

January News Brief 2010

Happy New Year

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HTA & VIGFC Check Presentation & Toy Donation



The VI Game Fishing Club and the Hotel & Tourism Association recently presented a \$50,000 check to Boys & Girls Club Executive Director, Julie Landreneau. The VIGFC challenged the Association to raise \$25,000 which they

would match if successful. Businesses and individuals offering support for this challenge included: **VI Ecotours, West Indian Company Limited, Steven Hughes, Bolongo Bay Beach Resort, Caneel Bay Resort, Frenchman's Reef and Morning Star Marriott, Windward Passage Hotel, Secret Harbour Beach Resort, Westin St. John Resort & Villas, Wyndham Sugar Bay Resort & Spa, the Ritz Carlton, Nick Pourzal, First Bank VI, Calypso Realty, Island Meetings & Incentives, Islander Taxi, Mahogany Run, Media Marketing, Mim's Seaside Bistro, MASA, Art by Lucinda, Innovative Telephone, Host-U Services, At Home in the Tropics, Diamonds International, Wendy & Abe Tarapani, Mary Gleason, the Prior Foundation, Seven Seas Water, Susan Lysaght and Coach. A special thank you to Southland Gaming who, at the Holiday Party, donated \$1000 to both the BGC & the Scholarship Fund.**

Highlights of 2009

In 2009, the Association continued its mission to develop and promote vibrant and sustainable tourism, and provide exceptional experiences for guests, members and the community. Through advocacy efforts, bi-monthly networking events, education and training, environmental initiatives, trade show participation, a strong web presence, marketing strategies, and public relations, the Association spent the year building membership, strengthening bonds with travel partners, supporting the hospitality workforce and encouraging the islands' youth. Successful highlights included: the annual Destination Symposium, Career Fair, Summer Employment Program, presence at major tour operator product launches (Funjet, Apple Vacations, MLT University), the Tommy Star Awards & Gala, and the Boys & Girls Club toy donation. Additionally, the Association's Culinary Team cooked, baked and blended their way to Silver medals at the Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association's *Taste of the Caribbean Competition*. Top vodka drink and "Most Innovative Menu" were just some of the honors they brought home. In the new year, expect the Association to continue those initiatives that which speak to the needs of the membership and support our mission. Membership meetings will continue to be held in odd months; networking events in the even months. Committees will address the major areas of youth and employee development, and environmental and safety issues. These committees can always use new members and fresh ideas. Look for notices of meeting dates in your inbox or call the Association office.

Membership Corner

New Member Feature

*Welcome to one of our new members-**Island Style Weddings**. Based on St. John, this independent wedding planning service is owned by veteran hospitality professional Mary Castle Bartolucci. After years of sales and marketing and event planning experience, Mary decided to branch out on her own and has been in business for the past 8 years. Island Style Weddings tackles all areas of destination wedding planning including accommodations, rehearsal dinners, day trips, and as an officiate Mary can perform the ceremony. In 2009, she planned more than 70 weddings. "I've made lasting friendships with the couples I've worked with and that let's me know that my clients were very satisfied." To reach Island Style Weddings call 774-1484 or visit www.islandstyleweddings.com.

***Secret Harbour Beach Resort** is one of the newest members of WORLDHOTELS First Class Collection of Affiliate Hotels. WORLDHOTELS is an exclusive collection of the world's most unique independent hotels.

*Commissioner of Tourism Beverly Nicholson Doty is the scheduled guest speaker at the **January Membership Meeting**. The breakfast meeting will be held at Frenchman's Reef Marriott on Wednesday, January 20. Registration begins at 8:30 am. Commissioner Doty will discuss the DOT's initiatives for 2010.

*The **cruise conversion kiosk** at the Havensight dock is getting a fresh new look. Over the holiday, the kiosk was painted and new graphics were installed. It slated for completion in the next week. Rental space is still available for hotels and activities at a yearly cost of \$450. Put your business in the sights of the tens of thousands of cruise ship passengers that traverse the Havensight Dock everyday. Contact the Association today to reserve your space.

*We congratulate **Sam Rey, owner of Host-U Services**, as he celebrates 10 years in the hospitality training business.

News from the CMI

*The Cooperative Marketing Initiative web site, www.virgin-islands-hotels.com, is being re-designed and will have a new look by The end of January. The revisions are designed to make the site more user-friendly and provide additional destination information.

*The Department of Tourism has provided the Association with their trade show calendar for 2010. Since the DOT is picking of the cost of the booth, they've identified who will be eligible to attend, whether it be an Association representative or any interested partner. The first show of 2010 open to all interested partners in the Danish trade show **Ferie**, which will be held from January 29-31 in Copenhagen. As the #1 destination for European visitors, the show offers a perfect opportunity to speak with consumers in this important market. We will continue to keep you updated on upcoming shows. To join the DOT at this show contact Assistant Commissioner of Tourism Monique Sibilly-Hodge at 774-8784 or email her at mshodge@usvitourism.vi. A best practice tip is to always make sure that the DOT offices has your most updated information.

Holiday Charitable Events Successful

Both Hotel Associations hosted successful holiday events to raise money for scholarships and collected gifts for the Marine Toys for Tots program and the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Virgin Islands. The St. Croix Hotel & Tourism Association who partnered with the STX Chamber of Commerce raised over \$52,000, while the USVI Hotel & Tourism Association collected over \$6400 for their respective scholarship funds. Hundreds of toys were donated by individuals and businesses. Demonstrating the giving spirit was alive and well. The Boys & Girls Club offers kids the opportunity to develop relationships with positive adult role models, participate in life enhancing programs and have fun.

SAVE THE DATE

January 10-12

CHTA Marketplace, San Juan, Puerto Rico
www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com

January 15

Soweto Gospel Choir, Reichhold Center for the Arts
www.reichholdcenter.com

January 22

St. Thomas Blue Festival, Reichhold Center for the Arts

January 20

General Membership Meeting
Frenchman's Reef Marriott

