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## Local Church Donates School and Safety Supplies to St. Croix Students

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**St. Croix Christian Church Pastor David Claeyes (L) presents 250 backpacks filled with school and safety supplies to St. Croix District Director of Curriculum & Instruction Pedro Parrilla (R) and St. Croix District English Language Arts Coordinator Paulina By. V.I. DEPT. OF EDUCATION**

The St. Croix District received a donation of 250 backpacks filled with school and safety supplies, courtesy of St. Croix Christian Church, as part of the church's efforts to continue its service to children, the V.I. Dept. of Education has announced.

According to the release, District Director of Curriculum & Instruction Pedro Parrilla accepted the donation on behalf of the district from Pastor David Claeyes at a brief ceremony held at the

Curriculum Center on Oct. 29. Ten of the district's schools will receive 25 backpacks each, with the purpose of providing the supplies to students in need.

"We were just trying to be a blessing," Claeys said of his church's decision to make the donation. He explained that in light of the church's Jericho Road Project afterschool program not operating this school year, the congregation wanted to help students in some way. Soon after the decision was made to donate the backpacks, Coldwell Banker St. Croix Realty called and offered its support.

"They called and wanted to partner with us to provide the backpacks," Claeys said. "We just wanted to be a blessing to the community, and hopefully this helps."

Each bag contains three folders, loose leaf paper, a glue stick, a ruler, crayons, pencils, a pencil sharpener, ear plugs, a mask, and hand sanitizer.

Parrilla thanked Claeys for the charitable gift.

"On behalf of the Office of the Insular Superintendent and the District Office of Curriculum and Instruction, we want to thank you for this gracious donation," he said. "The church has always been seen as one pillar of the community and the school as the other. So, to have that partnership is very important. Thank you on behalf of the children of the Virgin Islands."

According to the release, St. Croix Christian Church plans to continue supporting the district's schools through additional donations when the need arises.