

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix Foundation Awards \$20,000 in Scholarships, Supporting the Future of Local Youth

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ST. CROIX — Four bright young minds from St. Croix were recently awarded a collective sum of \$20,000 in scholarships from the St. Croix Foundation during a virtual presentation held on July 18.

The scholarships were made available through three key funds: the Patrick and Amelia Williams Opportunity Fund and the Foundation Scholars Fund, which awarded three students – Abigail Valery, Caliyah Helliger, and Sanaa Burke – \$5,000 each, for their third year at their respective universities.

Ms. Valery, a Music Education major at Temple University, Ms. Helliger, a Biology major at Howard University, and Ms. Burke, a climatology/meteorology major at the University of Delaware, have been demonstrating progress through submitting formal applications including transcripts, reference letters, and candid video presentations about their academic journey, according to the foundation.

These scholarship funds honor the memory and legacy of Patrick and Amelia Williams, the grandparents of fund administrators Junior and Anquanette Gaspard. The siblings have carried forward the values of resilience and determination their grandparents embodied, striving to provide young people in St. Croix with the same opportunities to overcome their challenges and succeed.

Jayden Ferdinand, a graduate of St. Croix Educational Complex, is the inaugural recipient of a \$5,000 scholarship from the St. Croix Educational Complex 20th Anniversary Reunion Committee Fund. He will begin his studies in psychology at Penn State University this fall.

Expressing her pride in the scholarship recipients, Anquanette Gaspard, advisor to the funds, said, "These bright young women continue to persevere and thrive in their college endeavors, and we are grateful for the opportunity to continue to lend our support. Having Jayden as the first recipient of the St. Croix Educational Complex 20th Anniversary Fund was an honor. He embodies much of what our class represents: determination, perseverance, and strength."

Since its establishment, the Patrick and Amelia Williams Opportunity Fund has awarded a total of \$71,000 in scholarships to 11 students who have faced significant challenges throughout their high school and early university education.

One of the recipients, Caliyah Helliger, expressed her gratitude, stating, "I am beyond grateful and humble to be a recipient of this scholarship for the third consecutive year. The Gaspard family and St. Croix Foundation have been at my side on this journey since I left high school and it's amazing to have that support."

The St. Croix Foundation extended its gratitude to the Gaspard family, the St. Croix Educational Complex 20th Anniversary Reunion Committee, and DIAM Management for their philanthropic partnerships. They continue to welcome donations to The Patrick and Amelia Williams Opportunity Fund, the SCEC 20th Anniversary Fund, and the Foundation Scholars Fund, aiding in the educational pursuits of future scholars.