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News Local news

Island Green Living Named “Sustainable Company of the Year” by Clinton Global Initiative & Island Innovation

May 17, 2022

In partnership with Island Innovation, Clinton Global Initiative named the USVI-based nonprofit [Island Green Living Association](#) the “Sustainable Company of the Year” during the inaugural [Island Innovation Awards](#) ceremony held recently (view recording [here](#), 46.45-minute mark).



From left, Island Green Living Staff Member John Baker, Operations Manager Anthony Novelli, Board Treasurer Curtis Penn, Board Vice President Mark Lichtenstein, Board President Harith Wickrema, Executive Director Kelly McKinney, Resource Depot Manager Kat Bodish, and staff member Kobe Liburd. (Submitted photo)

Chosen from among hundreds of entrants in 12 categories, the award was presented to Harith Wickrema, president of Island Green Living, by James Robinson, program manager for Clinton Global Initiative.

The “Sustainable Company of the Year” award recognizes an island-based organization that promotes sustainable solutions for their island and has introduced new and/or improved ecological goods, services, or strategies to help island communities become more sustainable, according to a press release announcing the award.

Judges include former President of the Republic of Seychelles James Michel; UN Secretary-General Special Envoy for the Ocean Peter Thompson; former President of the Republic of Kiribati Anote Tong; and a host of leaders in the academic, environmental, political and nonprofit worlds.



"We are grateful to have this platform to extend our toxic sunscreen and other sustainable messages to a global audience. Being chosen as 'Sustainable Company of the Year' from among the very deserving nominees is a testament to our amazing and committed staff, volunteers, and board members," said Wickrema in the press release. "We thank Clinton Global Initiatives and Island Innovation for the recognition. It is our hope that our achievements will serve as inspiration to others to preserve our Earth."

When presenting the award, the Clinton Global Initiative representative cited Island Green Living's 18-year mission of turning what many would consider "waste" into a resource. The nonprofit got its start as Island Green Building Association with the mandate to promote green building and salvage used construction material to ensure sustainable development. In 2014, due to many environmental challenges such as overflowing landfills, accelerated coral damage due to toxic sunscreen, lack of recycling, etc., its scope was expanded to encompass all aspects of sustainable living and was rebranded Island Green Living Association.

Most recently, Island Green Living introduced the Ocean-Bound Plastics Recycling Program through a partnership with PADNOS, a Michigan-based, family-owned recycling company, the first such program on St. John, which has so far crushed 3,400 pounds of plastics since late February. It complements the organization's aluminum can recycling program, which has crushed 1.3 million cans to date; brush chipping program, which has processed 4,500 cubic yards of green and brown debris; and ReSource Depot thrift shop, which has kept nearly 700,000 pounds of material from the overburdened landfill.

The organization's advocacy campaigns have successfully banned toxic sunscreen containing the "Toxic 3 Os" of oxybenzone, octinoxate, octocrylene, plastic bags, straws, and the burning of vegetative debris in the territory while advancing awareness and education about these vital issues. The "Ban the Burn" campaign has contributed to the territory's excellent air quality, among only three places in the world meeting the WHO's clean air standards. In addition to the "Sustainable Company of the Year" award, Island Green Living's efforts have earned numerous accolades, including an EPA Environmental Champion Award in 2017 and a Clinton Global Initiative "Commitment to Action" designation in 2020.

Island Green Living's programs are made possible through the generous support of donations. Tax-deductible contributions can be made at <https://islandgreenliving.org/donate/> or by mail at 5000 Estate Enighed PMB #38, U.S. Virgin Islands, 00830. Phone: 340-473-7870; info@islandgreenliving.org.

Established in 2004, Island Green Living Association is a registered 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization on St. John dedicated to sustainability throughout the USVI. Visit www.islandgreenliving.org.

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