



BLESSED COMMUNITIES & Grateful Hearts

As we close out another enriching year, we pause to reflect on the many moments that have strengthened us, inspired us, and reminded us of the beauty of community. The past months have been filled with stories of service, resilience, collaboration, and personal growth, each one a testament to the

enduring spirit of our people. From the hands that serve quietly behind the scenes to the voices that uplift and motivate, this year has shown, once again, that the Virgin Islands are blessed with individuals and organisations who continually pour love, time, and dedication into making our communities thrive.





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GRATITUDE Corner



There are gems hidden throughout the Virgin Islands communities. Not just the beaches, boulders, or views, but rather, the people. They do not ask to be recognised and their efforts are not for gain. They contribute to their communities in a positive way out of love. Their collective efforts and acts of service help to preserve the fibre of Virgin Islands culture. The Sister Islands Programme Unit extends sincere gratitude to all who help to maintain the beautiful Territory in which we call 'home'.

Ms. Iona George



Ms. Iona George is a kind, loving, and grateful woman of God, radiating grace in all she does. She is widely admired for her compassion and for the deep, unwavering love she extends to both her family and her neighbours on Jost Van Dyke.

Throughout her life, Ms. George has gone above and beyond to care for others, especially the elderly and the young within her community. Her door is always open, her heart forever warm, and her kitchen ever ready to offer a comforting meal.

She is the embodiment of generosity, humility, and true community spirit.

Valley Sound Lions Club

Founded in 1992, the Valley Sound Lions Club is a local chapter of the global service network, Lions Clubs International. Guided by the motto, "We Serve," the club embodies the organisation's commitment to helping wherever there is a need.

As part of Lions Clubs International, the Valley Sound Lions Club embraces the broader mission of 'Service to others,' focusing on key areas such as vision, diabetes, childhood cancer, environment, hunger, youth, disaster relief, and humanitarian efforts. Locally, the club has undertaken numerous community-focused initiatives, including teacher appreciation events, free medical screenings, back-to-school giveaways, support for seniors, and holiday celebrations.



The club also engages youth through its affiliated Valley Sound Leo Club, fostering volunteerism and civic engagement among younger residents.

One of the club's most cherished traditions is its Annual Back-to-School Breakfast Boxes, through which over 800 breakfast boxes are donated to students across all schools on Virgin Gorda. Another key initiative is the "Man Up" breast-cancer awareness campaign, held each October through December, during which the club sponsors free mammograms for 150–200 women.

This year, the club hosted its 33rd Annual Lighting of the Christmas Tree Concert, featuring local talent from across the Virgin Islands. The event kicked off the holiday season on Virgin Gorda with song, dance, traditional music, and local treats.

Throughout the year, the Valley Sound Lions Club continues to provide a wide range of community services, including free legal clinics, biannual soup kitchens, youth forums, senior citizen events, and environmental and public-safety projects, often in partnership with other organisations.





Latisia Smith



A former teacher at the Claudia Creque Educational Centre, Latisia Smith now serves as an Operations Officer at the Auguste George International Airport on Anegada. Balancing her career with raising two young boys, one still a baby; Latisia certainly has her hands full, yet she is never too busy to serve her community or to invest her time and energy into meaningful projects.

For nearly three years, Latisia has been an active board member of the Anegada Lions Club. In this role, she has helped plan impactful projects and participated in events supporting children, the elderly, the less fortunate, and anyone in need within the community.

Health Tips OF THE QUARTER

The holidays are a time when families, friends, and acquaintances gather to celebrate the season. It is also a time when many people indulge in more food and beverages than usual.

Here are some tips to help you enjoy the festivities without compromising your health:

- **Eat a full meal before attending gatherings** with food and drinks. This helps you make better choices and reduces the amount you consume at the event.
- **If eating desserts, limit yourself to one portion.** Consume it shortly after your main meal to help minimize blood sugar spikes.
- **When eating a main meal, follow this order:** vegetables or salad first, protein second, and starch last. This slows digestion and reduces the risk of blood sugar spikes.
- **Avoid eating and drinking too late.** Stop at least three hours before going to bed.





YOUTH Feature



Victor Soriano

Thirteen-year-old Victor Soriano is a proud and grateful young leader who recently celebrated being named Valedictorian, a moment he credits to God, acknowledging that none of it would have been possible without Him. Victor was deeply touched by the outpouring of love from the Jost Van Dyke community, especially the many unexpected gifts and the tremendous support he received at his graduation. With big dreams for the future, Victor aspires to become an entrepreneur and a tech engineer. His favourite sports include soccer, basketball, and baseball, while his hobbies span music, art, and robotics, interests that reflect both his creativity and curiosity. Victor's favourite color is red, and as he begins his high school journey, he is determined to once again earn the title of Valedictorian and achieve the Principal's Honor. His message to other young men is simple but powerful: *"No dream is too big to achieve."*



Neeranjanie (Mandi) Singh

My name is Neeranjanie (Mandi) Singh, and I'm a 19-year-old from Valley, Virgin Gorda. I graduated in 2024 from the Bregado Flax Educational Centre – Secondary Division with High Honours and began working shortly thereafter.

I am currently employed full-time at Green VI, a non-profit organisation dedicated to combating climate change and building a greener, cleaner, and healthier British Virgin Islands. In my role, my daily tasks involve maintaining mosquito traps, inspecting parcels to prevent potential breeding sites, organizing informational pop-up displays for public education, and teaching young students about sustainable living.



Outside of my environmental work, I am also a traditional artist and painter. I have had the opportunity to collaborate with Art Without Limits (AWOL) on mural projects, including the redesign of the Jeffery Caines Basketball Court. Art is one of my greatest passions, and I love bringing color and inspiration to public spaces. In the future, I hope to become both an architect and a traditional artist, blending technical skill with creative vision to design spaces that uplift and inspire. In my free time, I enjoy hiking, baking, scrapbooking, and sketching, simple activities that keep me connected to nature and creativity.



Angelina Evans

Angelina Evans was the valedictorian of her graduating class in 2023 at the Claudia Creque Educational Centre, an institution she attended from preschool through grade 12. She is 19 years old and is currently pursuing a degree at the University of the West Indies.

Additionally, Angelina works at Green VI, where she continues to demonstrate her passion and dedication to environmental awareness, eco-friendly practices, and community involvement through various cleanup campaigns that she spearheads in collaboration with partner organisations. She also occasionally volunteers with the Anegada Lions Club Branch, assisting with activities for children, seniors, and the wider community. Angelina enjoys reading, going to the beach, listening to music, and eating her favourite food, grilled chicken Alfredo pasta.

green TIPS

OF THE QUARTER

Energy usage is something every home and business should strive to control at all costs. Significant savings can be achieved by following these tips:

- Switch to LED light bulbs. They use significantly less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs.
- Unplug energy vampires such as chargers, TVs, and kitchen appliances. These devices can still draw power even when turned off. Use power strips and turn them off completely when finished.
- Use solar appliances whenever possible to reduce overall energy consumption. These can include solar path lighting, solar water heaters, and solar power generation systems.



SMALL BUSINESS Feature

Kathisha Mckie



Gifted Hands BVI

With eight years of coordinating and designing events for The Village Café and Restaurant, Kathisha Mckie launched **Gifted Hands BVI** in 2022 as an event planner and decorator.

Kathisha is known for her innovation, dedication, and meticulous attention to detail, consistently bringing her clients' unique visions to life.

"Planning and coordinating events allow me to use all my unique skill sets while working closely with my clients to ensure they enjoy a stress-free experience."

Gifted Hands BVI specializes in floral designs, balloon décor, table settings, graphic printing and design, wreaths, gift arrangements, draping, and lighting. Their mission is to transform each client's dream into a stunning, beautifully executed event or product where every detail is thoughtfully and perfectly arranged.



"Gifted Hands is not just a name... Gifted Hands define us!"



RECIPE Corner

Potato Stuffing



What you'll need:

- 2 lbs potato powder (dry instant mashed potatoes)
- 3 cups tomato ketchup
- 3 teaspoon gravy browning
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1/4 cup (4 oz) cold unsalted butter
- 2 cups raisins (optional)
- 1 cup fine brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Combine the ketchup, milk, butter, cinnamon, and gravy browning in a pot, and bring the mixture to a boil.
2. Stir in the brown sugar, then remove the pot from the heat.
3. Mix in the potato powder to form a thick, spreadable mixture.
4. If the mixture is too firm, add more milk until it reaches your desired consistency.
5. Taste the mixture and add salt and ground black pepper as needed.
6. Spread the mixture evenly into a greased square casserole baking pan.
7. Bake at 375°F until the top is slightly browned.
8. Allow the potato stuffing to cool before serving.





KIDS Corner



Advent Word Search

S	I	N	W	R	E	A	T	H	T	S
M	Y	E	I	S	O	A	N	Q	O	V
I	R	D	V	T	C	A	N	D	L	E
I	C	A	L	E	N	D	A	R	Q	J
P	E	A	C	E	O	P	E	H	S	O
N	A	T	I	V	I	T	Y	L	S	Y
H	O	P	E	Y	F	U	H	O	T	K
A	D	V	E	N	T	A	U	V	A	R
T	A	Y	N	X	T	U	I	E	R	Y

**Advent
Candle
Calendar
Wreath**

**Hope
Joy
Peace
Love**

**Nativity
Star**



SISTER ISLANDS PROGRAMME UNIT 2025 Highlights

Coastal Cleanup on Anegada led by GreenVI in collaboration with the Anegada District Office, Beyond the Reef and BVI Tourist Board.



Senior Citizens' events on the Sister Islands





District Officers' Post Office Training



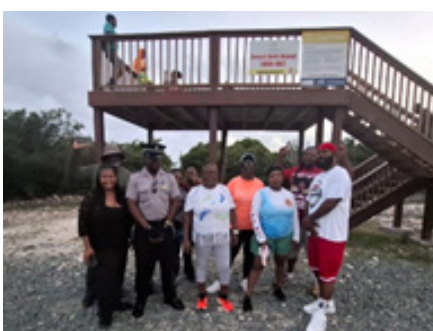
Senior Managers visited Virgin Gorda in May for the Sister Islands Coordination Committee Meeting.



Public Officers' Information Session in collaboration with the Virgin Islands Public Service Learning Institute and the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College.



Public Service Week activities across the Sister Islands





Hurricane preparedness and CERT Membership Drive on Anegada



Reading is Fun Week activities on Anegada





From our team to every household,
we extend our warmest wishes for a blessed
Advent, a joyful Christmas, and a
prosperous New Year!



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