

“Fostering development from within”

Building a new generation of Crucian artisans and heritage providers.

Crucian Heritage and Nature Tourism, Inc. (CHANT) is committed to preserving Crucian culture and heritage and promoting sustainable community development with a focus on tourism, traditional skills, and heritage-focused workforce development. Since the mid- 2000s CHANT has built a network of world class local tourism providers and programs. Today, CHANT boasts over 80 certified CHANT Tourism Providers and has helped integrate Crucian Tradition Bearers, students and young entrepreneurs into the tourism industry!

Our work facilitates local participation in the tourism industry; promotes cultural and heritage tourism; supports the preservation of St. Croix’s built and natural resources and, CHANT introduced Creative Placemaking/Placekeeping in our community; utilizing art in community revitalization and workforce development through the *Invisible Heritage: Identity Memory and Our Town* project.

CHANT’s Recovery and Growth

One month and two days after C.H.A.N.T. launched a new initiative, *Invisible Heritage: Identity Memory and our Town (IH)*, St. Croix was grazed by Hurricane Irma. Two weeks later, St. Croix took the full force of Hurricane Maria which brought destruction, devastation and opportunities. C.H.A.N.T. responded immediately providing support to the community; relocating to and repairing a new facility; adapting the training program to serve the youth of the community. Trainees cleared debris in the community, gathered and distributed donated supplies and received training and hands on experience historic restoration at the new CHANT Cultural Center located at 217 Custom House St., Frederiksted, St. Croix.



IH Apprentices constructing shutters



Emergency Food distribution

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Invisible Heritage: Identity Memory and Our Town – Free Gut Project and Building Arts Institute

Invisible Heritage: Identity Memory and our Town (IH) addresses the long-term problems of abandoned and derelict historic buildings in the town of Frederiksted on the island of St. Croix. This project focuses on the revitalization of the historic Free Gut neighborhood in Frederiksted and the development of a cadre of skilled artisanal craftspeople to restore the historical buildings.

The project addresses:

- 1) Job training and job placement
- 2) Preservation of traditional folk art and artistry
- 3) Restoration of significant vernacular buildings
- 4) Community engagement and support
- 5) Sustainability



Hospital Street, Frederiksted

Free Gut Summer Programs

CHANT’s Free Gut summer program provides children from the greater Frederiksted area with a low cost supportive and creative environment where they participate in multi-disciplinary arts activities that fosters their sense of self and provides positive ways for self-expression. The program includes a Youth Organizing component where they are taught the principles of collaboration and to connect the community’s history/legacy with their current environment, community, family, etc. as well as themselves as individuals.



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C.H.A.N.T Training Programs

Building Arts Institute – Offers training for youth ages 16-30 in the traditional building arts.

- **Introduction to Traditional Woodworking** - Provides students instruction and training in the use of hand and power tools. Methodology utilizes a series of projects to provide instruction in specific disciplines and/or in the use of a particular tool.
- 35 young men and 1 young woman trained in the art of traditional woodworking through the Building Arts Institute (BAI) Program
- **Introduction to Historic Restoration** - This program includes classroom instruction and on site training. Scope of work includes site preparation, stripping, painting, shutter construction and installation, fabrication of metal fitting for shutters and reroofing.
- **HOPE Crew Training** – 5 young men received training in historic masonry and historic preservation through a partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and The Nature Conservancy in April 2022. The on-the-job training resulted in the repair of the historic masonry of the Hospital building at Estate Little Princess.
 - 4 of the trainees were immediately hired by a major contractor



Tour Guide Training Walking Tour We provide Historical Walking Tours of Christiansted and Frederiksted for visitors and residents of the island. CHANT tour guides have guided thousands of visitors and students sharing our rich history and culture. Currently CHANT has ten tour guides and will be adding ten more for the 2025-2026 season.



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CHANT Cultural Center has become a hub of activity in the town of Frederiksted.

CHANT hosts training programs, art exhibits, community forums and youth summer programs.

- Annual Free Gut Summer Program: *Connected Expressions*, provided youth with a free cultural enrichment program. Students explored multiple artistic mediums, and used these mediums to investigate Crucian history, community organizing and social activism.
- *Connecting with the Archives: Reclaiming Memory*, a public conversation with artists and historians from the Virgin Islands and Denmark.
- Sponsored Artist Talk and Open Forum – I am Queen Mary with Virgin Islands artist La Vaughn Belle and Danish artist Jeannette Ehlers.
- Annual Artist in Residence: Afreek Southwell provides 4 weeks of classes in woodworking and sculpture and has taught 45 students between ages of 14-70 each February between 2019 – 2022.
- Annual Woodworking and Fine Arts Exhibit – held the month of February
- Youth Art Month – CHANT has hosted the Youth Art Month exhibit in 2021 – 2025. This years opening was held on Saturday, March 1st.
- Host for “No One is An Island” – Environmental Justice training sponsored by the St. Croix Environmental Association.



CHANT is proud to have positively impacted our community. We are most proud of the young men and women who have participated in our programs.

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CHANT WHEEL



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