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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 10, 2019

Kayak event raises over \$25,000 for Queen Louise Home for Children

ST. CROIX – The 19th Annual Kayak for Kids fundraiser for Queen Louise Home for Children was a success — garnering more than \$25,000 in funding for the residential foster care program. Thirty-five participants kayaked along the west shore of St. Croix on Sunday. Though there were fewer paddlers than in years past, the energy and charisma of participants brought an atmosphere of love and appreciation for the program and the event.

Junia John-Straker, Chief Executive Officer of Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands said, “It was very inspiring and wonderful to see so many people come out to support Queen Louise Home for Children. With this being our first summer event since the storms, we are touched to see how many people in our community still keep our residents close to their hearts.” Volunteers from Sea Thru Kayaks VI, Adventures in Diving STX, US Coast Guard, VI Police Department, 340 Misfits Motorcycle Club, and a number of community boat captains and kayakers supported the event. One long-time kayaker had even flown in from Texas to participate in the event.

Dr. Kevin Stewart and his son were the first kayakers to make it to the end of the course. Both his son and daughter had joined him for separate legs of the course and they were thrilled to be out on the water. Ryan Stutzman and Henry Smock were the community champions in raising the most funds for the program. For the first time in many years, Luther Edwards, a longtime fundraiser for Kayak for Kids has out-raised his rival, Julio “JT” Torres. The pair have been a part of the Kayak for Kids event since its inception, and every year they race to bring in the most funds for Queen Louise Home for Children.

Queen Louise Home for Children is a 24-hour residential foster care for children in the Virgin Islands. Part of its mission includes, Sister Emma Cottage, which provides 24-hour residential foster care for children in the Virgin Islands that have severe disabilities and special medical needs. Established on St. Croix in 1904, Queen Louise Home is a program of Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands (LSSVI) – the largest private, nonprofit social services agency in the U. S. Virgin Islands.

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