

## **SWEDISH SCHOOL VESSEL STUDENTS IMPRESSED WITH STATIA**

**St. Eustatius (March 21/07)** - "We are really impressed with the whole atmosphere on the island. People were friendly to us and the island is clean. We will come back to St. Eustatius." These were some of the responses of Swedish students who visited St. Eustatius today as part of their voyage on board the school vessel *Älva*.



This was their first visit to the island. The *Älva* started its voyage from Sweden to the Caribbean approximately two weeks ago. The visit to Statia was not scheduled but students all agree "this was the highlight of the voyage." The planning was to visit Dominica earlier this week but because of the Cricket World Cup it was impossible for the *Älva* to make a stopover in that

island. The students decided to visit St. Eustatius instead, a decision they do not regret at all.

The *Älva* is a school vessel based at Marina Läröverket, a maritime school in Stockholm, Sweden. Students on this vessel attend school with three different teaching programmes Maritime Biology, Leadership/Communication and Maritime Engineering. The combination of studies and work on board, together



with study visits during the voyages allow the student not only to study from books, but also to see and experience things in real life. While in Statia, the students took the opportunity to visit the Quill to experience the rainforest for the first time ever. Some students went snorkelling as well.

The *Älva* has left Statia and will be visiting St. Maarten, Bermuda, the Azores and France. The ship has 30 students, two teachers, one medical doctor and other staff on board. Classes are six days per week and are developed to enhance the personal skills of students.

Story and photographs by Jerry R. A-Kum