

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Fathers Commended For Participation In First Fatherhood Initiative

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Attorney General Claude Earl Walker publicly commended a group of fathers for completing a 22-week program aimed at helping them to become better parents, according to the V.I. Department of Justice.

Mr. Walker made those comments during brief remarks Tuesday afternoon at the inaugural Fatherhood Buzz closing ceremony held at the Department of Human Services conference room.

“We know that this program was challenging at times,” he said, “because it caused you to think about your responsibilities in ways that perhaps you never had, but we are proud of

all of you and we encourage you to continue to grow as responsible fathers who are involved in child-rearing because that is what our community desperately needs.”

The Fatherhood Buzz is a collaborative effort between the Department of Justice’s Division of Paternity and Child Support, and the Department of Human Services.

“The purpose of this program is to increase child support awareness and management, to improve parenting skills, healthy relationships and effective communication between fathers and their children, and to increase job readiness of the participants,” Mr. Walker went on.

“We are very proud of the fathers, all of them, who took the time out of their schedules to accept help from us by voluntarily participating,” he added.

For the duration of the program, the fathers selected for the pilot project attended two sessions per week for 22 weeks with a facilitator, Carlton Stevens, to discuss a number of important issues pertaining to fatherhood to help them become better fathers.

Mr. Stevens, who also addressed the gathering, gave an overview of the program’s curriculum. Among the topics covered were responsible fatherhood, impact fathers have on children, how to have positive impact on your children and families, and how to discipline children effectively as fathers.

“I congratulate and applaud the Department of Human Services and the Department of Justice for taking that bold step to start the initiative so we can help end this fatherless plague we’re seeing right now,” Mr. Stevens said. The four fathers who completed the program were awarded with Certificates of Participation. According to AG Walker, a similar Fatherhood Buzz session is planned for St. Croix.