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# FirstBank Supports Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities with Medical Equipment Donation

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**Dr. David Hall, Dina Perry-Malone, UVI School of Education Dean Dr. Karen Brown and Shamika Thomas pose for photo. By. UVI**

A generous donation from FirstBank is set to aid the Virgin Islands University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (VIUCEDD) in their ongoing commitment to improving the lives of the disabled community in the Virgin Islands, the University of the Virgin Islands has announced.

In a ceremony held at the University of the Virgin Island's (UVI) 13D Research and Strategy Innovation Center on Friday, Oct. 6, UVI recognized FirstBank for their donation which

facilitated the acquisition of essential medical equipment for the disabled community across the St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix districts.

Among the displayed equipment were some of the newly-acquired wheelchairs and walking canes. UVI's President, Dr. David Hall, praised the collaboration saying it is alliances like these that bridge the community gaps. This act of generosity by FirstBank towards VIUCEDD will greatly benefit the disabled community in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Dina Perry-Malone, vice president and USVI market manager of FirstBank, emphasized their longstanding dedication to community welfare, "Supporting non-profits like UVI VIUCEDD that address critical community needs aligns with FirstBank's mission, a commitment we've held for 75 years."

Highlighting the significance of the medical equipment, VIUCEDD Executive Director, Shamika Thomas said, "Mobility aids like wheelchairs can transform lives. They can mean the difference between confinement and community interaction. We are grateful to FirstBank Virgin Islands' Community Reinvestment Program for supporting this initiative."

According to the release, the VIUCEDD also manages the Virgin Islands Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities (VITRAID) program. This initiative provides assistive technology, ranging from specialized software to mobility aids, tailored to bolster the capabilities of the disabled. One of the program's components, the Re-Use Program, has received direct funding from FirstBank's donation. This unique program offers a "loan closet" service where assistive mobility devices, such as wheelchairs and walkers, can be borrowed either for short or long durations.

Sharon Williams, VIUCEDD's Associate Director of Assistive Technology, conveyed her gratitude, "Thanks to FirstBank's generosity, we can now offer community access at no charge. We hope others will also donate, allowing us to expand our reach."

Established in 1994, VIUCEDD is a leading interdisciplinary center, focusing on policy and practice enhancements for those with developmental and other disabilities. This federally funded entity, under UVI, is part of a national grid of 68 UCEDDs spread across the U.S and its Territories.

For those looking to support the cause, the Re-use Closet is welcoming both monetary and equipment donations. Potential sponsors can reach out to VIUCEDD at (340) 693-1322. For further details, please contact [pr@uvi.edu](mailto:pr@uvi.edu).