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Media Contact :

Sean Liphard
Communications Manager
seanl@cfvi.net
340.774.6031

KIDS COUNT Data Book Contact:

Anna W. Scarbriel, Ph.D.
Director of Grants and Programs
annas@cfvi.net
340.774.6031

**CFVI Releases 2019 USVI KIDS COUNT Data Book
Highlighting Well-being of Territory's Children**

U.S. Virgin Islands, December 10, 2019 — The Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands announces the release of the 2019 U.S. Virgin Islands KIDS COUNT Data Book, *Building Forward for Our Children Now*. This year's Data Book offers a comprehensive snapshot of data on well-being of the Territory's children from the 2015 Virgin Islands Community Survey (VICS), focused on four domains— family and community, economic well-being, education, and health and safety. Additionally, through the use of data from the 2019 Community Needs Assessment (CNA) and from local community and government agencies, CFVI has expanded the traditional KIDS COUNT Data Book format to include a special section with information on children and families in the USVI from 2016 through December 2018.

Since 2000, the USVI KIDS COUNT Data Book has been compiled and published by the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands (CFVI). Its purpose is to promote dialogue on children's issues and to stimulate community response to improve the overall well-being of children from birth to age 18 in the Virgin Islands. The Data Book is a valuable tool designed to help encourage responses to the challenges facing children and families in our community through community awareness and public policy.

"Core to our mission, we believe that children of every background and in every part of the Virgin Islands deserve all the tools and opportunities that we as a Territory can provide,"

said Dee Baecher-Brown, president of CFVI. “This book serves as an annual report card for how we are meeting that charge for all of our children.”

Historically, the USVI KIDS COUNT Data Book has based its data and analysis on the year for which the most recent USVI population data are available. These data are provided annually by the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) Eastern Caribbean Center (ECC) in the Virgin Islands Community Survey (VICS). In the aftermath of the 2017 storms, the most recent available VICS data were from the year 2015. Recognizing the need for current data about the state of vulnerable children and families in the USVI following the September 2017 storms, CFVI approached colleagues at UVI and, in collaboration with the UVI Caribbean Exploratory Research Center (CERC), produced the *Community Needs Assessment: Understanding the Needs of Vulnerable Children and Families in the US Virgin Islands Post Hurricanes Irma and Maria* (CNA). The CNA report was released in February 2019 and provides the findings of a months-long community assessment to determine the health, education, human services, and housing status and needs of children and families after the hurricanes.

Key KIDS COUNT Data Book 2019 Highlights (from the most recent data available)

- *Child Population* - The child population in the Virgin Islands has diminished significantly since the year 2000, decreasing by more than 14,500 children (or 42%). In 2015, children represented 20% of the total population.
- *Child Poverty* - In 2015, the child poverty rate in the Virgin Islands decreased to 30%, matching the lowest reported poverty rate for children recorded since 2010. By comparison, in the United States, 21% of all children live in families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold, ranging from 11% in New Hampshire to 32% in Mississippi (source: National Center for Children in Poverty).
- *School Readiness* - Consistent with the last decade of reported results, there remains a significant number of Virgin Islands children entering public kindergarten lacking age-expected cognition skills (31% in 2018, 31% in 2016, 35% in 2015) and language skills (48% in 2018, 44% in 2016, 50% in 2015).
- *Health Insurance* - In 2015, 18.9% of all Virgin Islands children and youth, ages birth through 19 (4,022 children) lacked health insurance. Although this rate is less than previous years (26% in 2015, 27% in 2013), it still remains higher than in any state, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico.
- *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Depression* - The data from the Community Needs Assessment suggest high levels of risk for PTSD and depression in the school-age population surveyed throughout the Territory (source: Community Needs Assessment: Understanding the Needs of Vulnerable Children and Families in the U.S. Virgin Islands Post Hurricanes Irma and Maria, 2019, p. 85).

This release of USVI KIDS COUNT 2019 marks the two-year anniversary of the Territory’s devastation from Hurricanes Irma and Maria - two category 5 hurricanes. In September 2018, CFVI provided a one-year update letter to our community which expressed gratitude for the efforts that had shown us the very best of humanity: family, friends, neighbors and even strangers coming together in remarkable ways. And we promised to continue the work of rebuilding a stronger, more resilient USVI for all our people.

“These pressing challenges call for smart policies, innovative solutions, and focused attention on our priorities. The more we support all Virgin Islands children to grow up healthy, hopeful, and contributing to the community, the brighter our future looks,” said Baecher-Brown.

To access the 2019 U.S. Virgin Islands KIDS Count Data Book, visit:

cfvi.co/2019kidscount

The 2019 U.S. Virgin Islands KIDS Count Data Book was made possible with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

About the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands

For nearly 30 years, the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands (CFVI) has been a catalyst for positive change in the Territory through initiatives committed to youth, learning, family support and the environment. With a professional staff and a volunteer Board of Directors composed of community leaders, CFVI is a trusted advocate and supporter of programs that ensure opportunity and sustainability for current and future generations. Since September 2017, CFVI has been serving as a vehicle for receiving and distributing funds to support hurricane relief efforts throughout the Territory. In addition to providing administrative oversight to over 100 named funds, and programs, CFVI is focused on meeting the emergency, immediate and long-term needs of children, youth and families in the aftermath of two Category 5 hurricanes. CFVI is a registered non-profit organization entirely supported by individual donors, grants, trusts, corporate donations and estate planning. For more information, visit cfvi.net.

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If you would like more information about the 2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book, please contact Anna W. Scarbriel, Ph.D., Director of Grants and Programs, at 340.642.3161, or email annas@cfvi.net.