

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Children Of All Abilities Enjoy Back To School Fun As ADA Office Works To 'Cultivate Inclusion'

Government / **Published On August 29, 2016 10:58 PM /**

Staff **August 29, 2016**



Government House Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator Jamila Russell demonstrated ways that children of differing abilities can play and learn from each other at special back to school outreach events this weekend on both St. Thomas and St. Croix, Government House made known via press release today.

"We have to take a look at what each child can do and not at what they can't," said Ms. Russell. "We have to continue to actively cultivate inclusion of all our children in community activities and everyday play."

During a basketball fun day at Winston Raymo Recreation Center, Ms. Russell explained that some children can participate by passing and dribbling the ball to teammates more physically able to make a shot – demonstrating how children with disabilities can successfully interact with non-disabled players, according to the release.

Governor Kenneth Mapp, who participated in Sunday's event with several members of his staff, emphasized the importance of ADA programs and encouraged the children to continue to do their best. Before presenting prizes to contest winners, the Governor reminded the young people to complete their books for his annual Summer Reading Challenge, which will culminate in a celebration for readers next month.

"The first day of school is almost here," he said. "Have you read your five books for the Reading Challenge?"

Mr. Mapp offered congratulations to 12 year-old Andre Leonard, basketball dribbling champion, and Kassa Bridgewater, 10, who triumphed in the free throw contest after an intense battle at the net with 13 year-old Enrique Royer. Sunday's games were held with the assistance of St. Thomas-St. John Administrator Merwin Potter.

The St. Croix activity was held Saturday at the Tropical Ten Pins Bowling Alley, where a large group of children of differing abilities gathered to enjoy the lanes together. School supplies were distributed and contests were held at each event with the top prizes being Samsung Tablets donated by sponsors.

Ms. Russell thanked the Education Department's Division of Special Education, members of the V.I. Junior Bowlers and the V.I. Bowling Federation for their assistance at the Back to School Bowl-A- Rama. Bowling contest winners included LaMonique Berrios, Amarii Larsen, Dylon Schang and Jediah Ramos.

The Government House ADA coordinator also expressed her appreciation to the children, parents, staff and others that came out for this weekend's "Cultivating Inclusion" activities. She was especially grateful to the many sponsors that made the events possible: The Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands, O'Neale's Transport, Caribbean Reservations, Ocwen, Cane Bay Partners VI, Fintrac, Denali Asset Management, Plaza Extra West, Office Max, Alpine Securities USVI, Bryan's Heavy Equipment Rental, Tecoma Asset Management, West Bay Supermarket, Caribe Tradewinds Lodge #17, Paradise Point and WICO.