



Friends of Virgin Islands National Park Announces First Recipients of Noble Samuel Scholarship

2021-2022 Scholarship Recipients are Ki'Janne' Alfred and Lila Uzell

St. John, US Virgin Islands, December 6, 2021 -- Noble Samuel was a Ranger in Virgin Islands National Park and the scholarship in his name is endowed by anonymous donors inspired by a man who generously shared his love for the Park with passion and humility. Friends of Virgin Islands National Park is happy to announce that this year there will be two recipients of the Scholarship available to St. John youth attending college. Ki'Janne' Alfred and Lila Uzell will each receive an award of \$5,000.

The decision to award two talented students rather than one was made possible thanks to the quality of scholarship applicants and the success of Friends of Virgin Islands National Park's recent *Villas For The Park* fundraiser that exceeded expectations.

"Ki'Janne and Lila are hard working, committed, and talented young women worthy of the Noble Samuel Scholarship and everything that its namesake stood for," says Tonia Lovejoy, Executive Director, Friends of Virgin Islands National Park. "We are so thankful to the donors of the endowment, and to everyone who donated stays and who bid on our Villas auction for making this opportunity possible."

Ki'Janne' Alfred is a freshman at Stetson University in Florida majoring in Political Science. She attended Ivanna Eudora Kean High School and Giffit Hill School. In the essay portion of her application, she writes: "My compassion for change and love for my community and culture, like Mr. Noble Samuel's, drove me to politics. I hope to implement effective changes that will have a positive impact on our community--involving and educating local youth about our islands. Helping youth develop a sense of identity and responsibility for their community. Where local little boys and girls can understand the natural resources we have and how we can maintain a healthy codependent society where nature relies on

us and we rely on nature.”

Lila Uzzell shares a similar commitment to this island community. She writes: “My experiences at UVI will help me become familiar with marine and terrestrial habitats of the USVI, build relationships with partnering organizations, and become more involved with the community through outreach and research initiatives. I have explored and grown-up learning about Virgin Islands National Park since I was a kid. Being able to combine scientific research and natural resource management with the love I have for our National Park would enable me to implement best-management practices for VINP in the future.” Lila is attending University of Virgin Islands doing a Masters of Science in Marine and Environmental Studies. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies from Warren Wilson College and attended Giff Hill School and Ashville High School.

Adds Lovejoy: “Our youth are our future and Friends is committed to building a pipeline of conservation education opportunities for island youth starting with our School Kids In The Park and Learn To Swim programs, to our Summer Trail Crew opportunity, to scholarships and internships like the Matheny Scholarship, the Noble Samuel Scholarship, and the AmeriCorps VISTA Program.”

AmeriCorps VISTA Program

Friends is pleased to announce that in addition the Scholarship awards, Ameir Sprauve recently joined the Friends’ team as a Natural Resource Intern in the AmeriCorps VISTA Program. Born on St. Thomas and raised on St John, Ameir worked on the Summer Trail Crew for four years working up to becoming a team leader and discovering an interest in natural resource protection. Ameir graduated from Giff Hill School in 2019 and is currently attending classes part-time at the University of the Virgin Islands where he is pursuing a degree in management.

Ameir succeeds Aariyah Athanase as the Friends’ AmeriCorps scholar. A native St Johnian, Aariyah has just completed two years in the AmeriCorps program as an Education Outreach Coordinator. In that position, she produced and narrated the Folk Life Festival documentary. She remains on the Friends’ team working on a School Kids In The Park video project.

Friends of Virgin Islands National Park is the official philanthropic partner of Virgin Islands National Park. Since 1988, Friends has been assisting and advising the National Park Service in assuring VINP’s unique terrestrial and marine resources are protected, the Virgin Islands’ cultural treasures in the park

are preserved, and visitors and community are connected to the park through volunteerism, education, and advocacy. For more information:
www.friendsvinp.org

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