

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Tropical Shipping Supports Maritime Education With \$10,000 Donation To World Ocean School

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ST. CROIX -- Tropical Shipping on Thursday afternoon presented a check f \$10,000 to World Ocean School, which will be starting a maritime academy at the St. Croix Central High School on Monday. The academy is a 2-credit program and includes 15 hours of weekly courses.

World Ocean School is a nonprofit which provides programs aboard the historic Schooner Roseway that challenge underserved children academically, physically, and emotionally. According to a blurb on the nonprofit's website, "doing this the way we do it, combats chronic apathy and disengagement which undermine society through increased drop-out rates, substance abuse, crime, and unemployment."

Ocean World School has been operating on St. Croix since 2006, working with public school students on the elementary, junior high and high school levels. Following the 2017 storms, the nonprofit took students during their out-of-school hours, brought them to the ship which docks in Gallows Bay, and taught them how to sail, perform Coast Guard drills, maintenance and operation of the ship, as well as basic maintenance on the ship's engine and systems.



From left to right: Eden Leonard, president and executive director of World Ocean School; Karla L. Yhan, manager at Tropical Shipping St. Croix; Chad Nelson, director of facilities, security and compliance at Tropical Shipping; and Jennifer Nugent-Hill, Tropical Shipping director of governmental and community affairs. (Credit: Cruselda Roberts, VIC)

"At the end of their time with us, we were able to offer them sea time letters and those are transferrable for any sea time career," said Eden Leonard, president and executive director of World Ocean School. Part of the academy's 15-hour weekly classes will include time spent on the Roseway, along with time spent at other maritime industry locations on St. Croix. Ms. Leonard said students will receive their letters at the end of the semester. Students will also receive STCW certification, which was established in 1978 and sets minimum qualification standards for masters, officers and watch personnel on seagoing merchant ships and large yachts.

Jennifer Nugent-Hill, director of government and community affairs at Tropical Shipping, said the company was pleased to support World Ocean School in its efforts to start a maritime academy at the St. Croix Central High School. "The maritime industry is absolutely one of the most significant industries for the U.S. Virgin Islands, but certainly for the world because just about 80 percent of everything we consume comes from water," she said.

Mrs. Nugent-Hill said the maritime industry in the U.S.V.I. pays well, with crane operators making \$80,000 per annum. She revealed that Tropical Shipping provides its employees with a number of benefits aside from hourly wage, among them a 401k. Therefore, she added, the opportunities of maritime learning in the territory needed to be increased.

"Tropical Shipping is committed to ensure that the children of the Virgin Islands get exposure to the incredible opportunities that there are in the maritime space," she said.

Karla L. Yhan, manager at Tropical Shipping St. Croix, thanked World Ocean School for the maritime exposure that it has provided so far to local students. "We seldom take time to recognize how important transportation is to our economy because we manufacture little to nothing here in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and our cargo ports along with the industry is so important for the vitality of our lives here," Ms. Yhan said.

Feature Image Credit: Ernice Gilbert for VI Consortium.