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Globally-Ranked Accelerator Brings Social Impact Programming to U.S. Virgin Islands

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ST. THOMAS — A group of community leaders are sparking innovation by hosting the globally recognized SEED SPOT's 2-Day Launch Camp on St. Thomas to empower more impact-driven entrepreneurs, a recently issued release had made known.

The U.S. Virgin Islands' entrepreneurial ecosystem is the first community in the Caribbean to host the 2-Day Launch Camp, the release said, a program designed to support entrepreneurs in the beginning stages of founding a business, and will be stronger with the unique programming SEED SPOT offers to entrepreneurs who are creating a product, service or technology that positively impacts the world.

During the 2-Day Launch Camp, entrepreneurs will be surrounded by a unique curriculum designed for social entrepreneurship, mentors, content experts, and a community of support. The 2-Day Launch Camp culminates in a community pitch event.

“Empowering entrepreneurs solving local and global issues creates ripples of positive change, yet many individuals lack access to resources and networks to launch their idea,” said C’pher Gresham, CEO of SEED SPOT. “We know that genius and ideas are equally distributed, but opportunity is not, that is why we foster entrepreneurship through programs, mentorship, access to networks and capital, and on-going support, by empowering dynamic local leaders to organize SEED SPOT programs in their communities. We are excited to empower the U.S. Virgin Islands entrepreneurial community.”

“We want every talented innovator in the Virgin Islands to have access to the resources, tools, and networks they need to help solve our biggest problems”, said Tricia Homer, SEED SPOT Lead Community Organizer and a former Miss U.S. Virgin Islands Universe. “SEED SPOT is a great fit for the VI because they bring a proven curriculum, a global support network and impact metrics to hold them accountable. Social entrepreneurship is about solving our most complex problems in a sustainable way. We have the skills and passion to address our social issues right here in the Virgin Islands.”

Ms. Homer is now on faculty at the University of Maryland Robert H. Smith School of Business where she teaches Business Communication, Social Innovation, and Entrepreneurship.

Ms. Homer represented the U.S. Virgin Islands at the 2005 Miss Universe pageant where she was awarded Miss Congeniality. In 2004 and 2005 she produced and directed the first ever production of The Vagina Monologues in the Virgin Islands. Part of Eve Ensler’s global V-Day movement, the Obie Award-winning play raised awareness about violence against women in the Virgin Islands and raised over \$13,000 for the Family Resource Center and Women’s Coalition of St. Croix. She is bringing the same passion for social change to this program. “We have a rock star team of entrepreneurs, local community leaders, educators, and event producers guiding and advising this U.S.VI SEED SPOT initiative.”

The SEED SPOT 2-Day Launch Camp is sponsored in part by the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands, VI Capital Resources, FirstBank, VI Lottery, Merchants Commercial Bank and the Small Business Development Center.

Over the past seven years, SEED SPOT has worked with over 844 ventures, 88% of which are still in business today. Of these ventures, 53 percent are female founded, 81 percent are started by underrepresented founders, and collectively, the ventures have created over 2,300 new jobs and impacted over eight million lives with their innovations. SEED SPOT is excited to continue the momentum and impact in the U.S. Virgin Islands community.

Registration is now open for SEED SPOT’s 2-Day Launch Camp running on March 27-28 in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The cost to apply is \$60 per participant until February 15th. After that, the price is \$75 per participant. All participants can register at bit.ly/2DLC-VI.