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My Brother's Workshop Announces Plan to Build St. Thomas Campus With Capacity of Over 1,000 Students; Project Kickstarted With \$1 Million Match From Philanthropic Family

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My Brother's Workshop campus concept art. By. MY BROTHER'S WORKSHOP

ST. THOMAS — My Brother's Workshop (MBW) has announced plans to build its 30,000 sq. ft. new campus to be located mid island on Donoe Bypass in St. Thomas. The campus serve clients from St. Thomas and St. John with the capacity to see over 1,000 students, according to a release issued Thursday.

The Stephenson Family, longtime residents and business owners in the USVI and supporters of MBW, has pledged to match all cash and in-kind donations made to the MBW campus over the next 365 days up to \$1 million, MBW said.

The Stephenson Family's history in the U.S. Virgin Islands dates back to 2003 during which time they have been active champions and supporters of community initiatives and charities that include Cancer Support VI, Jazz in the Park, The Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands, and their \$2M Help USVI Now! hurricane relief fund, according to the release. The Stephenson Family, under the leadership of Richard J. Stephenson, has always prioritized philanthropic and community interests as part of their moral code and genetic constitution to help others who are less well off, stated the release. Mr. Stephenson is also the founder and chairman of the Cancer Treatment Centers of America® (CTCA) and Gateway for Cancer Research, providing a nationally recognized, patient-first, holistic model of treatment and healing, and raising millions for cutting-edge clinical trials around the world respectively.



Front Row Left to Right - Scott Bradley, Bill Hostetler, Annie Hostetler, Jenny Hawkes, Nakeba Stewart, Chrystie Payne. Back Row - Julius Jackson. (Credit: My Brother's Workshop)

“With generous donations such as this one from the Stephenson family, not only are we able to keep our doors open, but this validates the work of MBW as important and necessary, giving us added inspiration to continue,” said Jenny Hawkes, MBW executive director. “Through donations, our private sector can be engaged in helping find solutions to issues and bring the community together.”

MBW's main campus has a 3-4 year timeline and will be comprised of three structures; totaling 30,000 square feet, eventually allowing for more than 1,000 people per year to receive vocational training, mentoring, mental health counseling, tutoring, online high school diplomas, job placement services, anger management, parenting classes, and access to art, music, and sports, according to the release.

The current MBW St. Thomas footprint spans three locations and is about 15,000 square feet. By doubling the space, MBW said it will have the ability to become energy efficient with solar panels, offer more effective training, provide mental health resources (including family counseling and individual counseling), classrooms for high school diplomas and continuing education, youth development, special needs training, free services to the USVI community, resiliency and sustainability programs and increased disaster response capacity.

The project will be completed in phases, beginning with Phase 1: the construction of the Stephenson Family Welcome Center (Banquet Space, Cafe, Industrial Kitchen, Classrooms, Offices). This building will house the following programs: Culinary Arts, Catering Services, Customer Service Training, Online High School, Anger Management, Offices and Welcome Center, Classrooms, Individual Counseling, NEW: Retail Experience, Family Counseling and Parenting Classes/Child Care Services. To date, \$1 million which is 25 percent of the goal for Phase 1, has been raised by MBW sponsors, according to the release. All donations made to the capital campaign at this time will go towards Phase 1.

With the announcement of the \$1 million match by the Stephenson Family, MBW said it will be able to begin construction on its main campus.

The following phases will include construction of the new MBW Workshop and MBW Community Center. The project is expected to take 3-4 years to complete.

MBW has had a long lasting impact on the members of our community through disaster response and workforce development. The increase in space will allow for MBW to respond quickly (and on a larger scale) to disasters as we did after the devastation of Hurricanes Irma and Maria and through the hardships of Covid-19 while keeping our youth engaged in our program, according to the release. With the additional programs, MBW said it will have the ability to work with older populations in workforce development for individuals needing to change career paths after life altering events and also be able to work with clients who have special needs or disabilities to help obtain employment.