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# Rotary Clubs Bring Nonviolent Communications Instructor to Virgin Islands as Part of International Peace-Building Program

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Robert Moore **February 20, 2020**

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ST. THOMAS — Patterns of violent behavior often begin with what Tom Carlisi calls the “power over, power under” way of thinking. “ ... I am going to get over on you before you get over on me. ... Nobody is going to disrespect me.”

That paradigm of violence rings somewhat true to those examining the cause of rising bloodshed in the Virgin Islands. And altering this spiraling line of thinking takes, in part, learning tools of communicating in a non-violent, non-threatening way.

Mr. Carlisi is a certified nonviolent communication trainer and founder of Building Peace Through Service, a Rotary Clubs initiative planting roots in the Virgin Islands. Over the past

week, he made the circuit of Rotary Clubs, schools and radio broadcasts in the Virgin Islands, culminating with a presentation Wednesday at the Rotary Club of St. Thomas East.

There have been no studies of root of street crime in the territory in recent years, but educators, activists and others in the community nonetheless appear receptive to Mr. Carlisi's message of peace-building through deeper listening through our own personal needs and those of others.

"Violence is a tragic expression of unmet needs," Mr. Carlisi said, quoting the works of Dr. Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi.

The Rotary Club's Building Peace Through Service Program is in place in 165 countries, with outreach happening in the Virgin Islands, Tortola and the broader Caribbean, Mr. Carlisi said. Over the past week, he has visited the five Rotary Clubs on St. Thomas. He spent two days with students and educators at the Virgin Islands Montessori School and Peter Gruber International Academy and visited the Boys and Girls Club of St. Thomas.

Sherrie Davis, a St. Thomian and longtime friend of Mr. Carlisi, said the school-related events were emotional. When conversations turned to how youths feel – frustrated, misunderstood – some burst into tears. "They need someone to understand, to listen."

An engaging interview with Mr. Carlisi on WSTA 1340 will be available at the Rotary Wellness Wednesday podcast.

For more information about how to become involved, contact Mr. Carlisi by email at [carlisiandassociates@gmail.com](mailto:carlisiandassociates@gmail.com) or by phone at 614-332-5974.