

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix Foundation, Patrick & Amelia Williams Opportunity Fund, Award \$17,000 In Scholarships To St. Croix Students

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ST. CROIX -- St. Croix Foundation announced Thursday a total of \$17,000 in scholarships awarded to five St. Croix graduates on Wednesday at the foundation's headquarters in Market Square. Scholarships were made possible through the second annual cycle for the Patrick and Amelia Williams Opportunity Fund and the foundation's DOVE Memorial Arts Scholarship Fund.

Two scholarships in the amount of \$5,000 were awarded through the Patrick and Amelia Williams Opportunity Fund, which was established to provide opportunities to youth who

have met obstacles but persevered despite these challenges, and see educational pursuits as a means to achieving personal and professional success that can then be shared with the next generation.

Awards were presented to the following students by Junior Gaspard and St. Croix Foundation:

- LaMonique Berrios, Sam Houston State College, Major:
- Engineering Jayla Norman, Saint Agnes College, Major: Nursing

An additional scholarship was awarded to Alayna Caraballo through the Giving the Dream Fund for attendance at School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Aimed at supporting students who have had to overcome obstacles to continue their education, particularly in the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, students had to meet specific requirements that included being a graduate from a St. Croix public high school and junior high school, maintaining a GPA of 2.0 or higher, demonstrating financial need, and most importantly, submitting personal essays that spoke to the reality of their challenges and their journey to pursue their dreams, the foundation said. All recipients are required to submit reports to the foundation.

A native of St. Croix and graduate of Central High School and John H. Woodson Junior High School himself, Gaspard and the rest of the Williams/Gaspard family wished to honor his grandparents in a meaningful way in the aftermath of the hurricanes of 2017. It was deemed that launching a named scholarship fund would allow for a longer lasting impact on the lives of students in the community and allow the lessons learned from his grandparents about resilience and perseverance to be passed on to the next generation of leaders.

Scholarship recipient Jayla Norman expressed her appreciation, stating that, "I am truly grateful to have been chosen by this prestigious foundation as a recipient for a Patrick & Amelia Williams Opportunity scholarship. The hard work that I have put in from my early years of education to now will continue so that awards such as this one are used effectively. I owe it all to God, my parents and godparents, close family and friends, and the great teachers and mentors that have blessed my mind and attitude throughout the years. I am forever grateful for opportunities like these that will help me to achieve great things and make the St. Croix Foundation, my community, and of course my parents proud."

In 2018 St. Croix Foundation also awarded an additional \$2,000 through its DOVE Memorial Arts Scholarship Fund (established in 2003) to support two students who received scholarships through the Williams Opportunity Fund: Joshua Parris is now in his second year studying criminal justice at the University of the Virgin Islands, and Shauniqua Wells who is also in her second year at Monroe College pursuing a degree in the culinary arts.

"This year is special for St. Croix Foundation. As part of our approach to holistic community development and strategic grantmaking, we made the decision to award two mini-grants to last year's award recipients in demonstration of our commitment to supporting and sustaining our grantees through success," said St. Croix Foundation

President Deanna James.

The foundation extended its deepest appreciation to Junior Gaspard (and his family) for his partnership and philanthropic spirit as well as the foundation's Grants Review Committee for their engagement. The Patrick and Amelia Williams Opportunity Fund welcomes gifts to allow for additional students to be provided the chance to pursue their education. For more information about the Williams Opportunity Fund, and how you can support this special scholarship opportunity for young people, contact St. Croix Foundation at 773-9898 or visit our website at to learn more.

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