

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Initiative To Ensure That Homeless Individuals Have Access To Meals Day And Night Announced By Frederiksted Health Care

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ST. CROIX -- Frederiksted Health Care, Inc. has embarked on an initiative to ensure that the homeless have access to meals throughout the day, especially on the weekends and weeknights, announced the facility on Monday. Through sponsorship and participation from many entities within the Frederiksted community, it is anticipated that the initiative will be very successful, according to the release.

Frederiksted Health Care, Inc. received a refrigerator from the Coca-Cola company, which is now on the front gallery at Frederiksted Health Care, Inc. Ingeborg Nesbitt Clinic

location in Frederiksted. The refrigerator will be accessible throughout the day and night, every day. Through kind contributions from entities located in Frederiksted, the refrigerator will be filled with suitable meals for those in need. Food items that would have typically been discarded will instead be boxed and placed in the refrigerator. The Frederiksted Health Care, Inc. will provide the to-go containers and labels to the participating entities to be utilized for this project.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony to launch the endeavor will be held on Wednesday at 3:00 p.m. on the gallery of Frederiksted Health Care, Inc. Ingeborg Nesbitt Clinic located at #516 Strand Street. In attendance will be representatives from Frederiksted Health Care, Inc. and many of the participating entities. During the ceremony, the first meals and beverages will be placed in the refrigerator and made accessible to those in need.

The announcement comes following discussions among local officials and those involved in charity programs for the need to develop a robust strategy to not only care for the homeless, but work on the problem. During a Senate hearing held at the Earl B. Ottley Legislative Hall earlier this month, Louise Peterson, executive director of the Methodist Training and Outreach Center and president of the V.I. Continuum of Care, revealed that there were 30 unsheltered homeless individuals in the territory, while 66 were sheltered. Of that total, 96 percent were males, while black men made up the wide majority with 90 percent.

The more surprising statistic, however, was the rise in youth homelessness between ages 0-17, according to Ms. Petersen. She said they are categorized under unaccompanied minors or youths without parents. That group includes approximately 61 teens -- 39 in St. Thomas, 15 in St. John and 7 in St. Croix.