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Virgin Islands Association in D.C. Donates 10,000 Masks to Dept. of Health For Distribution, \$1,000 to Ten Students in Scholarships

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The Virgin Islands Association in D.C., a nonprofit organization founded by Virgin Islanders residing in the metropolitan Washington, DC region, announced Sunday a donation of 10,000 3-ply civilian masks to the Department of Health, masks that will be distributed to community members territory-wide.

VIADC President, Nicole George, presented the masks to D.O.H. Commissioner Justa Encarnacion on Friday, according to the release. Ms. George noted said VIADC members are committed to giving back to the community that nurtured them and promoting positive change in the territory.

Ms. Encarnacion expressed her heartfelt appreciation for the donation. "This kind gesture from the Virgin Islands Association, DC shows that even from abroad, Virgin Islanders continue to look out for each other. The 10,000 masks will reach senior citizens, and our first responders. On behalf of the Department of Health, we are grateful," she said.

Through its community outreach activities, the Department of Health will distribute 4,000 of the donated masks on both St. Croix and St. Thomas and 2,000 masks on St. John.

In addition to the mask donation, in the fall of 2020, the Association provided \$1,000 in financial support to 10 students from the Virgin Islands under the VIADC's Scholarship Program. The 2020 VIADC Robert Finch Memorial Scholarship recipients include the following applicants, their high school, and the college/university where they have enrolled.

- N'Kosi Benjamin, (Free Will Baptist Christian School), Florida Institute of Technology
- Craig Benjamin, (Atholton High School), Towson State University
- Jayme Colbert-Williams, (St. Croix Central High School), Florida A&M University
- DeQuanda Defoe, (Ivanna Eudora Kean High School), Mary Baldwin University
- Agathe Emeran, Charlotte Amalie High School, Embry Riddle Aeronautical University
- Denali Georges, (Free Will Baptist Christian School), Liberty University
- Michayaela Hodge, (Charlotte Amalie High School), Florida Memorial University
- Tamera Laurent, (Ivanna Eudora Kean High School), University of the Virgin Islands
- Nia Sylvester, (St. Croix Educational Complex), Hampton University
- Jaiel Wyllis, (Ivanna Eudora Kean High School), University of the Virgin Islands

According to the release, at the close of 2020, the Association donated \$200 to the St. John Community food Pantry and another \$200 to the Reichold Center for the Arts. Over 40 years ago, the VIADC was established to promote fellowship and foster a sense of belonging and loyalty to the Virgin Islands. VIADC is known throughout Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia for its cultural activities including the Annual Summer Fish Fry, Picnic, and Winter Ball. The Association has held food drives for the homeless and hurricane relief drives for the USVI and other islands in the Caribbean.