



U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

VIDHS OFFICE OF HEAD START



Official Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies

FRIDAY, AUGUST 28TH

ST. CROIX, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS



ANNA'S HOPE
HEAD START
ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING



CONCORDIA
HEAD START
LEARNING CENTER



USVI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

HEAD START

CB CUSTOM BUILDERS



Anna's Hope and Concordia

Head Start Facilities

RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY

ORDER OF CEREMONY

★ 10:00AM

MASTER/MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

Ryan Nugent & Masikia Lewis

INVOCATION

Apostle Mona L. Barnes. City of Refuge Worship

NATIONAL ANTHEM

N'Bari Alexander

WELCOME

Commissioner Averil George

REMARKS

Acting Commissioner Rueben Jennings, Department of Public Works

Robert Rush, Custom Builders VI

Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien, Office of Disaster Recovery

The Honorable Stacey E. Plaskett, Delegate to Congress, Esq.

The Honorable Milton Potter., Senate President, 36th Legislataure

The Honorable Lieutenant Governor Tregenza A. Roach, Esq.

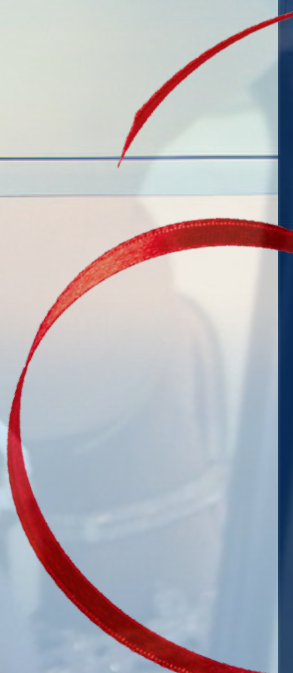
The Honorable Governor Albert Bryan Jr.

BENEDICTION

Apostle Mona L. Barnes

CONCORDIA RIBBON CUTTING 1:00 PM

★ *Ribbon Cutting Ceremony takes place at 1:00 PM at the Concordia Head Start facility in Concordia, Frederiksted followed by a reception.*





**THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE**

A MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

As a father, I know what it means to look at a child and want more for them. You want them to feel safe, challenged, encouraged, and surrounded by people who see what is possible in them before they are old enough to see it for themselves.

That is why today means so much to me.

With the opening of the Concordia Head Start Learning Facility, some of our youngest Virgin Islanders are beginning their educational journey in a place built to support who they are becoming. I want that standard to follow them throughout their lives. From Head Start to elementary school, from high school to college, our children should learn in environments that reflect the value we place on them and the future we expect them to build.

They should never grow up believing that better classrooms, stronger facilities, or greater opportunities exist only somewhere else. The opening of the Anna's Hope Administration Building carries that same responsibility. Our DHS employees spend their careers helping families through some of their hardest moments, and they deserve a workplace that recognizes the importance of their work.

These buildings are part of something much bigger than construction. They represent what happens when we decide our people are worth investing in, our children are worth believing in, and St. Croix is worth building for.

I am proud of what we are opening today, but I am even more moved by what will begin here tomorrow.

Congratulations to the entire Department of Human Services family.

Sincerely,

Albert Bryan Jr.
Governor



OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS



MESSAGE FROM THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

I am honored to join the Virgin Islands Department of Human Services at the official ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Anna's Hope Head Start Administration Building and the Concordia Head Start Learning Facility. This occasion highlights the ongoing progress of the Head Start program throughout the Territory and is a testament to our commitment to investing in early education for the children of the Virgin Islands.

Today we witness an historic dual facility ribbon cutting ceremony in the Virgin Islands which celebrates the grand opening of two facilities at different locations on St. Croix. The Anna's Hope Head Start Administration Building in Christiansted and the Concordia Head Start Learning Facility in Frederiksted are two of the six Head Start projects constructed simultaneously in the Virgin Islands, funded through a grant from the Office of Disaster Recovery. Built to modern building codes, both facilities offer complete hurricane resistance, are ADA compliant, and feature backup power generators. The Administration Building will house staff nutritionists, support personnel, and administrative personnel, providing them with a comfortable and modern working environment.

Further, the Concordia Head Start Facility, designed for young learners, combines modern, state-of-the-art architecture with a playful child-friendly atmosphere, giving low-income families equal access to comprehensive development services. Most notably, the three-classroom facility offers foundational learning for up to sixty students, offering parents in the Frederiksted district a more convenient option for early childhood education.

I commend the Virgin Islands Department of Human Services Commissioner Averil George and her dynamic team for overseeing the Head Start development projects throughout the Territory. I also extend my appreciation to the early childhood educators and support staff who have committed themselves to delivering a holistic approach to learning and to promoting school readiness for the children in our community.

I pray for God's guidance and protection for the Head Start students, facilitators, and families, and I extend best wishes to all for a successful program year and beyond.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tregenza A. Roach". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tregenza" being the most prominent.

Tregenza A. Roach, Esq.
Lieutenant Governor



STACEY E. PLASKETT
VIRGIN ISLANDS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

2059 RAYBURN
WASHINGTON

A MESSAGE FROM CONGRESSWOMAN STACEY E. PLASKETT

On behalf of the Members of the 119th Congress and my office, I extend my warmest congratulations to the Virgin Islands Department of Human Services on the grand openings of **Anna's Hope Head Start Administration Building** and the **Concordia Head Start Learning Facility** here on St. Croix.

Today's openings mark a renewed promise to our youngest Virgin Islanders, a promise that where a child begins should never determine how far that child can go. Head Start has always been rooted in that belief, and these facilities give that belief a home: bright, safe, purpose-built spaces where our children can learn, play, and discover who they are becoming.

I have long said that early childhood education is among the most consequential investments we can make as a territory. The research is clear, but so is the lived experience of every parent in these islands who has watched a child walk into a classroom and walk out a little taller. What happens in these rooms in the years before kindergarten shapes literacy, confidence, and opportunity for a lifetime. Our families deserve nothing less than facilities that reflect the value we place on that work.

I want to commend Commissioner Averil George and the entire team at the Department of Human Services for their vision and persistence in bringing these projects to completion. I also want to recognize the Head Start teachers, family service workers, administrators, and support staff whose dedication has sustained this program through storms, through recovery, and through every challenge our territory has faced. You have carried this work in temporary spaces and difficult conditions because you understood what was at stake. These new centers are a tribute to your commitment.

To the parents and guardians who entrust your children to Head Start each day: this is your milestone as well. Congratulations to all who made this day possible. I look forward to continuing to advocate at the federal level for the resources our children and families need to thrive.

Sincerely,

Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress

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Cruz Bay, United States Virgin Islands 00830
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CHAIRMAN
Committee of the Whole

VICE CHAIR
Committee on Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure, and Planning

MEMBER
Committee on Rules
Committee on Health, Hospitals, and Human Services

MILTON E. POTTER

PRESIDENT

36th Legislature of the United States Virgin Islands



A Message from Senate President Milton E. Potter

There are few investments more important to the future of our Virgin Islands than the investment we make in our children. When we create spaces where our youngest residents can learn, grow, and thrive, we are not simply opening buildings, we are opening doors to possibility.

It is with great pride that I congratulate the Virgin Islands Department of Human Services on the official openings of the Anna's Hope Head Start Administration Building and the Concordia Head Start Learning Facility.

These new facilities represent more than bricks and mortar. They reflect a commitment to providing our children with safe, nurturing, and supportive environments during some of the most formative years of their lives. They also recognize the invaluable role that educators, administrators, families, and caregivers play in laying the foundation for lifelong learning and success.

As a community, we have a responsibility to ensure that every child has the opportunity to begin their educational journey with the resources, encouragement, and care they deserve. Expanding and improving our Head Start facilities is an important part of fulfilling that responsibility.

I commend the Department of Human Services, its leadership, staff, educators, and community partners for bringing these projects to fruition. Your work reminds us that when we build for our children, we are building for generations to come.

May these new facilities be filled with curiosity, laughter, learning, and countless memories. And may every child who walks through their doors be inspired to dream boldly and reach their fullest potential.

Congratulations on these significant milestones, and may the Anna's Hope and Concordia Head Start facilities serve our children and families for many years to come.

May we continue to build a brighter future for our children, one opportunity at a time,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Milton E. Potter".

Milton E. Potter
Senate President
36th Legislature of the United States Virgin Islands

VIRGIN ISLANDS OFFICE OF DISASTER RECOVERY

Virgin Islands Public Finance Authority
1AH Estate Diamond, Suites 1&2
Christiansted, St. Croix VI 00820
Phone (340)202-1221



Virgin Islands Public Finance Authority
8000 Nisky Center, Suite 1
St. Thomas, VI 00802
Phone (340)202-1221

August 24, 2026



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE USVI OFFICE OF DISASTER RECOVERY

The completion of the Concordia Head Start and the Anna's Hope Administrative Building marks the beginning of many more Head Start facilities expected to be finished by the end of 2026. The USVI Office of Disaster Recovery (ODR) congratulates the VI Department of Human Services on this significant milestone as it continues leading the construction of new facilities aimed at supporting early education for the territory's youngest residents.

These are not just buildings but a home base to sustain program functions and sites that will foster the education and development of the children of St. Croix. This was made possible through generous support from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Head Start. The territory received \$42 million in federal funding to rebuild Head Start facilities after Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Of this funding, \$11 million has been allocated to these projects.

ODR's mission is to build a safe and resilient community by strengthening the territory's infrastructure through strategic planning, collaboration, and dedicated project implementation. Completing these facilities exemplifies our commitment to enhancing the territory's ability to serve all populations effectively.

This joint effort between the Departments of Human Services, Property & Procurement, Public Works, and Planning & Natural Resources exemplifies the core of recovery work. It is the shared goal of "building a resilient Virgin Islands" that strengthens our communities and will continue to do so for future generations. Thank you to everyone involved for your unwavering dedication and commitment.

Malcolm X once said, "Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today." Today, we prepare for tomorrow by cutting the ribbon on two separate facilities to serve the newest generations of Virgin Islanders.

Sincerely,

Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien
Director

"Building a Legacy of Resilience"



Government of the Virgin Islands of the United States
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Commissioner



Averil E. George
Commissioner

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

As Commissioner of the Department of Human Services, I am immensely proud to stand with our staff, families, and community to celebrate a monumental milestone for St. Croix and the Territory. Today, we officially commemorate the grand opening of the Anna's Hope Head Start Administration Facility and the Concordia Head Start Learning Center.

To say this has been a long and challenging road for this department would be an understatement. Rebuilding after unprecedented disasters takes resilience, dedication, and an unwavering commitment to our mission. Today's ribbon-cutting marks the completion of the second and third major projects in our broader mandate to deliver six state-of-the-art disaster recovery construction projects funded through a transformative \$42 million allocation. Following the successful completion of our first facility in Cruz Bay, St. John, bringing Anna's Hope and Concordia online represents halfway progress on this journey, with three more vital projects to go.

The Concordia Head Start Learning Center provides our youngest learners with a modern, nurturing environment where their educational foundation can thrive. Simultaneously, the Anna's Hope Administration Facility gives our hardworking Head Start administrative team a safe, functional, and dedicated workspace worthy of the crucial service they deliver to our families every day.

An achievement of this magnitude is never accomplished alone. I extend my deepest gratitude to the Office of the Governor for its steadfast leadership and vision. Special thanks go to our dedicated partners at the Virgin Islands Department of Public Works, the Department of Property and Procurement, the Office of Disaster Recovery, Custom Builders, Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Department of Planning and Natural Resources, and our Federal Partners. Your collaboration, hard work, and shared commitment to the Virgin Islands made this day possible.

We are proud of the physical structures we dedicate today, but we are even more excited for the brighter futures that will be shaped within their walls.

Sincerely

Averil George
Commissioner of Human Services
Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands



Government of the Virgin Islands of the United States
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Commissioner

August 28, 2026

Kudos! Well Done!

It is with tremendous pride that I congratulate the Virgin Islands Department of Human Services Head Start Program on the ribbon cutting and imminent opening of the second and third of an amazing six new, state-of-the-art sites for fostering excellence in early childhood education; Anna's Hope Head Start Administrative Building and Concordia Head Start.

These facilities represent years of vision, perseverance, hard work, and partnership. I commend our Head Start leadership and staff for their unwavering commitment to creating safe, modern, nurturing environments where our youngest children can learn, grow, and thrive.

We extend sincere appreciation to the Virgin Islands Department of Public Works, Department of Property and Procurement, Office of Disaster Recovery, Custom Builders and CPH/ CVS for their collaborative spirit and for investing their architectural design, construction and project management expertise in this successful effort.

Today, we also congratulate the people of the Virgin Islands. These two hardened facilities are not only exceptional spaces for early childhood education; they strengthen our Territory's disaster preparedness by providing facilities capable of serving as community hubs and shelters during emergencies.

As we open these doors, we celebrate an investment in our children, our families, and the resilience of our entire community. Congratulations to everyone whose dedication and partnership made this milestone possible. May these facilities serve generations of Virgin Islands children and families with excellence, safety, and pride.

Sincerely,

Carla E. Benjamin, MA Ed, LMSW, CPM

Assistant Commissioner

Virgin Islands Department of Human Services



Government of the Virgin Islands of the United States

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Office of Head Start



Message from the Head Start Administrator

Today, I am honored to celebrate the ribbon cutting of the Anna's Hope and Concordia Head Start facilities, a significant milestone in our ongoing commitment to children, families, and early childhood education. The Anna's Hope facility will serve as the administrative hub for Head Start operations, while the Concordia facility will provide a welcoming, high-quality learning environment where our children can learn, grow, and thrive.

First and foremost, I give thanks to God for His guidance, grace, and abundant blessings throughout this journey. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as a faithful steward of His vision, helping transform a dream into a reality that will positively impact generations of children and families. Together, these facilities represent more than buildings. They symbolize hope, opportunity, and our shared commitment strengthening services for families and supporting the success of every child we serve.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to our Head Start staff, families, project partners, contractors, stakeholders, and community supporters whose dedication and collaboration made this achievement possible. I also sincerely thank Bryan-Roach Administration for their leadership and steadfast support of early childhood education in the U.S. Virgin Islands. In addition, I am deeply grateful to the Department of Human Services Senior Leadership Team for their guidance, support, and commitment throughout this process. Their leadership has been instrumental in helping bring this vision to fruition.

As we open the doors of these centers, I celebrate not only this accomplishment but also the brighter future it creates for the children and families we serve. This milestone stands as a testament to what we can achieve through faith, partnership, and a shared commitment to excellence.

May God continue to bless our children, families, staff, and the U.S. Virgin Islands community.

With gratitude and pride,

Masikia Lewis

Administrator
Office of Head Start

6

MAJOR CONSTRUCTION
PROJECTS

\$42M

DISASTER
RECOVERY FUNDING



CRUZ BAY



MINETTA MITCHELL



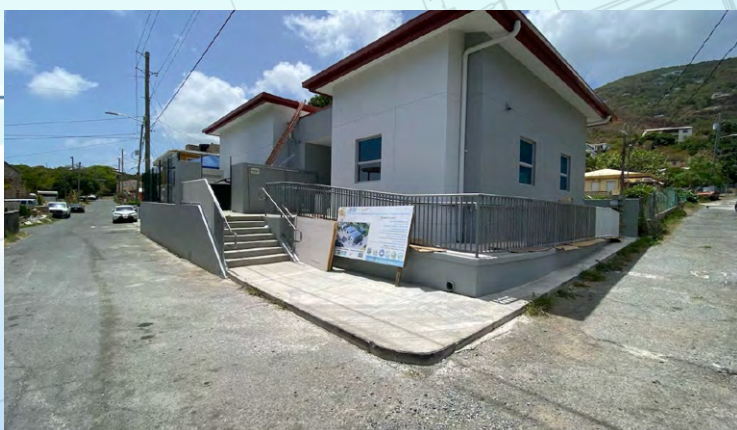
ANNA'S HOPE



CONCORDIA



DILSA CAPDEVILLE



LINDBERGH BAY

INVESTMENT AND IMPACT

The opening of the Anna's Hope Head Start Administration Facility and the Concordia Head Start Learning Center marks the next major milestone in a territory-wide initiative to rebuild and elevate our early childhood infrastructure. Together with the previously completed Cruz Bay facility on St. John, these developments account for three of six new Head Start projects funded through a \$42 million investment from the federal Office of Head Start Disaster Recovery Funds.

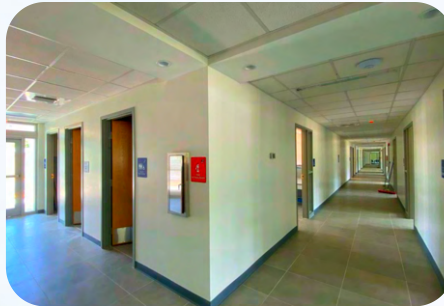
This comprehensive effort reflects a deep commitment to strengthening our island communities by prioritizing the education, safety, and overall well-being of our youngest residents—building long-term resilience and opportunity from the ground

ANNA'S HOPE HEAD START ADMINISTRATION FACILITY

A strong educational ecosystem requires a robust, secure, and modern operational hub. The new Anna's Hope Administration Facility provides the Head Start leadership and support team with a dedicated, professional environment designed to optimize agency operations.

For years, dedicated staff have navigated challenging post-disaster conditions to deliver critical family resources.

This purpose-built administrative center honors their hard work, streamlines program administration, and ensures that staff are equipped with the resources and space necessary to support hundreds of families across the district efficiently and effectively.



CONCORDIA HEAD START LEARNING CENTER

Early childhood education is the cornerstone of a thriving community. The new Concordia Head Start Learning Center features a state-of-the-art, single-classroom design tailored specifically to deliver high-quality early instruction for children in the Western district of St. Croix.

Built for ultimate resilience, the technologically advanced facility is equipped with dedicated generator power and a battery backup system, ensuring uninterrupted learning and safety regardless of island grid disruptions.

Concordia offers our youngest learners a secure, modern haven equipped with the tools needed to nurture lifelong growth.

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

The Virgin Islands Department of Human Services continues its mission to nurture the territory's youngest learners by administering the Head Start Program across St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix. Operating as the official territory grantee funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, the agency remains dedicated to delivering essential early childhood resources directly to local families.

Designed to prepare children for early academic and lifelong achievement, the Head Start Program serves children who reach three years of age by December 31st up to five years old at the time of enrollment. By focusing on low-income households, the initiative ensures that high-quality foundational learning, structured routine, and social development remain accessible to those who need it most.

Beyond classroom instruction, the program takes a holistic approach to early childhood care. Educators and program staff actively foster the mental, social, and emotional development of preschoolers, building the confidence and resilience required for a smooth transition into kindergarten.

To support the whole child, Head Start integrates comprehensive wraparound services directly into its daily framework. Enrolled students and their families receive ongoing medical, dental, and nutritional care, alongside targeted support for children with special needs or developmental disabilities.

Every service is delivered with deep respect for the territory's rich diversity, ensuring that daily routines and family engagement activities remain fully responsive to each child's unique ethnic, cultural, and linguistic background.

Head Start is recognized nationwide as a primary empowerment program for low-income families, involving them in all aspects of service delivery and decision-making for the program. Head Start encourages the role of parents as their child's first and most important teachers and facilitate building relationships with families that support positive parent-child relationships, family well-being, and connections to peers and the community.





Thank you!

WE EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT GRATITUDE to everyone whose dedication, hard work, and collaboration made this milestone a resounding success. This achievement reflects the strength of our community when leaders, partners, and dedicated public servants unite behind a shared vision for the Virgin Islands.

Special recognition goes to the Department of Public Works, the Department of Property and Procurement, Custom Builders VI, the Office of the Governor, the Office of Disaster Recovery, Virgins Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Department of Planning and Natural Resources, and the Bryan-Roach Administration for their essential leadership and support. We also extend sincere thanks to Head Start Region II, the Administration for Children and Families, Former Commissioner Kimberley Causey-Gomez, our Head Start Administrators, Teachers, and Staff, and the Department of Human Services. Your collective devotion continues to build a brighter, more resilient future for our children and our entire community.



"DHS IS ON THE RISE!"



USVI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

HEAD START

CB **CUSTOM BUILDERS**