

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Providing Over 35 Generators And Thousands Of Other Items With More To Come, Cane Bay Cares Mobilizes In Big Way For St. Croix

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ST. CROIX -- There are many organizations formed by Virgin Islanders at home and abroad helping USVI residents affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria recover. These organizations have demonstrated unwavering support, raised untold amounts of money, and have shipped trailers of relief supplies to St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. John and Water Island.

A standout organization is Cane Bay Cares, a fundraiser nonprofit created through the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands by [Cane Bay Partners VI](#) founders David

Johnson and Kirk Chewning. So far, Cane Bay Cares has distributed 36 generators to nonprofits and schools, and has been distributing a host of other items throughout St. Croix to residents, among them water, personal hygiene needs and canned goods.

"We care about St. Croix, especially the people, and we all knew right away that we wanted to do everything we could to help. St. Croix is our home and a native home to many of our employees. Everyone at Cane Bay Partners wants to see the island and the residents recover as quickly as possible," Mr. Johnson said.

Mr. Johnson and Mr. Chewning, who have already pledged \$100,000 each, will raise their pledge to a combined \$400,000 once donations arrive at \$200,000. "We hope to raise a total of \$1 million," Mr. Johnson said. The next wave of supplies will include more generators, solar lights, mosquito superbands and other specialty items that are in high demand and low supply on island. "We continue to adjust our purchases based on the immediate needs of the community," Mr. Chewning said.

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The men continue to do their part by expending their own dollars, and have seen the community stepped up with donations, which are matched by Mr. Johnson and Mr. Chewning. But Cane Bay Cares is asking that the community continue to donate because the need in the USVI is great.

"We need to keep the momentum going. We need more donations and for everyone to help share our message. We're asking people to participate on social media, particularly on [Facebook](#), and everyone to like our Cane Bay Cares page and like and share our posts far and wide. We want to tell the world about the situation in St. Croix and the Virgin Islands as a whole and generate more support for the relief efforts," said Stephanie Hanlon, marketing and PR for Cane Bay Cares. The fundraiser's website features a newsletter that includes information on what kind of help is needed. To donate, go [here](#).

The impact Cane Bay Cares's efforts has had on residents has been a humbling experience for all involved. "It's emotional. People on the ground are doing what they can. They are persevering despite the odds and the daily hardship. When we are able to make things easier, make the load a little lighter, then we feel a sense of accomplishment," Mr. Johnson said. "But it also shows us how much we still have to do. People are so appreciative because the needs are so great. It's heartwarming to see people smile and give them hope. It reinforces for us why this is so important and why we've got to keep this going."

The company's employees were also affected by the storms, along with its office on St. Croix. "Our challenge to get our office reestablished and our team back to full productivity is a tough one to overcome but we are committed to doing it," Mr. Chewning said. Cane Bay Partners office in Christiansted lost part of its roof, which resulted in severe flooding. According to Mr. Chewning, the ceiling also caved in. "We have yet to calculate how much we lost in terms of furniture, computer, equipment, and all of our personal items that were in the office. We have also lost significant revenue from the businesses we serve," Mr. Chewning made known.

With most of firm's employees evacuated, Cane Bay Partners has been operating out of Atlanta, GA, while the office is being repaired. Some employees lost their roofs, some had windows blown out, almost everyone experienced some type of flooding, and many employees' cars were totaled, Mr. Chewning said.

"We are blessed that our work family is all safe and accounted for and starting the rebuilding process," he concluded.

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