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Veterans Recognized for Service by AmeriCorps

Local event puts spotlight on veterans and the AmeriCorps members serving them

ST.CROIX – On Veterans Day, Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands (LSSVI) in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), recognized four veterans who reside at the LSSVI Housing Communities, as well as the AmeriCorps members who support them.

The event, held at both the Flamboyant Gardens Community Center on St. Croix and Ebenezer Gardens on St. Thomas, recognized these dedicated individuals as members of National Veteran Corps, which is part of a larger effort to raise awareness of the value veterans bring to communities. The ceremony is one of nearly 200 recognition ceremonies featuring National Veteran Corps pin presentations taking place across the country throughout the month of November.

“Our commitment to veterans and their families is deep and it's twofold: We serve them, and we ask them to serve with us. National service gives our heroes a new mission on the home-front, a pathway to opportunity, and a better transition to civilian life,” said Wendy Spencer, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service. “The National Veterans Corps recognizes the family of Senior Corps volunteers and AmeriCorps members carrying out the spirit of our shared values of devotion, honor, and service to our great nation. This month is an opportunity to salute those who are serving our country again, while bringing attention to the critical work being done by veterans-focused national service programs.”

Nine veterans and national service members were presented a veteran’s pin or a members serving veterans pin by Junia John-Straker, CEO of Lutheran Social Services of the V.I., joining thousands of national service members across the country in the National Veteran Corps.

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AmeriCorps members serving with Project Reach Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands assist seniors and adults with disabilities to maintain independent living. The members serve the residents of LSSVI's Housing Management Division by checking on them twice a day, providing assistance with shopping and appointments, planning social activities, and companionship. The members provide additional assistance to frail tenants such as light housekeeping, meal preparation, and help with laundry.

“On Veterans Day, we salute the women and men who have proudly worn the uniform of the United States of America and the families who have served alongside them, and we affirm our sacred duty as citizens to express our enduring gratitude, both in words and in actions, for their service.” President Barack Obama

Last year, national service members served more than 780,000 veterans and military members in VA clinics and hospitals, veteran service organizations, and at nonprofits and public agencies. In addition, more than 23,000 veterans served in their local communities applying leadership abilities and skills acquired during their military service through Catholic Charities USA, Habitat for Humanity, Teach for America, and multiple conservation corps programs, including those that have helped combat wildfires in the Western U.S.

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that engages millions of Americans in service and developing community solutions through its AmeriCorps, including VISTA and NCCC, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and other programs, and leads the President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit NationalService.gov.

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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PHOTO CAPTION:

Veteran residents of Flamboyant Gardens, Thomas Daubenspeck and Orlando Carrion, receive awards from LSSVI representatives during the recognition ceremony on Veteran's Day.