

December News Brief 2008

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Annual Holiday Party/Silent Auction/Toy Drive

Final preparations are underway for this year's Holiday celebration, auction and toy drive. The joyful event will be held on December 10 at the Westin St. John. Proceeds from the silent auction allow us to award scholarships to high school seniors with an interest in the hospitality industry. Donated toys are presented to the Boys & Girls Club of St. Thomas by the Association's mascot Tommy Starfish. We ask that wrapped toys be delivered to our office prior to the party, if possible. For some of the kids, this may be their only taste of the holiday so we encourage you to show your support for this project. Please indicate gender and age appropriateness on each gift. Contact the association office if you are interested in contributing an item to the silent auction. event. The Westin ferry departs at the National Park Service Dock at 5:30 pm.

Congratulations to 2008 Tommy Star Award Recipients

The air was filled with anticipation as guests at the 7th Annual Tommy Star Awards awaited the announcement of the 2008 recipients. Presentations to Lifetime Achievement Recipient Mary Gleason and Student Award Winner E'jaiey Grant were the first to be spotlighted at the glamorous event. The hospitality employees receiving awards this year are:
Hotel Associate of the Year—Antoinette Gomez, Frenchman's Reef Marriott

Hotel Supervisor of the Year—Naomi Hurlston, Frenchman's Reef Marriott

Retail Associate of the Year—Veda Hodge, Diamonds International

Attraction/Activity Associate of the Year—Troy Willock, VI Ecotours

Restaurant Associate of the Year—Jeremy Simon, Mim's Seaside Bistro

Airline Associate of the Year—Wilfred Omoare, Cape Air

Hospitality Support Service Associate of the Year—Shelly Blyth—Shoppportunities

Public Service Representative of the Year—Mary Loubie, VI Police Department

Thank you to the generous sponsors who contributed to another successful gala, especially our Platinum Sponsor—The Department of Tourism—and our Star Sponsors—Caneel Bay, Concert Works, FilmVI, Moxie-Marketing, M Booth & Associates, Roses Too, Tom Bolt & Associates, Southland Gaming, the West Indian Company Limited, and WSTA.

Crime Stoppers USVI

A new crime fighting tool is being introduced to the Virgin Islands. Crime Stoppers USVI INC is a not-for-profit organization of citizen volunteers, financed through tax deductible donations and membership dues, whose goal is to be an effective crime-fighting resource in the US Virgin Islands. Crime Stoppers gives cash rewards of up to \$2,500 to citizens who provide totally anonymous tips that lead to arrests or the recovery of drugs or stolen property. Contact Judi Frick at judi@viontherun.com for additional information.

CMI Corner

The Marketing Committee held a productive retreat in November to review initiatives and strategies for 2009. Some of topics discussed were:

- Web site enhancements
- Trade shows - the best for CMI members, developing packages value-added packages for specific shows
- Niche Marketing
- Public Relations
- New Marketing materials
- Department of Tourism Marketing Plan
- Capitalizing on social media

A 2009 marketing plan, incorporating the suggested initiatives, will be unveiled in a few weeks.

Congratulations to:

*Kevin Jackson, new GM at the Divi Carina Bay

*Earl Powell (King Christian Hotel) and Simone Palmer (Sand Castle on the Beach) - President and Vice President (respectively), St. Croix Hotel & Tourism Association

New Member-Imagine Wedding Events & Villa St. Thomas

Looking for experienced planners and an amazing location to make it all happen? Imagine Wedding & Events specializes in planning and designing distinctive personalized weddings, commitment ceremonies, civil unions, vow renewals, honeymoons and all of life's special occasions. Villa St. Thomas, owned and operated by Imagine, is a 5 BR, 3 1/2 bath deluxe location available for wedding coordination, private events, vacation rental, and corporate functions. Catering, entertainment, floral, gifts/favors, photos/videos, transportation, invitations, wedding parties and cakes are just some of the services that Imagine can coordinate. Contact Elena Lynch, Imagines' experienced Destination Manager, at elynch@imaginevip.com. For details on Villa St. Thomas, visit www.imagineviprentals.com.

Holiday Hope Fundraiser/Toy Drive

St. Croix's Hotel & Tourism Association and Chamber of Commerce present the 3rd Annual Holiday Hope Benefit on Thursday, December 4 at the Divi Carina Bay Resort beginning at 6:00 pm. The proceeds and toys donated benefit the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation, the Boys & Girls Club of the VI, and the Patrick Henry Hospitality Scholarship. Admission is either \$40 or two, new unwrapped toys valued at \$20 each. Thank you to the many members who have donated items for the silent auction. Unwrapped gifts can be dropped off at the following St. Croix locations: Anything Goes Deli, Chamber of Commerce Office, Divi Carina Bay Resort, Palms at Pelican Cove, and the Travel Desk of St. Croix. If you are interested in donating to the silent/live auction, contact Alex Johnson at the Divi. Remember, events such as this and our very own toy drive and auction help to change lives and improve our community, one child at a time.



Have a safe, joyous holiday and a prosperous New Year!

