

Ocwen Donation Helps WCSC Alternative School Re-Open

BY SOURCE STAFF — OCTOBER 14, 2015

The Women's Coalition of St. Croix has announced that a donation from Ocwen Mortgage Servicing Inc. (Ocwen) will allow them to re-open Project Link, an alternative high school program that offers significant benefits to the St. Croix community. Ocwen's \$50,000 grant as well as the continued funding from the Virgin Islands Department of Labor Workforce Investment will allow this important high school program to restart on Oct. 19.

Project Link provides individualized tutoring for individuals who want to return to high school and complete their high school education. The program, since its inception in 2007, has graduated six classes with a total of 123 students and has realized an 82 percent graduation rate. Students range from 10 to 60 years old and 77 percent of Project Link students were referred by the Department of Labor. The majority of students have been female (72 percent), parents (51 percent) and have completed 9th grade (41 percent).

For its adult students, Project Link provides an alternative high school experience that develops academic potential, study skills and personal responsibility. Immersed within the Women's Coalition tradition, the program promotes educational and life skills that empower adults to be successful in school and in the world. All students enroll in the American School, a home-school program fully accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

In 2011, Project Link added an online training component for students interested in pursuing additional education. Students study courses in hotel and restaurant management, travel and tourism, medical billing and coding, medical administrative assistant and child care. Students have earned scholarships through St. Croix Hotel and Tourism, and Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands. Graduates have enrolled in college, Job Corp, AmeriCorps and the military.

"Ocwen believes that education is one of the key pillars for helping individuals achieve their full potential. We are pleased to support Project Link, which is both an important educational program and community initiative, which is instrumental in helping build responsible, productive citizens and strong neighborhoods throughout St. Croix," said Otto Kumbar, CEO of Ocwen Mortgage Servicing.

“We are grateful for Ocwen’s support. Without their help, we would not have been able to re-open Project Link so quickly, and many adult learners would not be able to benefit from our services,” said Clema Lewis, executive director of the Women’s Coalition of St. Croix. “Ocwen heard our need and responded generously with a grant that will directly help those in our community who are seeking to further their education and improve their lives and those of their children.”

“For nine months, we have been trying to secure the necessary funding to re-open this important initiative,” said Sue Diverio, director of education for the Women’s Coalition of St. Croix. “Every week individuals have been calling us to inquire about Project Link and the opportunity to complete their high school education. It has been difficult to continually turn students in need away because of a lack of funding. We are extremely grateful that Ocwen has stepped up to partner with us and the St. Croix community to help individuals looking to build a better more rewarding life.”

About Women’s Coalition of St. Croix

The Women’s Coalition of St. Croix (WCSC) provides advocacy, programs and services to end all forms of violence and oppression by promoting equality for all. We offer assistance to women, children and men who are survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking and other crimes. Visit WCSC online at www.wcstx.org

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