

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Williams Delight Sets Aug. 20 Healing Gathering Amid Gun Violence and Recent Community Trauma

Re-Birth Re-Build will bring trauma counselors, mental health resources, peer support, youth healing and remembrance to Williams Delight Aug. 20. It comes weeks after Officer Eustace Charles was killed and days after fire engulfed his former home there.

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An aerial view of a portion of Williams Delight on St. Croix. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM.

ST. CROIX — The Williams Delight Tenant Council and WD4Lyfe Inc. will host a free community healing gathering Thursday, Aug. 20, aimed at supporting families affected by gun violence and community trauma through mental health resources, trauma-informed

counseling, peer support, remembrance and youth-focused healing.

The Re-Birth Re-Build gathering will take place from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Williams Delight Community Center in Frederiksted and is open to all community members seeking support and solidarity. Dr. Clema S. Lewis will serve as moderator.

The event comes amid a particularly difficult period for Williams Delight.

On July 26, 51-year-old VIPD Officer Eustace Charles was found inside a vehicle in Williams Delight with multiple gunshot wounds after authorities received reports of gunfire shortly before 6 a.m. Charles, a member of VIPD's Executive Security Unit, died from his injuries.

Then, late Friday, Aug. 14, Charles's former Williams Delight residence was engulfed in flames. Officials said the property was unoccupied, and the cause of the fire remained under investigation. Authorities have not announced any connection between the fire and Charles's homicide.

The Re-Birth Re-Build announcement does not state that the gathering was organized specifically in response to either incident. Instead, organizers describe it more broadly as an effort to address the effects of community trauma and gun violence and provide residents with a place to reconnect.

Mental Health Resources, Remembrance and Youth Healing

Organizers say the gathering is intended to provide a setting for unity, remembrance and action while connecting residents with mental health resources, trauma-informed counselors and peer-support networks.

Programming will include Faith & Fellowship, Community Remembrance, Youth Healing and a Restorative Space.

"The Re-Birth Re-Build gathering is a vital step toward community healing".

WD4Lyfe, which organizers say is known for hosting one of St. Croix's largest community reunions, said its work also involves creating spaces where residents can gather while strengthening relationships and community bonds.

Government, Police and Community Organizations Participating

The gathering is being held in partnership with several government, health, law-enforcement, faith and advocacy organizations.

Participating organizations include the Virgin Islands Housing Authority, Virgin Islands Police Department, Office of the Governor, Gun Violence Prevention, St. Croix Women's Coalition, Department of Health Behavioral Health and VI Pastors United.

The Williams Delight Tenant Council and WD4Lyfe said the event is intended to support residents and families confronting the effects of violence and trauma while creating opportunities for community members to reconnect.

Admission is free.

For additional information, residents may contact the Williams Delight Tenant Council at 908-502-2784 or WD4Lyfe Inc. at 340-220-5133.

Media inquiries may be directed to Leona Edwards of WD4Lyfe Inc. at 340-220-5133 or leconsulting@live.com.

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