

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Thirty-three Educational Complex High School Students To Join Teen C.E.R.T. Program This Weekend

Community Center / **Published On March 03, 2016 01:17 PM /**

Staff **March 03, 2016**



ST. CROIX -- Thirty-three St. Croix Educational Complex High School student-volunteers, this weekend, will face the final challenge before joining the ranks of Teen Community Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T), a youth disaster preparedness program sponsored by the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (V.I.T.E.M.A.) and Virgin Islands Rescue.

According to a release V.I.T.E.M.A. issued on Wednesday, at 3 p.m. on Sunday, March 6, the Educational Complex student-volunteers will participate in a mock full-scale hurricane exercise to test basic disaster response skills learned in the classroom and during hands-on training including; fire safety and suppression, light search and rescue,

disaster medical operations and team organization. The student-volunteers also completed Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training as part of the program, and will each receive an American Heart Association CPR certification card.

During Sunday's mock exercise, the group will be required to establish an incident command post to manage disaster operations and to respond to incidents that call for rescue and medical support, according to the release.

The exercise is the last hurdle these students face before receiving their official Teen C.E.R.T certification. Teen C.E.R.T., similar to the adult C.E.R.T. program, required that they participate in a 40-hour training program taught by certified C.E.R.T. trainers with the St. Croix Rescue Academy. Academy instructors also will observe and evaluate the students during the mock hurricane exercise.

The exercise will take place at the St. Croix Rescue Academy located in Five Corners, Christiansted, and the Certificate Ceremony set for 9:45 a.m., Thursday, March 10th, at the Educational Complex High School gymnasium. The entire school population is slated to attend ceremony.

The Virgin Islands Teen C.E.R.T. program is made possible through FEMA grant funding, according to the release. The program's objective is to educate student-volunteers about hazards that may impact where they attend school and live and to train them in basic skills that support an emergency or disaster response effort.

"We are very proud of these students who stepped up and volunteered to be called upon in times of crisis," said VITEMA Director Mona Barnes. "It demonstrates that they truly care about the safety of others and that they are vested in their community. I look forward to seeing their skills in full force during this weekend's exercise."

St. Croix Rescue Chief Gregory Richards, who has been instrumental in delivering the program to schools over the last several years, added that youth, like adults, are often compelled to volunteer their services during a disaster.

"As adults, we feel helpless when there is no means for us to provide support in a disaster. It's no different for young people," Mr. Richards said. "The Teen CERT program gives our youth the opportunity to help and to give back in very meaningful way."

The Educational Complex High School will become the fourth school to have an on-campus certified Teen C.E.R.T. The St. Croix Seventh Day Adventist High School, the former Elena Christian Junior High School and Ivanna Eudora Kean High School also established Teen C.E.R.T.s, the release concluded.

For more information contact Gregory Richards, St. Croix Rescue Chief, at 340-771-0555.