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**** pictures included ****

Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands Participates in Nationwide MLK Day of Service

ST.CROIX – On Monday, January 16, AmeriCorps members of Project Reach Lutheran Social Services of the VI and thousands of organizations across the country honored Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the nation’s largest day of civic engagement.

The annual MLK Day of Service, which is led by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), shines a spotlight on service as a powerful force to bridge economic and social divides – today and throughout the year. “By volunteering in communities across the nation on the MLK Day of Service, we honor his legacy through the spirit of service,” said Wendy Spencer, CEO of CNCS.

As part of their MLK Day Service Project, AmeriCorps members in St. Croix served warm meals at My Brother’s Table, a local soup kitchen that serves over 15,000 meals a year. AmeriCorps members also facilitated artistic expression activities with the fourth graders at Claude O. Markoe Elementary School that included creating posters about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day and the spirit of serving others. During the MLK Parade in Frederiksted, members also marched alongside the students of Claude O. Markoe School, while they held the posters they designed.

AmeriCorps members in St. Thomas facilitated activities with the first graders at Joseph Sibilly School-Monroe Annex that included creating coloring books and reading stories about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day and the spirit of serving others.

“With all the negative that surrounds us on a day-to-day basis, today exemplifies how if we all put our differences aside, we can make a difference in our community and even the world,” said Onika Gustave, the AmeriCorps & Volunteer Coordinator of Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands.

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AmeriCorps is a program of the Corporation for Community and National Service (CNCS) that engages thousands of Americans in community service every year to address critical community needs. Lutheran Social Services of the V.I. has been a grantee of the AmeriCorps program since 1994. The AmeriCorps members serve low-income seniors, adults with disabilities, and children who have been abused, neglected or displaced.

Lutheran Social Services of the V. I., Inc. is the largest private social service agency in the Virgin Islands that has five housing complexes for low income seniors and adults with disabilities; a safe haven for neglected, abused and severely disabled children; and two 24-hour residential care facilities for adults with disabilities unable to live independently. Early Head Start and AmeriCorps are also programs of LSSVI. Lutheran Social Services of the V. I., Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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