

The Virgin Islands Consortium

UVI Organization To Host 12th Annual 'Voices That Count' Conference

Community Center / **Published On December 04, 2015 12:21 PM /**

Staff **December 04, 2015**



ST. THOMAS -- The 12th annual "Voices that Count" conference will be held on Dec. 14 and 15, in the Administration and Conference Center on the St. Thomas Campus and in the Great Hall on the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix, according to a UVI press release issued on Thursday.

The conference will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. each day. The conference, themed "My Disability is One Part of Who I Am," is hosted by the Virgin Islands University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (VIUCEED).

The “Voices That Count” conference brings individuals with disabilities, family members, service providers, advocates and candidates for political office together to discuss issues that affect people with disabilities and promote systemic change.

“The focus of this conference will be employment-related issues, opportunities, and on policy-driven directives for people with disabilities,” said Dr. Yegin Habtes, VIUCEDD executive director.

U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Commissioner Janet LaBreck, an unsighted advocate for the blind community for more than two decades, will be this year’s keynote speaker. LaBreck lost her sight at the age of 10, but has never let her disability get in the way of her dreams.

In 2007, she was appointed commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. LaBreck has served as an ambassador for more than 30,000 legally blind residents and organized campaigns that have effectively increased employment opportunities for the blind.

In 2013, President Barack Obama announced his intent to nominate LaBreck as RSA commissioner. She oversees programs that help people with disabilities find employment and live more independently.

The community is invited to attend the “Voices that Count” conference. There is no fee for conference participants, but space is limited on both islands. To register online visit: <http://events.viucedd.org>. Individuals may also call (340) 692-4266 on St. Croix for more information. On St. Thomas, call (340) 693-1322. Reasonable accommodations, such as having American Sign Language interpreters, should be requested in advance.

VIUCEDD is funded by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its mission, under the provisions of the Developmental Disabilities Act, is to enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities and their families in the Virgin Islands and to provide them with tools necessary for independence, productivity and full inclusion.