

**For Immediate Release**

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**Project Promise's Salt River Bay Program  
Celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**ST. CROIX, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS (APRIL 1, 2024)**—Project Promise, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of at-risk youths on St. Croix has kicked off its 2024 Salt River Bay Program. This program gives local fourth graders the opportunity to visit and learn about the incredible history of the Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve.

First launched in 2014, the three-part Salt River Bay Program was designed by Project Promise Executive Director and Founder Resa O'Reilly Shearn. In Part 1 a park ranger comes to the school to provide an introduction to the park. Part 2 is the field trip to the park, including a ranger-led nature hike and a fun scavenger hunt. Students love the way the program makes the park's history come alive, with stories about Columbus' landing, the famous skirmish between Europeans and indigenous people that took place at the Cape of Arrows, and more. In Part 3 the ranger returns to the school for a post-experience visit, reviewing and reinforcing what was learned.

"We are thrilled," Resa shares, "to be starting our tenth year of providing this incredible experience to our local students! Over 5,000 kids have participated to date, and 400 more have been invited to take part this year. We are especially proud of the way that we have kept the program going no matter what game our way. "Hurricane Maria didn't stop us and neither did the COVID-19 pandemic – we simply pivoted to a virtual format with a video-based tour, then moved to a hybrid format until it was safe to run the entire program in person again."

All costs of the program, including transportation to and from the park, are being funded by a grant from the National Park Foundation.

"This program provides many students' first trip to a national park," Resa points out, "and the kids' excitement at being able to explore the park is always palpable. It is an eye-opening and horizon-expanding experience for them."

Project Promise invites the public to come celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at this year's Havana Nights. Project Promise's annual Havana Nights fundraiser, featuring Cuban music, food and salsa dancing will be held on February 10<sup>th</sup> at St. George Village Botanical Garden; tickets will be available through the organization's website, [www.projectpromistvi.com](http://www.projectpromistvi.com).