

The Virgin Islands Consortium

UVI's Marine Advisory Service Bringing Marine Education To Public And Private Schools

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Educators seeking to enhance the marine and environmental knowledge offered to their students can do so with the aid of the Virgin Islands Marine Advisory Service (VIMAS), a press release UVI issued on Monday has made known. VIMAS, which operates within the University of the Virgin Island's Center for Marine and Environmental Studies (CMES), offers assistance to teachers in the form of curricula both inside and outside of the classroom.

VIMAS agents can make scheduled visits to private or public school classrooms territory-wide and provide presentations to students in grades six through 12 on key target areas that align with a specific lesson/learning objectives.

“To help drive home concepts such as ‘What are invertebrates,’ VIMAS can organize field trips to UVI-CMES where students can interact with marine invertebrates such as sea urchins, brittle stars, and sea cucumbers,” said St. Thomas VIMAS Coordinator Howard Forbes, Jr. Lesson plan materials and other information can be obtained at <http://vimas.uvi.edu>. VIMAS curriculum is great for educators because it aligns with the common core standards, fosters active and group learning for students, and incorporates and infuses local environmental science information into existing school curriculum, said Forbes.

The main goal of VIMAS is to raise awareness within the Virgin Islands community about marine and environmental related topics. “For approximately 25 years, VIMAS agents have partnered with the Virgin Islands Network of Environmental Educators (VINE), the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Education, as well as with other environmental agencies to help meet these goals and objectives,” said CMES Director Dr. Paul Jobsis.

VIMAS provides outdoor educational presentations and activities to youth groups on a variety of different topics such as marine debris, marine life, and the importance of mangroves, he said.

Some example activities include:

Evolutionary adaptations that allow mangroves to survive

- Planting mangroves either in the UVI CMES nursery or in the field
- Working with the Virgin Islands Sea Turtle Project to capture and tag sea turtles
- Guided sea turtle snorkel tours in Brewers Bay
- Engaging students in beach cleanup activities where data can be collected and utilized in the classroom
- Teaching students various ways to repurpose single use plastic items through hands-on activities.

For more information on St. Thomas, contact Forbes at (340) 693-1672 or howard.forbes@live.uvi.edu. For more information on St. Croix’s activities, contact Marcia Taylor at (340) 693-4046 or mtaylor@uvi.edu.