

logo not found or type unknown

VI Marine Advisory Service Launches Water Quality Education Program in VI Schools

Economy / **Published On November 25, 2019 07:33 PM /**

Staff Consortium **November 25, 2019**

Image not found or type unknown



On Monday, Nov.18, the Virgin Islands Marine Advisory Service (VIMAS) launched a Water Quality Education Program, with the Charlotte Amalie High School piloting the program. The program is expected to expand to include other high schools and middle schools in St. Thomas and St. Croix, in 2020, the University of the Virgin Islands has announced.

The new program is intended to educate Virgin Islands youth on the importance of water in our everyday lives, and how to properly test water quality, as well as filter unclean water, UVI said.

“There are water crises happening all over the world such as the lead contamination in Flint Michigan to water shortages in South Africa and our team wants to bring awareness to these issues and highlight what is currently being done to address these issues,” said Howard Forbes Jr.,

coordinator of VIMAS, St. Thomas.

The program is being facilitated through a sub-award of \$28,000 in grant funds provided by the Water Resources Institute at the University of the Virgin Islands. The program will continue until June 2020. The areas VIMAS will focus on include education, outreach and research practices.

“We are using best practices from our Youth Ocean Explorers Summer Program to actively engage students in this three day module geared for students in grades 3-12,” said Community Engagement Specialist for the Virgin Islands Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (VI-EPSCoR), Jarvon Stout said. “At the conclusion of the three day module, participating teachers will receive two resource kits that enable them to facilitate several of the activities with their students post program; thus allowing for the continuation of the program after the program ends in June of 2020.”

According to Stout, students will work closely with the project team to create public service announcements that will be aired on several local radio stations to educate the community on practices they can adopt to conserve how much water they use daily.

“This program dovetails into another program that I have launched through the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR), “the Refill Bottles, Not Dumpsters' program” where I am working to install water refill stations at VI schools and providing students with reusable water bottles,” said Kristina Edwards, outreach coordinator of the DPNR Coastal Zone Management Division. “Students need reliable drinking water but we must also recognize that bottled water also contributes significantly to the waste stream and these projects will work hand in hand to educate our youth about waste reduction and water quality.”

VIMAS is housed within the Center for Marine and Environmental Studies at the University of the Virgin Islands. VIMAS works with the Virgin Islands community to raise awareness about our natural resources and foster environmental stewardship. For more information about the Water Quality Education Program, contact Howard Forbes Jr. at (340) 693-1672 or howard.forbes@uvi.edu.