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UVI Executive Director of Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Awarded Inaugural Disability & Disasters Award

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Kimberly Mills By. **LINKEDIN**

Dr. Kimberly Mills, executive director for the Virgin Islands Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (VIUCEDD), was awarded the Disability and Disasters Award by the Natural Hazards Center, the University of the Virgin Islands has announced. The inaugural award will be presented to Dr. Mills in July for her efforts in the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017.

“I found her work at the VIUCEDD after Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 inspiring,” stated Melissa Villarreal, committee member for the award and graduate research assistant. “She

organized a fundraising campaign that generated more than \$7,000 to purchase emergency radios for those who are deaf and hard of hearing. The award committee agreed this was representative of the type of leadership and service that Dr. Mills exhibits in the area of disability and disasters.”

Dr. Mills stated, “Hurricane relief was a TEAM Effort between VIUCEDD and our DD Network Partners at the Disability Rights Center, Center for Independent Living and the DD Council. We did our best to support our community in a time that was traumatic and trying for everyone.”

According to the release, Dr. Mills has spent more than two decades serving people with disabilities across the globe and in the U. S. Virgin Islands in several capacities, including in the context of disasters.

“Dr. Mills’ strong commitment to advancing and supporting the area of disability and disasters stood out, even among all of the other highly impressive and qualified applicants,” said Candace Evans, a Natural Hazards graduate research assistant and co-chair of the award committee.

Her research and community priorities include best treatment practices for autism spectrum disorders, technical assistance and evaluation, the study of phenomenon surrounding the school-to-prison pipeline, cultural and linguistic competence through a behavioral analytic lens, disability employment, health disparities research, and emergency preparedness, according to the release.

The Natural Hazards Center recently established the [Disability and Disasters Award](#) to recognize those who advance and support the area of disability and disasters with their research, practice, or service. The award was made possible thanks to the generous contribution of an anonymous donor.

As the first recipient of the award, Dr. Mills will receive financial support to attend the 2021 Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop. In addition, she will have travel and registration costs covered for the next in-person workshop.

“Because she has never attended the Workshop before, we are so excited that Dr. Mills will be a part of this year’s gathering,” said Heather Champeau, also a co-chair for the award committee and graduate research assistant. “We look forward to having her participate and learning more from her wide-ranging work.”