

Recycling Advocates Pleased with First-Time Campaign in St. John Celebration Village

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By Judi Shimel

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Island Green source separation bins won support from public officials and party goers stepping out for the opening night of St. John Celebration Village. (Source photo by Judi Shimel)

Recycling proponents from the public and private sector found an opportunity to spread their message of reduce, recycle, reuse at the recently concluded St. John Celebration. Island Green Living — a St. John-based nonprofit and the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority stationed receptacles in and around Celebration Village to collect used aluminum and plastic beverage containers.

Organizers of the Island Green collection drive called it a success. Interim Chief Executive Officer Dawn Henry thanked Waste Management for granting them permission to place 14 recycling bins throughout the village from June 28 through the 4th of July. Henry, former commissioner at the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, [took the helm at Island Green earlier this year](#).

The new nonprofit leader said the idea came from stateside experience that showed festival goers would deposit recyclable items into specially marked bins. “We really wanted to extend Island Green Living’s Recycling campaign to a really big event that would reach a broader segment of Virgin Islanders,” she said.

Results appeared from the first night when a dedication ceremony took place, honoring St. John Soca singer Tischelle Knight. We had a haul of about five thirty-gallon trash bags, and the haul was pretty clean,” Henry said.

Public officials who gathered at the opening ceremony voiced their support for the campaign, including Senate President Milton Potter, former Senate President Novelle Francis and Senator-at-Large Angel Bolques.

Island Green staff and volunteers were also praised for their efforts in making the first-ever source separation campaign take hold in Celebration Village. In a statement issued July 9, the management at Island Green expressed special thanks to Recycling Manager Akeino Williams, Program Support & Education Assistant Kheyanna Davis, and CJ Scatliffe and John Baker from the recycling team for their outstanding work. Their efforts included constructing bin covers, designing signage, organizing bin placement, conducting daily recyclable collection, and educating the public on proper recycling practices.

“Although this is the first time bins have been available at St. John Celebration, Island Green has been recycling since 2014, and the program has grown exponentially since then,” said President Harith Wickrema. “Recycling is vital to ensuring sustainable resource management, however Island Green advocates for an approach that begins before an item ever reaches the recycling bin. The first priority is to RETHINK consumption and avoid unnecessary purchases, especially single-use plastics: Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.”

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