

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Dept. Of Health's Nurse-Family Partnership Program Graduates 10

Health / **Published On February 10, 2019 09:31 AM /**

Staff **February 10, 2019**



ST. THOMAS -- Ten V.I. Department of Health Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) program participants graduated on Thursday during a morning ceremony held in St. Thomas, D.O.H. has announced.

Eight of the ten new mothers, their children and families were joined by National NFP representatives including President and Chief Executive Officer of NFP, Frank Daidone, and Jaime Moreno, NFP vice president of marketing and communications from the National NFP office in Denver, Colorado. They were also joined by Alain Glen, R.N. and NFP nurse representative from South Florida. Ms. Glen provides regional support to the VI NFP Program, D.O.H. said. Two graduating mothers were unable to attend.

The original 12 participants joined the program when they were less than 28 weeks pregnant, D.O.H. said. Even though Hurricanes Irma and Maria ravaged the Virgin Islands in September 2017, these graduates stayed loyal to the program and remained in St. Thomas, according to the release.

D.O.H. said the graduation ceremony was especially significant to all involved because of the hardships endured by the mothers and the NFP nursing staff during and immediately following the storms. "The post-storm period was extremely challenging time for everyone," stated Carmen Vanterpool-Romney, nurse supervisor of the VI NFP program. "It was difficult on the NFP team but they prevailed because they knew their families needed them and because they also received tremendous support from their national NFP colleagues."

The program's graduate speaker, Deneisha Brazzle, summed it up best saying: "A big thank you to all. It was a great two years; it was a rough two years. It was a happy two years. It was a sad two years, two years is what we have to thank the NFP nurses and their associates for all the help they have given us, with their open arms, their attentive ears, their wise mouths, and their caring and adherent supportive mindsets," she said.

"Through this program, we who benefited from it, [have] gained knowledge, a good sense of direction, and key points of how to keep those temper tantrums in check. This program has helped us be the mothers or fathers that our kids [need] us to be. We should never forget the connections that we have formed with the NFP members," Ms. Brazzle added.

She also talked about the assistance she received throughout the over two years of participation, stating that not only did she receive medical intervention to help with her unique pregnancy challenges, but she also received support to become a certified medical administrative assistant with the Department of Labor, according to the release.

As a participant in the NFP program, all expectant women received training to help guide and train them through their pre and postnatal experience as well as individualized healthcare care, D.O.H. said. The department said expectant mothers are supported with training to improve their pregnancy, and are also encouraged to become economically self-sufficient through continued schooling or pursuing career goals. Participants benefited from being part of the program during their pregnancy and up through their child's second birthday.

D.O.H. said the program is expected to expand to St. Croix and St. John.