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CFVI Awards More than \$410,000 to Support Humanities Programs and Activities in the Territory

U.S. Virgin Islands, January 7, 2021 — The Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands (CFVI) has awarded \$410,791 to 20 USVI nonprofit organizations and one individual with funding received from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

“These grants will support humanities programs throughout the USVI, reflecting the unique gifts of our Territory’s diverse communities and the importance of our culture, heritage, and its preservation. We are so thankful to NEH, and to CFVI’s nonprofit partners for their creativity and commitment to enriching the lives of all of us with these exciting humanities programs,” said CFVI President Dee Baecher-Brown.

The purpose of the NEH funding is to support humanities programs, projects and initiatives such as festivals, literacy campaigns, speaker’s bureaus, teacher development, cultural tourism, humanities publications, films, exhibitions, and projects that preserve and provide access to cultural and educational resources in the USVI. Requests for proposals were announced by CFVI in June and August of 2020, and over 50 applications were submitted.

“Our goal is to bolster local humanities entities, as well as to enrich the lives of people throughout the Territory through humanities education, lifelong learning, and public humanities programming,” said CFVI’s Vice President and Director of Grants and Programs, Anna Wheatley Scarbriel.

Approximately half of the funding CFVI received from NEH came from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. As directed by NEH, CFVI awarded the CARES money to

provide emergency project funding to USVI museums, libraries, archives, historic sites, and other nonprofits impacted by the pandemic. From the NEH CARES Act funding, CFVI awarded a total of **\$242,464** to 11 organizations, which support a wide variety of programs and initiatives:

All Saints Cathedral School | Academic Enhancement and Maintaining Our Cultural Relevance | \$20,000 – Funding supports K-12 students' engagement in VI historical and cultural content. This project provides culturally relevant instruction in the Caribbean art forms of storytelling, bamboula and quadrille dance, and steel pan. A Caribbean festival is expected to be held in March (as public health concerns permit), at the end of VI History month, where the culmination of learning activities will be presented to the school and community.

Boys & Girls Clubs of St. Thomas/St. John | 2020-2021 BGC St. Thomas/St. John Humanities Project | \$20,000 – Funding supports children's exploration of U.S. and Virgin Islands history, culture, and geography. This project will engage children in instruction and reflection on a range of humanities topics related to the world around them, including field trips, workshops, presentations, and activities.

Caribbean Genealogy Library | Stories from our Elders – Creating a Virgin Islands Oral History Collection, Transcription and Cataloging Interviews | \$3,800 – Funding supports an oral history project that will include existing elder interviews as part of an oral history collection to be catalogued and housed at CGL, to have the collection available and easily usable by researchers, and to later produce a documentary on island history using the interviews.

Caribbean Genealogy Library | The St. Thomas Graphics Collection: Interpreting 25 years of the late 20th Century in the U.S. Virgin Islands, a digital snapshot | \$19,250 – Funding supports digitization of a historic postcard collection. This project will make available a collection of government reports, political campaign materials, tourism industry brochures, funeral booklets, civic organization booklets, and VIP recognition booklets from a period between 1970 and 2000. Historians will be contracted to interpret the digitized materials and present workshops.

Caribbean Genealogy Library | Images of Our Past, Michael and Jane Sheen Virgin Islands - Danish West Indies Historic Postcard Collection Digitization Project | \$12,650 – Funding supports a collaborative digitization and cataloguing project. This project will digitize over 700 historic postcards from the U.S. Virgin Islands - Danish West Indies from around 1870 through the 1950s; provide a permanent digital collection of a unique photographic collection related to the islands' history; and permit access to researchers, educators, students, and the community.

Caribbean Genealogy Library | Teaching Virgin Islands History using Original Source Documents | \$19,965 – Funding supports the availability of original source documents as teaching tools. This project will create an online modern teaching tool for teachers in the Virgin Islands (elementary through high school) related to VI history using original source documents such as archaeological artifacts, census records, plantation asset inventories, laws, church records, and audio recordings.

Center for Educational Growth, Inc. | Transforming Literature Into Expressions Of Art | \$20,000 Funding supports virtual after school enrichment programming by providing humanities-based virtual education, cultural activities, and lifelong learning opportunities for youth and families in the Virgin Islands.

Good Hope Country Day School | Cultural and Diversity Education Plan | \$20,000 – Funding supports a humanities-based resource library. This project will offer knowledge, skills and resources for students, faculty and staff in order to promote diversity and appreciation of various ethnic and racial groups through the study of humanities, including a year-long series of guest speakers to present history, literature, holidays, music, languages, food, art, and traditions of different cultures.

My Brother's Workshop | Furniture Caning Class and Open Workshop | \$20,000 – Funding supports instruction of traditional/cultural caning methods. MBW will partner with the St. Thomas Historical Trust and contribute to the local economy by promoting the Virgin Islands' as a historically significant destination through a caning project to help preserve the long tradition of caning.

St. George Village Botanical Garden | Creation of an African Provision Garden | \$12,699 – This new interpretive garden will seek to provide additional historical context into the lives of enslaved people on site. Interpretive signs will provide plant information and their traditional uses, enhancing the grantees mission to conserve, preserve, and educate.

Ten Sleepless Knights, Inc. | Emancipation Day Quadrille | \$20,000 – Funding supports The Emancipation Day Quadrille scheduled for July 3, 2021 in Freedom City, Frederiksted. This project marks the 173rd year of Emancipation from slavery, engaging culture bearers in highlighting the importance of this day and celebrating its significance, including commemorating the contributions of revolutionists and education and participation in cultural elements such as quadrille dance and quelbe music.

United Jazz Foundation | Caribbean Music Institute Online | \$20,000 – Funding supports use of music literacy to support student participants to become culture bearers and share their knowledge with the community. This project will use music literacy to enhance students' life skills, their social intellect, music writing and notation skills, self-determination, and expand their knowledge and vision of their musical cultural history to preserve and sustain the musical cultural heritage of the USVI.

Virgin Islands Children's Museum | VICM Cultural Ambassadors | \$19,100 – Funding supports humanities education for Virgin Islands families to instill a sense of pride in local heritage. Through the Cultural Ambassadors program, the VICM will produce short video segments on topics of Virgin Islands historical and cultural interest, hosted by staff members and special guests. Each video segment will also include a participative, hands-on activity that viewers can do at home.

World Ocean School | St. Croix World Ocean School aboard the historic landmark tall-ship Roseway | \$20,000 – Funding supports educational opportunities for St. Croix students to learn aboard the historic landmark tall ship Roseway. This multi-disciplinary programming will facilitate an exploration of the impact of tall ships on St. Croix's history. From Columbus's landing and the triangle trade all the way to today's thriving maritime industry, this program will provide a structured and safe space with opportunities for discussion of a traumatic history and its continued effects on today's world.

An additional **\$168,327** in NEH funding was awarded by CFVI to 10 organizations and one individual in support of humanities-related programs in the Territory:

Coral Bay Community Council | Preparing National and Local Register Applications and Raising Awareness of History & Historic Schoolhouse Properties in Coral Bay and East End, St. John | \$17,500 – Funding supports recognition, protection, public education, and documentation of the two early "one room" schoolhouse buildings in Coral Bay and East End, St. John.

Fireburn Foundation | Fireburn the Documentary | \$19,050

Funding supports completing the production of the documentary that explores the folklore, history, and social and economic ramifications of the event known as Fireburn, and promotion of the documentary as a tool for cultural preservation and education that speaks to the heritage and resilience of Virgin Islanders.

Friends of Virgin Islands National Park | Studying the Nexus between Culture and Nature on St. John | \$20,000 – Funding will be used to study the relationship between Virgin Islands National Park and cultural heritage preservation on St. John using seminar discussions and podcast series with the goal of identifying best practices for cultural heritage preservation in the future.

Giff Hill School | Treasures of the Territory: preserving and promoting Virgin Islands culture, heritage, and history for the next generation | \$20,000 – Funding will be used to bring community culture bearers into classrooms to share their knowledge, skills, stories and perspectives with the next generation of Virgin Islanders.

Hebrew Congregation of St. Thomas | Upgrade and reorganization of Lilienfeld House and library; modernization grant for costs of upgrading to social media | \$16,000 – Funding will be used to upgrade Lilienfeld House to make the space available for community use and education

and to reorganize the library and archives with the ultimate goal of turning Lilienfeld House into a museum.

Priscilla Hintz | Digitization, Cataloguing and Repatriating of the Bernie Kemp Collection and Archive (St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands Folk Art) | \$7,500 – Funding will be used to support the archiving, digitization, catalog printing and repatriation of the Dr. Bernie Kemp Archive and Collection consisting of St. John folk art and related materials that document the history, traditions and culture of folk artists, tradesmen and cultural bearers on St. John with a focus on the tradition of basket making and the East End community of St. John.

Project Promise VI | Development of a Cultural Awareness Curriculum for St. Croix Youth and Public Mural Exhibit | \$14,777 – Funding will support the development and implementation of a new humanities program under the Caterpillar Project that focuses on the islands' history, literature, agriculture and natural resources, economy, arts, tourism, and other cultural dimensions culminating in a public mural of student vision boards in the shape of the island of St. Croix.

University of the Virgin Islands | Accessible Revised Organic Act of 1954 | \$20,000 – Funding will be used to create an integrated, easily accessible, plain-language brochure of the Revised Organic Act of 1954 that provides both the legislation and its amendments in both electronic and hard copy formats.

VI Montessori School & Peter Gruber International Academy | "Our Story Will Be Told" – The VI Suffragist Movement | \$20,000 - Funding will be used to partner with the League of Women Voters of the VI and engage students in a documentary process focused on the unique narrative of the USVI suffragists using oral narratives and local music to chronicle the VI suffragists' advocacy, examine the parallel histories of BIPOC communities in the U.S., and connect these histories to the current discourse on race, citizenship and social activism.

Virgin Islands Museum Civic and Cultural Centre St. Thomas Inc. | Virgin Islands Dutch Creole Project | \$13,500 – Funding will be used to support a revival of the extinct Virgin Islands Dutch Creole language through collecting authentic conversations, songs and folktales from the archives for presentation to all generations of Virgin Islanders as a series of animated films and printed and electronic texts, with a particular emphasis placed upon reaching Millennials and Generation Z, as they seek ways to further deepen their awareness of their unique Virgin Islander identity.

Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this press release, do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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About the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands

Since 1990, the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands (CFVI) has been a catalyst for positive change in the Territory through initiatives committed to youth, learning, family support and the environment. With a professional staff and a volunteer Board of Directors composed of community leaders, CFVI is a trusted advocate and supporter of programs that ensure opportunity and sustainability for current and future generations. CFVI is a registered non-profit organization entirely supported by individual donors, grants, trusts, corporate donations and estate planning. For more information, visit cfvi.net.

About the National Endowment for the Humanities

Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at: www.neh.gov.