



# THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

## BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS

*"Security, Custody, Control"*

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### VIRGIN ISLANDS BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS CELEBRATES ITS TRANSFORMING LIVES ACADEMY GRADUATION

**St. Thomas, USVI** – At the Alexander A. Farrelly Criminal Justice Center and John A. Bell Adult Correctional Facility, the Virgin Islands Bureau of Corrections (the "Bureau") continues to make significant progress in transforming the lives of those entrusted to its care. Inmate programs help inmates transition from prison to the community by providing reentry services, academic and vocational education, treatment for substance abuse, and fundamental life skills. In addition, programs provide meaningful activities that keep inmates engaged and help ensure the safety of the facilities. Director Testamark stated, "The goal under this administration is to ensure that our clients are better citizens when they return to the community than when they came in and that families can stay connected with their loved ones while incarcerated."

#### Transforming Lives Graduation – Alexander A. Farrelly Justice Center

On Tuesday, June 20, 2023, for the first time ever at Government House on St. Thomas, Governor Albert Bryan, Jr. and the Bureau hosted the Transforming Lives Academy Graduation. Graduation caps, gowns, tassels, and kente stoles, the tune of "Pomp and Circumstance" humming in the air, and government officials, Bureau staff, and family dressed to the nines awaited the soon-to-be graduates. A professional-accredited certificate or high school diploma was awarded to ten graduates. Cira Burke, CEO of Inspire VI LLC, was the Mistress of Ceremonies and opened the commencement ceremony. Rev. Dr. Sharon Jackson McDonald, Impacting Your World Christian Ministries, offered the invocation, and St. John Administrator Skikima Jones-Sprauve sang the Virgin Islands March and the National Anthem. Director Wynnie Testamark, BOC's Programs, and Grants Manager Peter Abrahams, and UVICELL Director Dr. Suzanne Darrow-Magras gave welcoming remarks as waves and smiles filled the ballroom. Dr. Monique Faulkner, State Director, Career and Technology Education/Adult Education, delivered the commencement address as the guest speaker and shared, "Through anger, we develop moods, prolonged negative moods developed into temperaments and if we are not careful to check ourselves, temperaments can evolve into personalities that spur fixed mindsets." She told the graduates, "You make the conscious decision to take back your life." Throughout the ceremony, the "hero of the program," BOC's Case Management Planner Tanesha S. Russell, was recognized for her continued efforts in propelling the educational program and ensuring

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that inmates complete the same. Graduates shared words of excitement and appreciation for the program and how important it was to them.

Another excellent highlight of the ceremony included remarks from Governor Bryan and Lt. Governor Tregenza Roach, Esq., who lauded the graduates noting their irrefutable accomplishments despite the numerous obstacles and setbacks. Governor Bryan shared that he believes in second chances, noting that individuals make mistakes and that if the graduates were serious about rejoining the community, he would assist in helping with reintegration. With those sentiments in mind, he commuted the life sentence of Felix Perez, who has been incarcerated for the past 37 years.

This year's graduates are:

- ✚ Daliqua Moses – Penn Foster High School Diploma
- ✚ Jahkeel Clarke – Penn Foster High School Diploma
- ✚ Rasokemo Archibald – Penn Foster High School Diploma
- ✚ Tyler Labarrie – Penn Foster High School Diploma
- ✚ Aubrey Frett - Penn Foster Career Diploma (Accounting)
- ✚ Akenda Weeks – Penn Foster Career Diploma (Automotive Repair Technician)
- ✚ Marciano Rivera - Penn Foster Career Diploma (Automotive Repair Technician)
- ✚ Daliqua Moses - Penn Foster Career Diploma (Human Resources Management)
- ✚ Janelle Walters - Penn Foster Career Diploma (Medical Billing and Coding)
- ✚ Jerome Wallace - Penn Foster Career Diploma (Start Your Own Business)
- ✚ Koi Thomas - Penn Foster Career Diploma (Start Your Own Business)

### **Transforming Lives Graduation – John A. Bell Adult Correction Facility**

The Bureau held its Transforming Lives Academy Graduation on June 16, 2023, at the John A. Bell Adult Correctional Facility. At the event, 31 inmates received certificates of completion, special recognition, and professionally accredited diplomas. Director Testamark, Acting Warden Dana Grant, BOC Programs and Grants Manager Peter Abrahams, UVI Cell Director Dr. Suzanne Darrow Magras, BOC Chaplain Ludger Berkitt, BOC Construction Superintendent Anthony Wheeler, BOC PREA Coordinator Sandra Gerard-Leung, and BOC Correctional Instructor Urla Wiltshire, who served as the Mistress of Ceremonies, offered words of encouragement and congratulations during the commencement ceremony. Adryann Glenn, founder and CEO of Align Community, was the guest speaker and shared his story and motivational insights of challenges encountered and overcome through decisions. He charged graduates and participants to take a moment and be intentional in this moment: Live it, know everything in your mind, keep a tally, take time to celebrate, and celebrate yourself. Mr. Glenn concluded with fulfilling encouragement by stating “You only start losing when you stop, but you can pump your brakes and take your time in achieving your accomplishments.” Inmates offered their remarks as part of the ceremony, reflecting on their experiences and what the opportunity to continue their education while incarcerated has meant to them.

This year's graduates are:

- ✚ Jumanie Forde - Penn Foster High School Diploma
- ✚ Elieser Edward - Penn Foster High School Diploma
- ✚ Shekil Berthier - General Education Diploma
- ✚ Lester Roberts - NCCER Construction Safety Module
- ✚ Eugene Roberts - NCCER Construction Safety Module
- ✚ Jalani Hall - NCCER Construction Safety Module & Cisco Certified Network Associate

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- ✚ Winston George - NCCER Construction Safety Module
- ✚ Devindra Jaglal - Automotive HVAC Essentials & Anger Management
- ✚ Delicia Daniel - Pet Grooming Certificate
- ✚ Jamal Morton - Fitness and Nutrition Coaching
- ✚ Sholome Francis - Motorcycle Technician
- ✚ Manuel Davis - IT Support Specialist
- ✚ Daryl Blyden - VI History
- ✚ Dionno Brooks - VI History
- ✚ Jalani Hall - GCSEN Entrepreneurial Program
- ✚ Stephan Hyacinth - NCCER Construction & Support to Programs Special Recognition
- ✚ Lemy Virgil - NCCER Construction Special Recognition & Most Outstanding Resident
- ✚ Felix Perez - NCCER Construction Special Recognition
- ✚ Vaughn Challenger - NCCER Construction Special Recognition
- ✚ Delicia Daniel - Anger Management
- ✚ Lisa Allen - Anger Management
- ✚ Vivian Stewart - Anger Management
- ✚ Elwood Canton - Anger Management
- ✚ Denise Donovan - Anger Management
- ✚ Shakim Gumbs - Anger Management
- ✚ Jose Alcala - Anger Management
- ✚ Francisco Tirado - Anger Management
- ✚ Solomon Degallerie - Anger Management
- ✚ Kenyata Horsford - Anger Management
- ✚ Darin Franklin - Anger Management
- ✚ Lester Roberts - Support to Programs Special Recognition
- ✚ Eugene Roberts - Support to Programs Special Recognition
- ✚ Ethelbert Benjamin - Support to Programs Special Recognition
- ✚ Jalani Hall - Support to Programs Special Recognition
- ✚ Elroy Edwards - Support to Programs Special Recognition
- ✚ Khalid Jaffar - Support to Programs Special Recognition

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