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11 V.I. SCHOOL LIBRARIES RECEIVE GRANT FROM LAURA BUSH FOUNDATION

ST. THOMAS, USVI - Eleven of the Territory's public schools received grants of up to \$75,000 in the second round of 2017 Disaster Relief Initiative grants awarded by the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries. Grants totaling more than \$1.3 million were distributed to 38 school libraries in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Texas, California, and Florida that were damaged in natural disasters last fall.

The Virgin Islands schools that received grant awards include:

- Alexander Henderson Elementary School
- Eulalie R. Rivera Elementary School
- Arthur A. Richards Junior High School
- Elena L. Christian Junior High School
- John H. Woodson Junior High School
- Lew Muckle Elementary School
- Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School
- Alfredo Andrews Elementary School
- St. Croix Career & Technical Education Center
- St. Croix Educational Complex High School
- Yvonne E. Milliner Bowsky Elementary School

"One of our goals is to foster literacy for all students. We also want our students to develop a love and appreciation for reading, which will improve their literacy and communication skills, to include, writing and even speaking. Reading also helps develop children's imagination and creativity," said Yvonne E. Milliner-Bowsky Elementary School Principal Daphne Gonzalez-

Thomas. “Ultimately, reading builds comprehension skills which can help students to become academically successful. This grant will be very instrumental in helping us to achieve our reading goals by allowing us to purchase new reading books.”

Bowsky Elementary was awarded \$60,000 to replace and replenish its school library book supply. Each individual school is responsible for ordering and procuring the books desired for the school library. The billing and shipping costs will then be covered by the Foundation to the vendor.

“As a former librarian, I know school libraries are important to improving student achievement, and with the second round of grants from the 2017 Disaster Relief Initiative, these schools can start on the path to full recovery,” said Mrs. Laura Bush. “To everyone affected during last year’s natural disasters, you have support from neighbors across the nation. Your hard work and can-do spirit ensures that your cities and schools will thrive again.”

In response to a shattering season of storms and wildfires, The Laura Bush Foundation for America’s Libraries established the 2017 Disaster Relief Initiative to help rebuild school libraries that were damaged or destroyed in recent natural disasters in Texas, Florida, California, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. In January, the Laura Bush Foundation initially awarded over \$850,000 to 17 school libraries affected by Hurricane Harvey. With the second round of 2017 Disaster Relief Initiative grants, the Laura Bush Foundation has now awarded over \$2 million to school libraries devastated by the storms and fires that ravaged schools around the country last fall.

The 2017 Disaster Relief Initiative is the second time the Laura Bush Foundation has assisted in disaster relief efforts. The “Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative,” created and raised as a separate and special fund, helped rebuild school library collections affected by the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. The Laura Bush Foundation awarded nearly \$6.5 million in grants to 124 schools in the Gulf Coast area between 2006 and 2012.

For more information on how to support the 2017 Disaster Relief Initiative, please visit www.laurabushfoundation.org.

The Laura Bush Foundation for America’s Libraries provides grants of up to \$7,000 to our Nation’s neediest schools so they can extend, update, and diversify the book and print collections in their libraries with the goal of encouraging students to develop a love of reading and learning. Since its inception in 2002, it has awarded over \$14.3 million to more than 2,700 schools across the country.

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