THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION OF
THE CARIBBEAN HOTEL ASSOCIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMER CAMP FOR CARIBBEAN YOUTH STILL ACCEPTING PARTICIPANTS

~ 7th Wider Environmental Youth Program will welcome children 12-16 July 21-27 on St John, USVI ~

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (May 26, 2005) - For the seventh year, the Wider Environmental Youth Program will welcome young Caribbean people from July 21 to July 27 on St John, USVI for a seven-day environmental summer camp filled with exciting outdoors activities and interactive lectures. The deadline for registering has been extended to June 17, 2005.

Students, ages 12-16, are immersed in activities and experiences that cover natural history and ecology of selected Caribbean ecosystems – coral reefs, sea grass beds, mangrove wetlands, coastal scrub, dry forest and moist forest – conservation issues in the Caribbean, natural resource management strategies in the Caribbean, and environmental issues and careers. The daily program includes field trips in the various ecosystems (hiking, snorkeling, biking…), as well as demonstrations and discussions. This year's theme is "Natural History, Ecology and Conservation on Caribbean Islands." More information and detailed daily program are available on the VIERS website at www.islands.org/virgin/viers. Interested parties can register by contacting Randy Brown at (410) 647-2500, fax (410) 647-4554, email rb@islands.org.

In July 2004, 8 Caribbean teenagers participated in the program, hosted by the Virgin Islands Resources Station (VIERS) on St John, USVI, and were absolutely thrilled. Eion Maison, from St Maarten, says the experience "has motivated [him] to be a volunteer for environmental organizations back home," while "it sparked a great interest in marine life" for Lena Manek, from St Martin, and "it has been one that [she] would always cherish" for Chantel Pemberton from St Kitts.

This initiative is presented by the Clean Islands International, the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA) and its environmental division, the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST), with sponsorship from American Airlines. Land cost per participant is US$600 (includes everything except air fare). American Airlines provides extra-special rates for the participants; no higher than $200.

Photos from 2004 program available at:

http://www.caribbeanhotels.org/images/VIERS04_1.jpg
http://www.caribbeanhotels.org/images/VIERS04_2.jpg
http://www.caribbeanhotels.org/images/VIERS04_3.jpg
http://www.caribbeanhotels.org/images/VIERS04_4.jpg

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About Clean Islands International – www.islands.org
Clean Islands International, Inc. is a non-profit non-governmental organization with international members who are dedicated to providing educational and technical assistance to island communities for the preservation and beautification of indigenous natural environments and the sustainable development of proper solid waste handling practices.

About the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST) – **www.cha-cast.com**
CAST, the environmental subsidiary of the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), was chartered in 1997 to undertake collaborative environmental efforts within the hotel industry, enhance the practices of the region's hotel and tourism operators by providing high quality education and training related to sustainable tourism; promote the industry's efforts and successes to the traveling public and other stakeholders; and serve as a vital link to all stakeholders with sustainable tourism interests in the Caribbean region. CAST has consolidated its strategic focus within the following four program areas: sustainable tourism certification and standards development, development of environmental management tools, advocacy and fundraising.

About the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA) – **www.caribbeanhotels.org**
The Caribbean Hotel Association is dedicated to excellence in hospitality, leadership in marketing, and sustainable growth in tourism, to the benefit of its membership and that of the wider Caribbean community. It aims to be a regional forum that will advance the Caribbean hotel and tourism industry. The members of CHA represent the entire spectrum of hospitality industry's private sector, from 835 member hotels representing some 127,000 hotel rooms in 36 national hotel associations to allied members – airlines, tour operators, travel agents, trade and consumer press, hotel and restaurant suppliers, among many others – which account for 520 members. CHA is headquartered in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and maintains a promotion and marketing office in Miami, Florida.