

The Virgin Islands Consortium

A Thanksgiving Miracle: Empty Pantry at Nonprofit Helping Victims is Filled With Goods by Elementary School Students of Joseph A. Gomez

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Ernice Gilbert **November 26, 2022**



Front Row (l2r) Re'Tasha Bedminster, Meki Andrews, Kemiah Corum, K'Liey Lindo, Ray'Keema Fahie. Back Row (l2r) Asst. Principal Tashina Rogers, Lynn Elveus Marc Fedee, Kevion Dore, Adardlee Benjamin, Darielle Cajuste, and Kindergarten Teacher Merle Narciss By. JOSEPH A. GOMEZ ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

Students in Kindergarten through fifth grade, along with faculty and staff of the Joseph A. Gomez Elementary School brought smiles — and more importantly, meals — to victims of crimes this Thanksgiving by donating over 1,200 food items to the Family Resource Center in St. Thomas.

The drive, which lasted for two weeks (Nov. 7-18), was organized by kindergarten through 2nd grade Counselor Kiri Catta, however it was a school-wide effort, including the families of students at the school.

Though the goal was to collect 1,000 items, the drive's total was 1,221, with Educator Merle Narcisse's Kindergarten class donating the most — 185.

As it turns out, the effort was just what the Family Resource Center needed, according to its executive director, as the nonprofit's pantry needed to be restocked.

"When I received the phone call that we were the recipients of the Joseph Gomez Thanksgiving Food Drive, I got goose bumps; our pantry was empty," stated Anya Stuart, executive director of the Family Resource Center. "We use the items in our pantry to prepare meals for the families in our safe house and many people in our community that needs help stop by regularly to get items from our pantry. With Thanksgiving being a few days away, our supply was depleted, so this donation is a great help. We have items to restock our pantry."

She added, "I got goosebumps because it always amazes me to see our young children get involved in community awareness projects. Their support in giving back to our community is awesome. It really made my heart glad to see the young children take the initiative to help support a worthy cause."

Ms. Stuart thanked Ms. Catta, who organized the drive, "for being the driving force, the main influence and a leader who leads well. TeamFRC appreciates your compassion and love for humanity."

"The Joseph A. Gomez School community wanted to help add smiles to the faces of families that are less fortunate by ensuring they have access to a warm, hearty Thanksgiving meal," Ms. Catta stated.

She added, "Our families really stepped in and helped! One day before the close of the drive, we were at 730 items. We were 270 items away from our goal. A note was sent home to families that afternoon, and by the by the very next day, students arrived at school with boxes and bags of more donations. We surpassed our goal! We collected a total of 1,220 items plus a turkey! I am pleased with the turn out."

Erma V. Skelton is the principal of the school. Assistant Principal Tashina Rogers is currently the acting principal.