

Office of Gender Affairs Leads Food Donation Initiative to Support Single Parents on International Women's Day

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In honour of International Women's Day, the Office of Gender Affairs, in collaboration with key public and social agencies, donated groceries from a food drive initiative to support single parents in need.

This initiative, was in partnership with gender focal points in the public service and statutory bodies, aimed to alleviate food insecurity while promoting gender equality, equity and community empowerment.

Through this collaborative effort, seven single mothers and fathers received essential food baskets/boxes who are associated with programmes at Social Development Department, and Family Support Network bringing relief and encouragement to those facing financial challenges.

International Women's Day is a global event celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women while advocating for gender equality. The 2025 theme, "For All Women and Girls: Rights, Equality, Empowerment," underscores the importance of ensuring that every woman and girl has access to their fundamental rights, equal opportunities, and the support needed to thrive.

This initiative aligns with the theme by addressing food insecurity among vulnerable single mothers and fathers, reinforcing the commitment to gender equality, equity and community empowerment.

The Gender Affairs Coordinator, Miss Patricia Hackett, highlighted the significance of the initiative, saying, "This effort aligns with our mandate to advocate for gender equality and to support the most vulnerable members of our community. By working together with key agencies, we can make a significant difference in the lives of single parents who often bear the brunt of economic hardships. We hope to continue and expand this initiative to reach even more families in need, particularly in the Sister Islands."

Meanwhile, Director of Family and Children Support Services, Miss Laurel Freeman, expressed appreciation for the initiative, stating, "We really appreciate this assistance provided by Miss Hackett and her team. It has created a partnership between the Social Development Department, the Office of Gender Affairs, and the

other agencies that have collaborated to put a smile on the faces of single mothers and single fathers. They were very appreciative of the assistance, and I hope this can continue and expand further into the community because we know there are other persons out there who really need this support.”

Ms. Prudence Charles-Phillip, Ag Executive Director, Family Support Network, stated that she was extremely happy and grateful that single mothers received food baskets from the initiative. She also appreciated that Ms. Hackett gave words of encouragement to the single parents, she said, “you are strong women and continue to strive for greatness”.

This year marks fifty (50) years since the United Nations began a global celebration of IWD and declared March 8 as International Women’s Year (1975).

In 1977, the General Assembly adopted a resolution to proclaim a United Nations’ Day for Women’s Rights. All Member States were called upon to designate March 8 as International Women’s Day. It was recognized that women’s rights needed to be fully supported to end discrimination against them.

The Office of Gender Affairs and its partners remain committed to initiatives that promote the well-being of families, gender equality and equity within the Virgin Islands

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