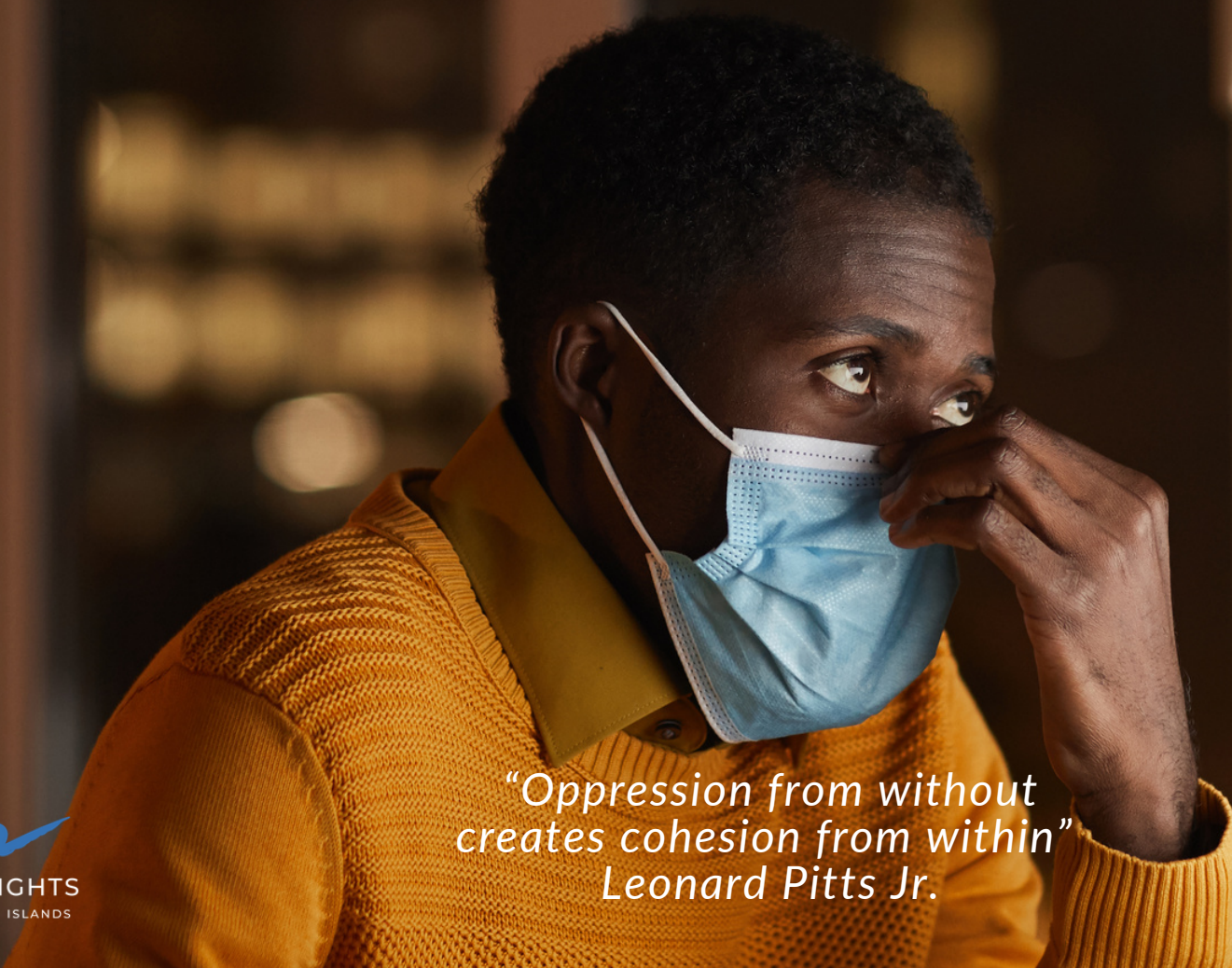


DRCVI ANNUAL REPORT 2020



*"Oppression from without
creates cohesion from within"*
Leonard Pitts Jr.



MISSION STATEMENT

Advance the legal rights of people with disabilities, support and empower families and provide training and information that promotes the overall health and educational development of children and youth.

STAYING FOCUSED ON IMPROVING THE LIVES OF VIRGIN ISLANDERS WITH DISABILITIES: ADVOCACY DURING A PANDEMIC

The year 2020 brought remarkable challenges to the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands. As a community we are reeling from the unrelenting and unresolved crisis caused by the disastrous social and economic impacts of two category 5 hurricanes in 2017 and the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020. Under these circumstances, giving information, support and assistance to our community has required us, the staff of DRCVI, to be resourceful, effective, innovative and safe.

We had to quickly rethink our approach to community-based advocacy activities and adapt them to the pandemic environment. The best examples of our activities in that regard are:

- Commemoration of the 30-year Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Our work to promote the health & safety, education, recreation, and employment of persons with disabilities
- Commissioning a report on federal discrimination and the U.S. Virgin Islands.



LIMITED CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS IN THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

With the assistance of the Justice Catalyst Foundation and Yale Law School, DRCVI had arranged for the research and creation of a soon-to-be-released report on the status of U.S. citizens residing in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The report will address the historical relationship of the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Government of the United States as it relates to:

- Voting in presidential elections
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Medicaid and other health disparities, and
- Data collection



DRCVI CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law on July 26, 1990—thirty (30) years ago. In recognition of this landmark civil rights legislation, DRCVI worked with several individuals and organizations (e.g., VI Center for Independent Living, Territorial Office of the ADA Coordinator, VI Developmental Disabilities Council and UVI Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities), to commemorate this important event. During the month of July 2020, our local PBS station, WTJX, broadcasted a series of films relating to the disability experience. DRCVI produced three (3) public service radio announcements that aired in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole. Members of the U.S.V.I. disability community contributed short videos sharing their experiences and gratitude for the ADA—videos can be found on DRCVI's Youtube channel. The celebration was concluded by a public reading of the ADA Proclamation signed by the Governor of the Virgin Islands.

CONTINUING OUR WORK FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

DRCVI along with the Small Business Development Center, the Economic Development Center, and the Northeast ADA Center presented twenty eight (28) workshops on the following topics: employment accommodations and workers with disabilities, transition and career development, engaging persons with disabilities in the employment process, best practices for recruiting people with disabilities, and employment rights and responsibilities in the work place. The training sessions were created to provide useful information to persons who are interested in finding a job, keeping a job, or starting their own business.



DRCVI was awarded a five (5) year grant from the Office of Special Education Programs (U.S. Dept. of Education) to continue its work as the Virgin Islands Parent Training and Information (VIPTI) program. One of our grant activities

involved working with a group called Ready4K. Ready4K is a curriculum-based text messaging service designed to help families with their child's development. DRCVI established an "in-house" texting program that, with the permission of families, will allow us to periodically provide them with information via text messaging. The text method of communication is our attempt to reach families who may have limited or no access to broadband Internet service.

MEDIA OUTREACH



DRCVI continues to expand its effort to share information with our community by way of traditional media and social media. During 2020, DRCVI had an audience reach of 33,744 on its Facebook page, 5,682 hits on its website page, 111 Twitter followers and 23 YouTube subscribers. DRCVI continues to produce and present its weekly Ability Radio program on WLDV 107.9 FM "Da Vybe". DRCVI in collaboration with WTJX, Channel 12, the Territory's Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) station initiated a monthly

television show called Able to Raise. The program features interviews from experts covering topics dealing with parenting, health & wellness, education, and much more.

MONITOR LOCAL RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

Under federal law, DRCVI as the protection and advocacy agency is authorized to conduct monitoring visits at residential facilities in the U.S. Virgin Islands so that residents receive appropriate care and treatment and are not subject to abuse or neglect. The year 2020 was no exception and DRCVI legal staff conducted in-person and virtual monitoring visits at 12 local facilities.



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Amelia Headley LaMont, Executive Director
Ullmont James, Administrative Assistant
Archie Jennings, Esq., Director of Advocacy
Kippy Roberson, Esq., Staff Attorney
Nicole Ross, Communications Specialist

St. Croix-Main Office

63 Estate Cane Carlton
Frederiksted, VI 00840
(340) 772-1200

St. Thomas/St. John

9003 Havensight Mall, Suite 313
Charlotte Amalie, VI 00802
(340) 776-4303



DISABILITY RIGHTS

CENTER OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

63 CANE CARLTON

FREDERIKSTED, VI 00840

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