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Virgin Islands Humanities Showcase Highlights NEH-Funded Cultural Projects

The first Humanities Showcase since CFVI became the official Humanities Council featured nine of 41 NEH-funded initiatives. Filmmaker Peter Bailey shared insights on the Unbreakable Film Academy, training students in digital media and storytelling.

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Students of the Unbreakable Film Academy interview entertainment lawyer Charles Hamilton By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

Wednesday's Virgin Islands Humanities Showcase was the first since the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands was named the territory's official Humanities Council by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The online event featured nine of the 41 organizations that have

benefited from the \$1.5 million in NEH funding for humanities projects received by CFVI since 2020.

One of the presenters was Peter Bailey, who spoke of the Unbreakable Film Academy. The Academy is a “hands-on training program in which five local high school and college students gain an introduction to film and digital media production,” Mr. Bailey said. “A lot of times we see our young people using these new tools and devices, but we're not teaching them how to...share content from a purposeful standpoint and in essence, create a visual library of our history and our culture,” he declared. The Academy is meant to bridge that gap.

A recent project was working on the digital media campaign for Mr. Bailey's Paradise Discovered: The Unbreakable Virgin Islanders 2.0, a documentary showcasing the resilience of residents following the devastating hurricanes of 2017. The students also recently did some film production of their own, interviewing Charles Hamilton, an A-List entertainment attorney raised in the USVI. “We went to the beach, and they had no idea that they were going to capture this,” Mr. Bailey remarked. “They had to capture and produce this segment on the fly with the tools that they have.”

Having the students go through the filmmaking process was an invaluable experience for them, Mr. Bailey said. “When they take ownership of their story, there's a self-worth and self-value that entails, and I think it...[creates]...a stronger community and a more aware community.”

He disclosed that some of the students from the project have now been hired as employees of his own media production company, and are now working on a new show, with several episodes already filmed.

The Consortium will continue to feature presenters at the Virgin Islands Humanities Showcase in subsequent articles.