

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Lutheran Social Services VI Receives \$351,000 National AmeriCorps Grant

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St. Croix -- Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands (LSSVI) has received a \$351,000 AmeriCorps grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to support 18 AmeriCorps members who will serve children who have been abandoned, abused, or neglected, low-income seniors, and adults with disabilities, according to a press release the nonprofit issued on Wednesday. The grant will support AmeriCorps members here and St. Thomas.

AmeriCorps members will tackle the critical challenges of assisting seniors to maintain independent living, teaching life skills to adults with disabilities, and providing loving care and a therapeutic setting for children who have been removed from their homes, allowing

LSSVI to expand its impact on these important national issues.

"AmeriCorps is an indispensable resource to help meet critical challenges facing our communities and nation," said Junia John-Straker, Chief Executive Officer of Lutheran Social Services of the V.I. "We're thrilled that the Corporation for National and Community Service has recognized the value that AmeriCorps members serving with Project Reach Lutheran Social Services offer to our community. These AmeriCorps members will meet pressing local needs as they develop civic and leadership skills that last a lifetime."

"AmeriCorps members are improving the lives of millions of citizens and having a positive and lasting impact on the toughest challenges facing our communities," said Wendy Spencer, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service. "While they serve others, AmeriCorps members also expand opportunity for themselves – gaining skills and experience to jumpstart their careers. We congratulate Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands for their strong application, and thank all AmeriCorps members for their dedication to service."

In addition to the grant funding, CNCS will make available \$175 million in Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards for the 75,000 AmeriCorps members funded by these grants nationwide. After completing a full term of service, AmeriCorps members receive an award of \$5,730 that they can use to pay for college or to pay off student loans.

LSSVI has applied for, and been awarded, an AmeriCorps grant every year since the federal program first began in 1994, making this year's award the 21st AmeriCorps grant LSSVI has received. AmeriCorps operates as a public-private partnership that leverages significant amounts of outside resources to stretch the federal dollar and increase community impact. LSSVI is required to match the \$351,000 federal grant award with \$215,129 in local matching support and other outside resources from businesses, foundations, and other organizations.

The current year's AmeriCorps grant cycle was highly competitive, due to the strong demand by organizations seeking AmeriCorps resources. The 2015 competition prioritized investments in economic opportunity, education, veterans and military families, disaster services, and continued a new initiative for governors and mayors.

AmeriCorps engages 75,000 members in intensive service annually to serve through nonprofit, faith-based, and community organizations at 25,000 locations across the country. These members help communities tackle pressing problems while mobilizing millions of volunteers for the organizations they serve. Since 1994, more than 900,000 Americans have provided more than 1 billion hours of service addressing critical challenges from poverty and hunger to disasters and the dropout crisis.

Below is a listing of where AmeriCorps members will serve:

St. Thomas: Ebenezer Gardens – 2 members serving seniors Yellow Cedar Residence – 1 member serving adults with disabilities

St. Croix: Queen Louise Home for Children – 7 members serving children Flamboyant Gardens – 4 members serving seniors and adults who use a wheelchair LSS Housing Management Division – 2 members serving seniors and adults with disabilities Ginger

Thomas Residence – 2 members serving adults with disabilities

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