We encourage all our candidates for public office to do the same and carry the baton forward!***

## Framing the Future through the 2016 Food & Wine Experience



Cork & Fork Celebrity Chef, Sam Choy (center), and Chef Gary Klinefelter (at right) take a moment with students from the Career & Technical Education Center's Culinary Program to smile for the camera in between preparing delectable courses for guests at the 2016 FWE.

Coinciding with the Foundation's Silver Anniversary, our 2016 Food & Wine Experience (FWE) brought with it greater alignment between our mission and the events our community has grown to love. In addition to the lively entertainment, celebrity chefs, amazing food and fine wine, our streamlined event lineup is directing laser focus on leveraging this world-class *Experience* into a vehicle for social transformation. By connecting all of our stakeholders (sponsors, partners, grantees and the community at-large) with our programmatic priorities, our FWE is blossoming into not just a fundraiser for St. Croix Foundation but a benefit for the entire Virgin Islands. Funds raised support our work in every priority area from Community Revitalization, Public Safety, and Public Education to Nonprofit Development, Youth Leadership and Workforce Development. The Foundation is forever grateful to all of our committed sponsors, coordinators, and community partners on all three islands for their support and commitment. We invite culinary enthusiasts, connoisseurs of fine wine, celebrity chefs and foodies to join us for the 2017 Food and Wine Experience April 7-10th! For more information visit [www.stcroixfoodandwine.com](http://www.stcroixfoodandwine.com) and stay tuned for updates on 2017!

### *A Salute to Former President Roger Dewey*

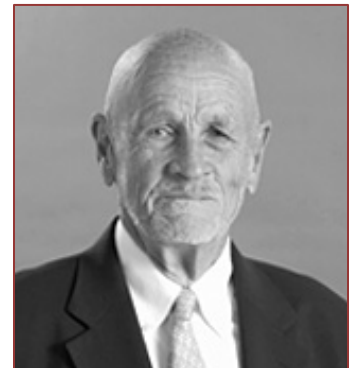
In November 2014, the St. Croix Foundation's Board of Directors announced the retirement of President Roger W. Dewey after 22 years of service. With his extensive background in community and economic development, Roger brought to the Foundation the requisite combination of vision and creativity that proved to be instrumental in establishing the Foundation as a Civic Leader and community revitalization trailblazer. In his parting statement, Roger said, "It has been a true honor to serve our community side by side with committed staff and Board members. The partnerships we've built over my 22 years are the bedrock for the Foundation's success and are testimony to our motto that... ***Together we can make a difference!***"



Now a resident of Thailand, Roger and his wife Kat are enjoying retirement, traveling through Southeast Asia and Europe and sharing their adventures with us along the way. While we live vicariously through them, all of us at the Foundation wish Roger and Kat health, happiness and safe travels!!!

### *Donor Corner: Don Weeden*

Welcome from an old timer to the St Croix Foundation Newsletter. In 1996, I finally bought a house here and asked Joel Holt to name some non-profits doing good work. The St. Croix Foundation was at the top of his list. Soon, the late John Emery, a wonderful man, induced me to join their Board. I did just that and never looked back. Now with Deanna James as Executive Director, much of their effort is focused on improving public safety and education. There's no better purpose than that. If you haven't yet, please get involved.



## *Believe...*

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