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H.O.P.E. Incorporated Hosts Healing Fair and Survivor Exhibit on St. Thomas

H.O.P.E. Incorporated will host a Healing Fair and Survivor Exhibit on March 22 in St. Thomas, featuring free coaching, a Caribbean dance class, and the Reclaiming Faces photo exhibit to support survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

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Dr. Khnuma Simmonds, Founder of Girlfriendism™ International and Executive Director of H.O.P.E. Incorporated.

H.O.P.E. Incorporated, the nonprofit branch of Girlfriendism™ International, is inviting the community to its Healing Through Movement Community Class & H.O.P.E. Open House on Saturday, March 22 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at My Girlfriend's Closet in Havensight

Shopping Mall.

The event will provide free resources for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, featuring coaching sessions, wellness activities, and an empowering survivor exhibit.

A Day of Healing, Empowerment, and Support

Inspired by Women's History Month and the 2025 global theme "Accelerate Action", H.O.P.E. said via press release that it is partnering with local professionals to provide survivors with critical support services. The event will begin with a free demo SoKh Caribbean Dance Fitness class at 11 a.m., followed by:

- Financial coaching with Shawn Williams, CEO of Dubya Consulting
- Entrepreneurship coaching with Lia Magras, CEO of Lia Magras Coaching and Consulting
- Wellness coaching and resources for survivors

Dr. Khnuma Simmonds, Founder of Girlfriendism™ International and Executive Director of H.O.P.E. Incorporated, emphasized the organization's commitment to healing through culture and creative expression.

"H.O.P.E. is a culturally specific services organization specializing in historical and artistic approaches to healing and empowerment for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. As we accelerate action for Women's History Month and prepare for Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April, this event highlights the power of the arts, entrepreneurship, and financial empowerment in fostering healing and resilience," said Simmonds.

Reclaiming Faces Survivor Exhibit to Be Showcased

The Reclaiming Faces Survivor Photo Exhibit, which first launched on St. Croix in 2023, will be unveiled at the event, according to the release. Inspired by Chalana Stephanie Brown's 2021 project "Claiming Spaces: The African Story of the Sugar Mill", the exhibit continues the anti-oppression, pro-healing, and Afro-Caribbean emancipation movement.

The exhibit features visual narratives from survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse in the U.S. Virgin Islands, serving as a testament to resilience and healing. The event will also unveil research from Simmonds's dissertation, "Caribbean Women, Music & Dance: Self-Expression and Intimate Partner Violence," which explores how music and dance influence the self-expression of Caribbean women who have experienced intimate partner violence.

Survivors who have attended previous exhibits have shared powerful testimonials:

- "Thank you for this. I feel free!"
- "This is emotional... I am a survivor too. Thank you."
- "I'm here for my mom. I saw her go through it, and when I told her about it, she didn't want to come. I know it's too hard, so I came for her."
- "I feel so empowered! The stories are so powerful, and I can see myself in them."

Community Partnerships and Support

H.O.P.E. extended gratitude to Sterisil, Solmetex, and DryShield, the primary sponsors of the Reclaiming Faces exhibit, as well as the H.O.P.E. Board of Directors, Chalana Stephanie Brown,

the St. Croix Foundation for Community Development, and My Girlfriend's Closet St. Croix & St. Thomas for their continued support.

The event is made possible through a 24-month grant from Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault and the National Department of Health and Human Services, allowing H.O.P.E. to provide services at no cost to survivors.

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