

**For Immediate Release**

**For More Information Contact:**

Resa O'Reilly  
Phone: (340) 244-3242  
Email: [info@projectpromisevi.com](mailto:info@projectpromisevi.com)

**PRESS RELEASE**

**NPS Offers Salt River Bay “Ticket To Ride” Program For 2015-2016**  
**Project Promise Partners With NPS For Second Year To Administer Ticket To Ride Program**

St. Croix, USVI (December 4, 2015) Project Promise is excited to once again partner with the National Park Service (NPS) to offer Salt River Bay Historical Site and Ecological Reserve's (SARI) 2015-2016 Ticket to Ride Program for the second year. SARI is one of 113 national parks selected to receive a 2015 field trip grant from the National Park Foundation, the official charity of the America's national parks.

Nationally, the goal of the Ticket to Ride Program is to help NPS provide efficient transportation support for over 100,000 students to visit its national parks annually, and to engage the youth in meaningful activities once there. Last year, more than 450 students from St. Croix's public schools were able to visit and learn more about SARI through the joint efforts of NPS and Project Promise. Thanks to a grant from the National Park Foundation (NPF), Project Promise through its partnership with NPS, will be able to offer the SARI Ticket to Ride Program to hundreds of sixth graders this school year. This grant, funded in part by Disney, provides funding for materials and logistics to make national park field trips, citizen science projects, Junior Ranger activities, experiential learning opportunities, and more possible, as part of the National Park Foundation's Open Outdoors for Kids program.

This year's SARI Ticket to Ride Program kicks off on December 7, 2015. The program provides students with the opportunity to get out into the fresh air, while learning more about the history of the park. It's a three-aspect program, designed by NPS and Project Promise President Resa O'Reilly, and includes an introduction to the park at the school, followed by an on-site park tour, and a post-experience in-class visit by the instructor to review what was learned. "We are very excited to welcome the nearly 500 sixth grade students scheduled to participate in the program this year", said O'Reilly.

SARI's Visitor Center tour introduces students to the national park's incredible history, and the natural resources it offers. During the on-site tour, students will get at least two opportunities to hike within the park, and experience the beach head and mangrove forests first hand through ranger-led activities. The students will then explore Taino culture through artifacts and a PowerPoint presentation, discover the story of Christopher Columbus' encounter where it occurred, and learn about Taino cosmology in a craft-making exercise. During the post-experience visit to the school, students will participate in a question and answer session about Salt River Bay's historical and natural significance.

"This program is beneficial to the next generation of Crucian school children and the future of NPS on St. Croix" said NPS Superintendent Joel Tutein. "Being awarded this grant, allows NPS and Project Promise to provide these students with meaningful experiences, and foster a life-long relationship with national parks", concluded Tutein.

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For more information about The Caterpillar Project, or to purchase tickets, please contact Resa O'Reilly at (340) 513-0446. 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 the website at [www.projectpromisevi.com](http://www.projectpromisevi.com) .