

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix Foundation To Host 'Crucian Conversations' With St. Croix Culture Bearers

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The St. Croix Foundation for Community Development will be hosting StoryCorps, a national organization dedicated to the preservation of community voices and cultures representing diverse American experiences, from Monday April 1st through Wednesday April 3rd, a release the nonprofit issued Saturday has made known. Working in partnership with StoryCorps, the foundation will engage 30 Crucian Cultural Bearers to record and share conversations about resilience, about culture, and about the power of the human spirit through this legacy project entitled, "Crucian Conversations," the release said.

During their visit StoryCorps will record 15 conversations between 30 participants who will share experiences of Caribbean identity and cultural heritage with local residents, including doctors, musicians, chefs, and community activists, according to the release. Through each recording, St. Croix Foundation and StoryCorps seeks to bring further awareness to the diverse landscape of the Virgin Islands while honoring participants by preserving their stories as a part of the Crucian cultural history and fostering a deeper understanding of the unique social fabric of the St. Croix community.

The foundation said the genesis of Crucian Conversations first came about when the Urban Land Institute (ULI) visited St. Croix in June 2018 and St. Croix Foundation was invited to participate in interviews, meeting with artist Amie MacPhee and cultural anthropologist, Sandra Kulli, among other community development representatives from ULI. In subsequent months, Ms. Kulli and Ms. MacPhee collaborated with the Foundation and members of StoryCorps to make the project a reality.

Crucian Conversations will follow the StoryCorps model and consist of two people who know each other having an intimate 40-minute conversation. A trained StoryCorps facilitator will sit in the room during the interview. StoryCorps conversations are not rehearsed or read from notes and participants are encouraged to incorporate their own questions, while maintaining spontaneity and flexibility during conversations. By telling actual stories, these conversations will be an opportunity for participants to record the essence and vast array of the Crucian experience from their personal perspectives, the release said.

Through StoryCorps' close partnership with National Public Radio (NPR), some of the recorded conversations may be aired on NPR and, with permission, archived at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. The ultimate aim is to capture and amplify voices of everyday people least heard in the media, the foundation said.

The timing of Crucian Conversations was specifically designed by the Foundation and StoryCorps to coincide with the Foundation's benefit, St. Croix Food & Wine Experience, to achieve the Foundation's goal to celebrate the people, land and culture of St. Croix. This year's annual event series, themed "Feel St. Croix," and StoryCorps' work will underscore the Foundation's holistic approach to community development and rebuilding efforts in the aftermath of the 2017 hurricanes.

Crucian Conversations is made possible by a grant through Enterprise Community Partners and the Urban Land Institute which provided funding support and coordination. The Foundation wishes to extend its sincerest appreciation to the 30 culture bearers who have generously committed their time and stories to the process, to Sandra Kulli and Amie MacPhee, and to the team and facilitators of StoryCorps.

For more information about Crucian Conversations, StoryCorps, and the work of the Foundation, please contact St. Croix Foundation directly at 340.773.9898.