



VIRGIN ISLANDS HOUSING FINANCE AUTHORITY

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PRESS RELEASE

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Homeless Transitional Housing on St. Croix Officially Opens with Dedication Ceremony

On Thursday, Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority Executive Director Daryl Griffith gave remarks at the dedication ceremony hosted by Catholic Charities of the Virgin Islands, Inc. to commemorate the completion of the Territory's largest homeless transitional housing development, Saint Teresa of Calcutta House of Hope, located at #16 Friedenstahl on the western outskirts of Christiansted.

Through a competitive application process, VIHFA grants Housing and Urban Development CDBG funds to non-profit organizations such as Catholic Charities, and occasionally other governmental entities, to implement projects that prevent/eliminate slum and blight, address an urgent need, or provide primary benefit to low-to-moderate income persons. The total CDBG funding to complete the Friedenstahl facility was \$1,338,232.



The new facility marks the first large-scale investment in transitional housing on St. Croix. Transitional housing facilities help facilitate the transition of homeless individuals and families into permanent housing within 24 months of entering the program. In addition to safe, affordable housing accommodations that meet the participant's needs, wrap-around services are provided to address issues that may hinder residents from obtaining or maintaining stable long-term housing. Providers of transitional housing services are required to arrange for, or make available, services to participants to assist them in securing permanent housing within two years or less.

Executive Director Griffith stated, "A recent study of the Territory's homeless crisis response system identified significant gaps in available resources to address homelessness. One such gap identified is the lack of transitional housing, so it is fortuitous that we are here to dedicate this facility today."

 *Unlocking the Door to Affordable Housing*

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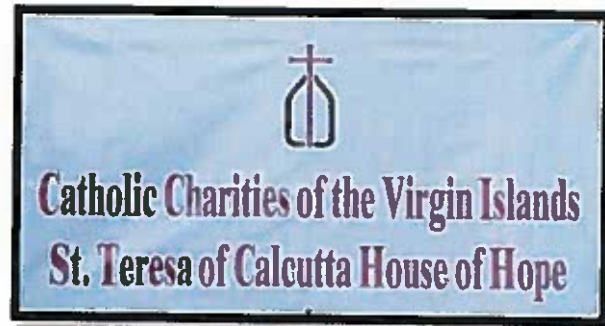
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“Sadly, over the past decade, the western area of Christiansted including the Christiansted Cemetery has become known for its concentration of homeless persons. The soup kitchen and shower facilities within this facility will enable outreach staff to directly engage these persons in their environment to begin to build the trust and rapport that is the first step toward helping them from the streets.”



The name of the facility, Saint Teresa of Calcutta House of Hope, is fitting because it honors the late Mother Teresa founder of the Missionaries of Charity who, in addition to traditional vows, also professed a fourth “vow” of service to the poorest of the poor. The new Calcutta House will offer not only housing, but a way forward for a population that is often living without hope.

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