GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Public Schools Receive Softball Equipment to Strengthen National Sport

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Public schools across the Virgin Islands, including those on the sister islands of Virgin Gorda, Anegada and Jost Van Dyke, have been equipped with new softball equipment as part of the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports' ongoing efforts to strengthen the Territory's national sport and enhance physical education programmes.

The equipment was presented to Physical Education teachers representing schools throughout the Territory and will support the reintroduction and expansion of softball programmes within primary and secondary schools.

Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports Honourable Sharie B. de Castro said the initiative reflects the Ministry's commitment to reinvesting in softball at the developmental level and ensuring that students have greater opportunities to participate in the sport.

"We really want to ensure that softball is firmly reintroduced in our schools so that we can once again have strong inter-primary and inter-secondary competitions," Honourable de Castro said. "I grew up on the softball field, so this initiative is personal to me. We want to reinvest in the sport at the developmental level so that we can nurture the talent needed to represent the Territory."

The Minister added that the Ministry is taking a holistic approach by supporting teachers with both equipment and professional development opportunities.

"In order for teachers to effectively instruct students, they must have the proper resources," Honourable de Castro said. "This investment provides the tools they need, from gloves and bats to balls and bases, while also ensuring that teachers receive professional development to strengthen their instructional skills."

Director of Youth Affairs and Sports Ms. Debra Hodge said the equipment was secured after years of effort and represents an important step in strengthening softball development within schools.

"This is an exciting moment for us because softball is our national sport," Ms. Hodge said. "By providing this equipment to our schools across the Territory, we are ensuring that students have the resources they need to practise, develop their

skills and participate in the sport.”

During the handover, teachers also participated in training sessions which demonstrated the proper use of the equipment and provided guidance on strengthening softball instruction within physical education programmes.

Veteran Physical Education teacher Ms. Talia Nibbs, who has served in the education system for more than two decades and currently teaches at Ivan Dawson Primary School and Leonora Delville Primary School, said the equipment will create meaningful opportunities for students to develop their skills in the sport.

“With the equipment now available in our schools, PE teachers will be able to introduce more students to the sport and help them develop their skills,” Ms. Nibbs said. “You never know how far a child can go once they’re given the opportunity.”

The Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports continues to support initiatives that promote youth development, physical activity and student participation in sport, recognising the important role athletics play in fostering teamwork, discipline and personal growth among young people.

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