

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority in St. Thomas Launches 'Comfort Closet' at BCB School, Giving Students Access to Variety of Free Supplies

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The V.I. Dept. of Education has announced that Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School students now have access to free essential hygiene products, clothing items, and school supplies, thanks to the efforts of the St. Thomas Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

According to D.O.E., the sorority formally adopted the school and simultaneously launched the DST Comfort Closet during a ceremony held at the school on Tuesday.

According to chapter president Shanika Charles, the organization began working closely with BCB last school year and sought to formalize its commitment to providing the Bovoni-area school of more than 500 students in grades 6-8 with ongoing support. Students in need may discreetly obtain items from the on-campus store with the aid of a school counselor, nurse, or teacher.

"We are here today because we formally adopted BCB last school year and this is one of our first initiatives, where we are donating to the Comfort Closet that will offer an array of items that the students may need," she said, according to the release. "They can come to the office, and there are items for them to choose from, based on their needs."

Dr. Kifani Hendricks-Carey, BCB assistant principal and chairperson of the sorority's Social Action Committee, further explained the origins of the project.

"We have been working tirelessly on this project, as we know the needs of our students, and we are trying to fill in the gap for students where resources are needed," she said, adding that the idea for the comfort closet stemmed from conversations with staff, and a recommendation by the school's student success specialist, Meki'ya Thomas.

"We are here to serve the students and we are hoping to get the community involved to make sure that the resources continue to be replenished as they are needed," she said. "We know that our students have many needs, and we are hoping that the partnership continues in the vein it was started."

Department of Education Commissioner Dr. Dionne Wells-Hedrington praised the effort, noting its alignment with a focus area of the Department.

"Having community partners like the St. Thomas Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority come to the aid of our students in this way is tremendous," she said. "Building and maintaining partnerships is a top priority of mine and we are extremely grateful for this new relationship forged with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. We welcome anyone who wishes to partner with our schools because it takes all of us, as a collective whole, to ensure the very best for our students."

According to D.O.E, the Chapter, which boasts 71 active members on St. Thomas, seeks the community's support in the form of new donated items to ensure DST Comfort Closet remains fully stocked. Requested items include, but are not limited to shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, bath soap (liquid and bar), toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, hairbrushes, combs, hair bands, mouthwash, pocket-sized tissues, body wipes, toilet paper, flushable wipes, socks, underwear, new clothing and shoes, laundry detergent, dryer sheets, backpacks, pencils, notebook paper, and composition notebooks. Furthermore, organizers say financial donations to DST Comfort Closet will only benefit the project.

The sorority intends to expand the initiative to other middle and high schools throughout the St. Thomas-St. John District. For more information or to donate items, email stalumnaechapter@gmail.com or visit www.sttacdstd.org.

For information on adopting a school, contact Department of Education Director of Partner Relations Monique Creque at (340) 774-0100 ext. 8062 or email monique.creque@vide.vi.

