

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Juan Luis Hospital Partners With Island Therapy Solutions; Pilot Program Successfully Concludes 8-Week Rotation

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ST. CROIX -- The Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center in May welcomed seven adult volunteers with autism from Island Therapy Solutions, a local agency providing a wide range of psychological and therapeutic services for adults and children on St. Croix, the hospital announced today. The volunteer group finished its first 8-week rotation at the end of July, and has begun the second rotation.

JFL Acting CEO Richard Evangelista said he was excited about the program. "These volunteers have been awesome, completing every assignment they've been given," said

Mr. Evangelista. "They have demonstrated their ability to work well in a professional setting, and I am happy that they get the opportunity to hone their skills here at JFL."

According to the release, the seven volunteers are working in several areas at JFL, including guest relations, administration, human resources, pharmacy, JFL's print shop and the housekeeping and maintenance departments. They range in age from 19 to 35 years old, and each volunteer is paired with an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) technician while working, to systematically build their skills. Their duties include clerical work such as filing, shredding, and answering phones, as well as cleaning, sorting laundry, organizing and maintaining inventory and light landscaping.

The new program is part of a pilot program developed by Dr. Lindsay Wagner and Meghan Crowley, a board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA) from Island Therapy Solutions to place their adult learners with autism in a work setting. The program is designed to help those volunteers develop employment, social, and independent living skills. The overall goal of the ABA-based program is to help adult learners with autism gain independence, according to the release.

The volunteer group completed orientation at the hospital on May 15, before starting work at JFL. The volunteers also take part in an ABA-based program organized on site at Island Therapy Solutions created by a BCBA to help prepare the adult learners for their new assignments. Ms. Crowley, Island Therapy Solutions' BCBA, oversees the program and wanted JFL to be a site to initiate the pilot.

"We are so grateful to the Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital as an organization for their support in this endeavor. JFL has provided an amazing platform for our adult learners to apply their newly learned skills in a safe, accepting environment," said Ms. Crowley about the experience.

The program is year-round, and volunteers will complete eight-week rotations in each area.