

The Virgin Islands Consortium

AZ Academy Burglarized Five Times In Six Months; Loses \$15,000 In Stolen Equipment And Damage

Crime / **Published On April 08, 2016 12:38 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **April 08, 2016**



ST. CROIX -- After being burglarized and vandalized for the fifth time since November, costing the school over \$15,000, AZ Academy -- located west of downtown Christiansted on Northside Road and across the street from the Juanita Gardine Elementary School -- is asking for the community's assistance in identifying at least one of two suspects after surveillance captured footage of two young men breaking into the learning facility.

There was one break-in in November, one in January, two in February and one on Wednesday. The incidents have severely damaged at least one major component of AZ's curriculum, its music department, as thieves have made away with almost all of the school's instruments. They stole one Mac Book, four iPads and a P.A. system, among

other equipment. The thieves also ransacked the school's classrooms, and ripped off its surveillance camera; but not before the camera captured some footage of the two men, which has been posted on The Consortium's Facebook platform and has garnered over 13,000 views so far.

AZ Academy's mission statement says its goal is to champion "the whole child using differentiated small-group instruction in a safe and nurturing environment, thereby inspiring students to reach their full potential." But the institution's Executive Director, Paula Heller, fears the constant break-ins may hurt its reputation.

"The piece that I'm really concerned about is the kids," Ms. Heller told The Consortium on Thursday. "This is all happening in the middle of the night but to walk in and see your lockers ransacked, to see holes in the door, it's disheartening to them and that's not what I want them to see of their community. I want them to really celebrate the positive things and the great work that they're doing as learners."

The school is seeking the community's help identify the persons in the video below, so as to put an end to the incessant theft and disruption of learning. There are closeup images of the suspects [here](#) and [here](#).