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Inaugural St. Croix Youth Hope Awards to Honor Island's Young Leaders

Senate Vice President Kenneth Gittens and the I Am Hope Foundation will recognize youth exemplifying leadership, perseverance and community impact during the February 28 ceremony at Teddy's in Christiansted.

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The inaugural St. Croix Youth Hope Awards will take place at 6 p.m. on Saturday, February 28 at Teddy's in Christiansted, marking the first time the celebration has been hosted on St. Croix.

Senate Vice President Kenneth Gittens announced his partnership with the "I Am Hope Foundation" to bring the awards ceremony to the district, describing the event as an opportunity to highlight the accomplishments and character of the island's youth.

The Youth Hope Awards recognize children and young people whose efforts, leadership, and community contributions have made a positive impact. Honorees are selected for exemplifying perseverance, responsibility, and a commitment to uplifting others.

The 2026 St. Croix Youth Hope Award recipients are:

- Linroy Forde — Outstanding Youth Award
- Daryl Griffith — Trailblazer Award
- K’Asia O’Bryan — Role Model Award
- Israel Popo — Leadership Award
- Micaiah Jones — Community Impact Award
- Kaela Violet — Hope Award
- Marley Robinson — Youth Impact Award
- Jamal Rogers Jr. — Youth Inspire Award
- Je’Talia Hanley — Youth Excellence Award
- Julieta & Gracie Reid Ventura — Entrepreneur Award

The Youth Hope Awards were founded by Dr. Teshanne Phillip, a native of St. John and founder of the “I Am Hope Foundation.” For the past seven years, Dr. Phillip has hosted the Hope Awards in the St. Thomas–St. John District, recognizing young leaders and changemakers throughout the territory.

Senator Gittens expressed enthusiasm about expanding the program to St. Croix.

“At a time when negativity often dominates the conversation, this is an opportunity to shine a light on our best and brightest,” Senator Gittens said. “Our young people are accomplishing remarkable things, and they deserve to be celebrated. I encourage the entire community to join me in supporting and uplifting these exceptional honorees.”

Tickets for the February 28 event must be purchased in advance and are available online at <https://HopeAwardsStCroixUSVI.eventbrite.com>.

Individuals and organizations interested in further recognizing the honorees may also purchase a congratulatory advertisement in the official event program. Inquiries regarding advertisements can be directed to IamHopeFoundation@outlook.com.