



# THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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## **ST. CROIX JEEP CLUB DONATES SCHOOL SUPPLIES TO EULALIE RIVERA ELEMENTARY IN ANNUAL GIVEBACK EFFORT**

*This marks the fourth consecutive year of donations to St. Croix elementary schools*

ST. CROIX, USVI -- Members of the popular St. Croix Jeep Club, founded by Angel Diaz in 2015, rolled into the Eulalie Rivera Elementary School on December 20 to donate 42 book bags filled with essential school supplies for deserving students as part of the club's ongoing commitment to give back to the community.

Each bag included copybooks, markers, crayons, pencils, rulers, glue, "the materials students need to be able to complete their learning," said St. Croix Deputy Superintendent Faith Dane George-Boone, who coordinates the annual giveaway with club members.

According to Cecil Simmonds, Jr., Jeep Club treasurer, the 30-plus member organization is thrilled to give back. He pointed out, however, the Jeep Club's goal is bigger than giving away school supplies.

"We like talking to the kids and encouraging them to get involved in something mechanical, instead of television," he explained. "A lot of children see the jeeps and they like them, so we try to bring them in and let them sit in the jeeps and learn about them."

Simmonds said the nonprofit raises money for its philanthropic efforts, which is meted out to any number of organizations in the St. Croix community, through monthly member dues.

"It's to help out anyone in need," he said, adding, "And we would like to thank Ms. George [because] we are happy to do anything for the children."

George-Boone confirmed that “all the elementary schools on St. Croix have had an opportunity to benefit from the supplies.” Eulalie Rivera Elementary was selected for this year’s donation, she said, as it was the last elementary school to reopen at its school site since the 2017 hurricanes.

“We felt that this would be the school and it had the greatest need, in terms of the students who are coming without a book bag, as well as not having supplies,” she said.

Simmonds and George-Boone explained that while the donations are generally given at the start of the school year, due to fundraising setbacks resulting from last year’s storms, “this was the earliest we could facilitate it,” George-Boone said.

A few lucky students were chosen to tour the 10-jEEP motorcade. They honked horns, turned headlights on and off, talked on a loud speaker in one of the jEEps, and even started an engine. One student beamed as he got a close-up look at a jEEP’s tires.

“I like the large tires,” he said, while stooping and touching a tire with one hand.

“It’s not just about how cool the jEEps look, it’s actually a job for the driver,” George-Boone explained. “So, the students need to know it’s entrepreneurship, it’s automotive, painting, artistry, it’s a variety of careers that are associated with the jEEps. We wanted to make sure they all got a chance to feel what it feels like on the inside, what it looked like before--it’s a holistic opportunity for the students.”

Eulalie Rivera Principal Loretta Moorehead expressed her gratitude.

“I want to thank the Jeep Club for their donation,” she began, “I think it was really thoughtful of them, especially because we got off to a late start this school year.”

Moorehead went on to say that the timing of the donation couldn’t be better.

“Now is a good time [for the donation], so the students could receive new bags coming in [after the holiday break],” she said. “I’m really appreciative of the donation and hope that they can continue to have this relationship with the school.”

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