

Love City Livin'

Iowa State students assist Island Green's recycling efforts

By KWANIQUA MONSANTO
Special to The Daily News

ST. JOHN — A group of Iowa State University students, volunteering for the summer in the V.I., spent two days assisting Island Green Living at its Giffit Hill recycling center, giving the nonprofit a significant boost as it continues to shoulder much of St. John's recycling workload.

Ten students, accompanied by Jodi Cornell, director of the study abroad program, and associate professor Julie Blanchong, helped sort aluminum and No. 1, No. 2, and No. 5 plastics to prepare materials for shipment.

Dawn Henry, Island Green's vice president and interim CEO, said the students' efforts demonstrate the power of community involvement.

"Having the students from Iowa State here really exemplifies how community, when we get together and we work together, can conquer issues," Henry said. "We encourage Virgin Islanders to volunteer with us and to ask Waste Management to step up efforts by source separating on a municipal basis."

The nonprofit relies heavily on volunteers to keep its recycling program operating, especially as the organization continues to function without full government funding.

Island Green President Harith Wickrema noted that despite providing what is essentially a municipal service, the nonprofit has not received its full



Photo courtesy of ISLAND GREEN LIVING

Iowa State students assist in separating aluminum and various plastics during their two-day visit to Island Green Living last month.

2024 allocation from the Legislature and was left out of the 2025 budget.

“We truly could not operate without our volunteers and donors,” Wickrema said. “We collect and recycle hundreds of thousands of aluminum cans and ocean-bound plastic containers each year almost exclusively through community support.”

Cornell and Blanchong said the experience offered their students a meaningful way to contribute during their time on St. John.

“The organization makes a huge difference,” Blanchong said. “It’s nice to see local people caring for the island, and it’s nice when visitors do their fair share to keep this island beautiful.”

“We thank you for the opportunity for our students to learn and do something productive while we are here,” Cornell added.

Since its inception, Island Green has recycled more than 5.2 million aluminum cans and 167,000 pounds of ocean-bound plastics, keeping those materials out of the landfill and surrounding waters. The organization stresses that while recycling is essential, the first step is to rethink consumption, particularly of single-use plastics.

Residents and visitors can drop off rinsed No. 1, No. 2 and No. 5 plastics and aluminum cans at the following locations.

- WMA site in Cruz Bay near EC Gas Station and Alfredo’s Landscaping
- Caneel Bay fuel dock
- WMA site on Giffit Hill Road near the school
- WMA site in Coral Bay across from

