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## VI-PR Friendship Committee, Neighborhood Pharmacy and Census 2020 Backpack Giveaway Deemed Huge Success

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ST. CROIX — The membership of the Virgin Islands-Puerto Rico Friendship Committee joined forces with Neighborhood Pharmacy and Census 2020 to present students across the island with more than 1,400 bags of school supplies during an event Saturday.

Maria Colon-Clarke, VIPR Committee president, said the drive-thru event held in the Neighborhood Pharmacy parking lot gave an opportunity to share gifts and smiles with families during these difficult times.

“We all really put in some hard work to prepare the bags, and the community was excited and came out to be blessed,” she said. “We began just before 10:00 a.m. and by noon we had

distributed more than 1,400 bags.”

Mrs. Colon-Clarke thanked the VIPR committee, Neighborhood Pharmacy and the 2020 Census. She also thanked Raydiance Clarke-Cherubin for getting all the study worksheets and information supplies to give for students' learning experience.

In a release prior to the giveaway, Mrs. Colon-Clarke said the last few months, as a result of Covid-19, have been hard on adults, but especially harder on students. “Over the last few months, our students in all grades have been abruptly displaced from their classes and campuses, they have been ostracized from their friends and made to adapt to a new way of life,” she said. “This is all new for all of us, but we wanted to give them some encouragement and some support as they prepare to start the new school year in uncharted waters of distance learning and other hybrids of instruction.”

"We thought it best to team up with one of our community partners, Neighborhood Pharmacy, and join them in their celebration of their 5th Anniversary in business and annual backpack giveaway," she added. "Our Committee will be giving away 400 VIPR string backpacks and an additional 500 bags donated by Census 2020 along with T-shirts and census information. The bags will also contain supplies needed to start the school year the right way. We will also have snacks and leaning materials in the bags to help to motivate and assist the students."