



CARIBBEAN  
HOTEL & TOURISM  
ASSOCIATION



For Immediate Release

Source: Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

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## **CHTA, TOURISM CARES DEPLOY HURRICANE RECOVERY RESOURCES TO SPUR CARIBBEAN TOURISM**

MIAMI (August 3, 2018) - The Caribbean Tourism Recovery Fund, established by the nonprofit organization Tourism Cares and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), has collected more than US\$275,000 in charitable donations to build long-term recovery and enhance the ability of hurricane impacted destinations to rebound as quickly as possible.

In a joint statement today, CHTA **Director General and CEO** Frank Comito and Paula Vlamings, CEO of Tourism Cares, outline the success of the collaborative fundraising venture and report that assistance has gone to Caribbean nations and territories for training and education, restoring destination capacity, the physical restoration of tourism-related infrastructure, social enterprise development, job creation, hotel training, voluntourism, marketing and public relations support, and the environment.

"With another hurricane season in full swing, we are so grateful for the way all sectors of the travel industry came together to invest in the vulnerable people and places we depend on," the statement read, as both organizations thanked the many donors for their support during last year's unprecedented hurricane season.

"Because of the generosity of our donors, tourism infrastructure is being repaired, the workforce will receive new training and opportunities, and more communities will benefit from tourism dollars. Together, we're empowering destinations to build resilience," the statement read. "As an industry, we have the powerful opportunity to use our business to benefit the local communities and fragile ecosystems that are the pillars of our businesses."

Highlighting CHTA immediate past president Karolin Troubetzkoy's role in the launch of the "One Caribbean Family" initiative, a special marketing program which spurred CHTA member support for the Recovery Fund, the tourism leaders thanked the St. Lucian hotelier for her leadership.

Inspired by Troubetzkoy, CHTA challenged its members to participate in the One Caribbean Family marketing campaign, and dozens of hotel and travel companies doing business in areas of the Caribbean not directly impacted by the hurricanes contributed a portion of booking revenue to the fund.

Companies and individuals in airlines, destinations, meetings/academia, media/PR, travel industry associations, financial/professional services, travel agencies, online travel agencies, lodging, hospitality, cruise, and attractions were fired up by the power of giving and, through their donations, are helping to accelerate recovery and bring stability to the affected areas.

After the relief agencies met immediate needs and moved on, the recovery phase began. This process is typically long, difficult and underfunded. Through Tourism Cares and CHTA, the industry has united to help destinations "build back better" by investing in recovery.

Some 15 grants have been approved and more than half of the total funds raised have been passed on. "As we continue to assess the needs of the people and the industry, the remainder will be allocated in the final phase of distribution this summer," Comito and Vlamings reported.

This first phase has funded the strengthening of local hotel and tourism associations in Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, St. Maarten, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. It also helped participants attend 2018 Caribbean Travel Marketplace, allowing them to meet with travel partners and the travel trade media to brief them on recovery efforts and generate business in the aftermath of the hurricanes.

The fund also provided several affected destinations in the region with training on how to establish an effective voluntourism program, bringing visitors back to assist with recovery initiatives while spending much needed cash locally.

For skills training and employment opportunities, My Brother's Marine Workshop in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, received a grant to support the creation of a marine trade school for at-risk youth that will help at least 25 students get jobs.

Kidz at Sea on St. Maarten, which is helping youth get jobs with a three-week course on boat repair, was another beneficiary. Run and supported by marine professionals, the aim of Kidz At Sea is to get local schoolchildren interested in waterborne activities to lead to careers in the marine industry, while making the region a more attractive yachting and boating destination.

Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC), which is diversifying the tourism market in St. Maarten by developing and offering eco-tours, also received funding to help create jobs and helps travelers appreciate and preserve the natural resources on the island.

Local Area Management Authority (LAMA) Yacht Moorings in Dominica will leverage the resources received to create sustainable livelihoods for locals living in Soufriere-Scotts Heads. A new mooring field will allow boats to stop in these communities, creating further economic opportunities for locals via small social enterprises such as restaurants, laundry services, suppliers of fish, produce and ice to visitors, snorkel and diving trips and tour guiding. Additional income will be available for families who will police the mooring balls and receive rental income through the lottery system.

The Marine Center for Innovation Grupo Puntacana Fundación is training others in the region in destinations which suffered severe reef restoration. The project, supported by the fund, focuses on reef restoration to protect the remaining wild colonies of coral while increasing their population with genetically diverse corals grown in underwater nurseries.

Seeds of Love in the British Virgin Islands, with the help of the initiative, bought 1,000 saplings and seedlings for the local community and travelers to replant the islands' indigenous trees and vegetation, much of which was wiped out in the storms. The project helps to prevent erosion, protect the ecosystem, and support tourism.

Other projects targeted for social enterprise support include the Kalinago Heritage Center in Dominica and the Puerto Rico Agriculture and Culinary Linkages Project. Other grants will be announced as they are decided.

Further details about the fund are available at [www.tourismcares.org/Caribbean](http://www.tourismcares.org/Caribbean) .

### About Tourism Cares

Tourism Cares advances the travel industry's social impact to help people and places thrive. We unite the industry and use our collective influence and reach to positively benefit the people and places our industry relies on. Our members include leading travel associations and companies, together helping destinations in need, supporting our workforce, and improving our corporate social responsibility. Learn more at [www.TourismCares.org](http://www.TourismCares.org) and [@TourismCares](https://www.instagram.com/TourismCares)

### About the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is the Caribbean's leading association representing the interests of national hotel and tourism associations. For more than 50 years, CHTA has been the backbone of the Caribbean hospitality industry. Working with some 1,000 hotel and allied members, and 32 National Hotel Associations, CHTA is shaping the Caribbean's future and helping members to grow their businesses. Whether navigating new worlds like social media, sustainability, legislative issues, emerging technologies, climate change, data and intelligence or, looking for avenues and ideas to better market and manage businesses, CHTA is helping members on issues which matter most.

For further information, visit [www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com](http://www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com).