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PROJECT PROMISE ROBOTICS TEAM HEADED TO SINGAPORE FOR *FIRST* GLOBAL CHALLENGE

ST. CROIX, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS, (October 3, 2023)— On October 3rd, a team of very excited local high school students will be heading to Singapore to represent the Virgin Islands in a global robotics challenge hosted by *FIRST* Global, a non-profit organization. The ten-person delegation will include Resa O'Reilly Shearn, Executive Director and Founder of St. Croix non-profit Project Promise, who is managing the team; four team members – Ricardo Caleb, Nnenaya Bedminster, Isolde Diaz Belle and Ziva Caleb; Steven Feltner, the team's coach, and mentor. Also, traveling with the group is Bianca Stevens, a teacher at John H Woodson; plus, three guests of the team.

The story behind how this team came to be is incredible! On July 19th Resa was getting ready to head to Tanzania to deliver toys and school supplies to the children at the Rift Valley Children's Village that Project Promise has been supporting for the past eight years, when she received an email from *FIRST* Global.

"This email," Resa recalls, "was an invitation to put together a team to represent the Virgin Islands in an international robotics challenge in Singapore. I had never heard of this organization or event. While it sounded amazing, I knew I wouldn't have sufficient time to fundraise to make this happen. In addition to airfare and miscellaneous expenses, we would also need to cover the \$10,000 registration fee, which included the robotics kit, hotel, meals, and ground transportation for the team members plus two adults." After all, it was late July and the event itself was scheduled to begin on October 7th!

In an effort to safeguard the opportunity, Project Promise applied for *FIRST* Global financial aid and three weeks later we were informed that *FIRST* Global would cover ALL expenses for the team members plus two adults! Resa immediately hit the ground running. The teams from other countries had been working on this project for months. Project Promise had about two months to recruit a team, ensure the team members had passports, coordinate travel arrangements, and assemble and program the robot. With Coach Steven's guidance and support the team of high schoolers got it done!

"This Robotics Challenge is a life-changing opportunity for our students, on so many levels," Resa points out. "Through this process the students honed their teamwork skills, got a fun introduction to robotics, and they'll be traveling to Singapore, where they'll meet and work alongside students from around the world. We are incredibly grateful to the *FIRST* Global organization for helping us make it happen as well as GoDaddy.com, TEAM Consultants, Island Delivery Services, and Crucian Creations for their additional support!"

ABOUT THE *FIRST* GLOBAL

The *FIRST* Global Challenge is an annual, Olympics-style international robotics event to which one team of high school students from every nation is invited to participate. Held in a different nation each year, the Challenge seeks to highlight the greatest challenges facing our planet while encouraging the next generation to build the STEM skills required to solve them. Teams receive the same kit of parts, which they use to build a robot designed to complete a series of tasks. The event itself is then designed to foster collaboration between teams.

ABOUT PROJECT PROMISE

Project Promise is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of at-risk youth on St. Croix by providing empowerment initiatives, cultural programs, and family services. To learn more about Project Promise, please visit their website at www.projectpromisevi.com.