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St. Croix Foundation Awards \$22,000 in Scholarships to Local Youth

Students receive scholarships through the Patrick and Amelia Williams Opportunity Fund, the St. Croix Educational Complex 20th Anniversary Reunion Committee Fund, and the Foundation Scholars Fund during a virtual ceremony

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The St. Croix Foundation has announced that \$22,000 in scholarships were awarded to six deserving St. Croix youth on Wednesday, July 10. The virtual presentation ceremony took place at the St. Croix Foundation headquarters in Sunday Market Square.

These scholarships were made possible through the Patrick and Amelia Williams Opportunity Fund, the St. Croix Educational Complex 20th Anniversary Reunion Committee Fund, and the

Foundation Scholars Fund.

2024 Scholarship Recipients:

Patrick & Amelia Williams Opportunity Fund

- \$4,000 Competitive Scholarship to 2024 Graduate of St. Croix Educational Complex:
 - Jahnai Rodriguez, studying Physical Therapy at Florida A & M University
- Three \$4,000 Invitation-Only Scholarships to rising seniors:
 - Abigail Valery, studying Music Education at Temple University
 - Sanaa Burke, studying Meteorology at the University of Delaware
 - Caliyah Helliger, studying Biology at Howard University

St. Croix Educational Complex (SCEC) 20th Anniversary Reunion Committee Fund

- \$5,000 Competitive Scholarship:
 - Ryan Ferdinand, Jr., studying Biomedical Engineering at Villanova University
- \$1,000 Scholarship for 2023 recipient:
 - Jayden Ferdinand, studying Psychology at Penn State University

During the virtual awards ceremony, recipients expressed their heartfelt gratitude:

“I don’t think I would’ve been able to actually make it through college without your support. It means a lot to know that there are people back home outside of my family that actually care and they’re like I’m willing to instill in you, I am willing to invest in you, because I believe you have potential.” – Sanaa Burke

“Thank you for your support, I couldn’t be able to chase my dreams of earning a doctorate degree in physical therapy without your aid. It not only means a lot to me, it means a lot to my family.” – Jahnai Rodriguez

“A special thank you to the Committee for selecting me as a recipient of this scholarship; it’s a testament to all of my hard work and years of education, and I am extremely honored to receive it. I am committed to making the most of this opportunity.” – Ryan Ferdinand, Jr.

“You guys are amazing. A blessing to the community, and I don’t know- more needs to go out about what you are doing.” – Mother of Ryan & Jayden Ferdinand

The Patrick and Amelia Williams Opportunity Fund was established by Junior Gaspard in honor of his grandparents, aiming to support youth who have met obstacles but persevere despite challenges. To date, the fund has awarded \$84,000 to 15 young people.

Junior Gaspard expressed his pride, saying, “We are incredibly proud to support these outstanding students who have demonstrated remarkable perseverance throughout their college journey. Watching them leave St. Croix for a new environment, settle into their lives as college students, and then perform at such a high level academically and socially over the last three years has been truly inspiring.”

The SCEC 20th Anniversary Reunion Committee Fund, established by the SCEC’s 2003 alumni, has awarded a total of \$11,000 to two young scholars in its two years of operation. Anquanette Gaspard, sister to Junior Gaspard, established the fund to increase support for St. Croix youth and encourage giving back to the next generation.

The St. Croix Foundation extended appreciation to the Gaspard family, the St. Croix Educational Complex 20th Anniversary Reunion Committee, and the Foundation's Grants & Scholarships Review Committee for their partnership and philanthropic spirit. The Foundation welcomes donations to these funds to support additional students as they pursue their education.

For more information on how to support these special funds or details on the application process for future scholarships, visit the Foundation online at www.stxfoundation.org or call 340-773-9898.

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