



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ms. Dianne Wells

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Telephone: (340) 714.5678

info@habitat.vi

Habitat for Humanity of the Virgin Islands

Host its first Collegiate Challenge

(St. Thomas, VI) – From March 5 to 11, Habitat for Humanity of the Virgin Islands (HFHVI) plays host to four students from St. John's University in Jamaica, New York and one student from the University of Connecticut. All five are members of Collegiate Challenge - a division of Habitat for Humanity International's (HFHI) Youth Program. They are on island to donate their time, talent and labor to HFHVI.

Collegiate Challenge is a year-round alternative break program. It provides opportunities for students from youth groups, high schools and colleges to spend a week of their school break working with Habitat for Humanity affiliates throughout the United States.

The five-member team financed the trip through personal funds, faculty donations and a \$500 gift from St. John's University's President. The team will participate in construction work at Habitat's Adele Gade site, as well as offer administrative assistance in the Habitat office located in Royal Dane Mall. St. John's University student leader Kari Mocci said, "We knew that St. Thomas was a brand new affiliate, so in terms of expectations, we've basically come to help wherever we can."

The students, who are staying in dorm rooms at the University of the Virgin Island's (UVI), are not only working hard at HFHVI but want to build relationships with UVI students. "We want to connect with UVI students and possibly mentor a Collegiate Challenge program here, however, with students taking mid-terms we'll have to see what happens," Mocci continued. You can find out more about Habitat for Humanity International's Collegiate Challenge program at www.habitat.org.

This is HFHVI's first housing project and according to Executive Director Dianne Wells, Habitat is aggressively seeking volunteers to assist with construction. "This group could not have come to St. Thomas at a better time. Our construction schedule is in full swing and we need volunteers from the community skilled in building," she said. The Habitat home site, located in the Garden Street area and donated by Cecile Galiber deJongh and the Galiber family, will be restored to a three bedroom, two-bath home. You can view the entire construction time line at www.habitat.vi.

Habitat for Humanity of the U.S. Virgin Islands was incorporated in January 2005 and is a Christian, faith-based non-profit organization that builds homes and hope through partnership with individuals, business and faith communities. Habitat is in need of home sites and is accepting donations of vacant land and homes in need of renovation. Habitat for Humanity International has more than 3,000 affiliates in 100 nations, which have built more than a quarter of a million homes for Habitat families.