



O U R C H I L D R E N N O W !



WHERE IS OUR COMMITMENT?



U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS KIDS COUNT DATA BOOK 2002





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On behalf of the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands, we are pleased to present the KIDS COUNT 2002 Data Book for the US Virgin Islands. This is CFVI's third annual KIDS COUNT report. As in the two previous years, the data in 2002 offer a mix of good and bad news that raise as many questions as they answer.

We all view the KIDS COUNT data from our unique perspectives. Many are alarmed by the picture these statistics paint of the difficulties facing our children and families, particularly the escalating rate (now 42%) of V.I. children living in poverty. Some see reason for hope in those areas where the data suggest improvements over time, including a decrease in the teen birth rate. Both perspectives, of course, are correct.

This community dialogue is an important reason for the KIDS COUNT project: to get people thinking and talking about children and families, their well-being and what we must do to improve their lives. As we see it, KIDS COUNT is not just information. It is a challenge to our community to work harder on behalf of our children.

To use the data in KIDS COUNT to improve our community, it is critical to understand the interrelationship between indicators. Poverty rates, single parenthood, teen pregnancy and school failure all influence each other.

If children receive a substandard education, they will not be able to access the high-paying jobs that will ensure their families' economic security. In the next generation, their children will also be poor. Teen pregnancy and single parenthood place children at a considerable disadvantage by greatly increasing the likelihood that the parent, living on one wage earner's income, will be unable to earn an income above the poverty line.

There is a relationship as well between another set of indicators: the numbers of children living with relatives, the median family income and the percentage of children with two wage earners in the family. These indicators and others reflect the stress that many working families feel as a result of the territory's low wage levels and high cost of living. For many families, full-time employment does not guarantee living above the poverty level, much less sustained economic security. Fortunate families have relatives who are helping – grandparents and others who care for children until their parents are able. But this often places a tremendous burden on those caretakers, particularly when they have health or other problems of their own.

The good news about the linkage of one indicator to another is that improvement in one area can lead to eventual progress in others. If our school dropout rate is reduced, median income is likely to rise over time. If teen pregnancy continues to be reduced, the numbers of single parent families will be reduced and this too will lead to higher median family incomes. Even small improvements can begin to make a difference in the lives of many children.

But where do we begin?

We at CFVI believe the key to ending the community's cycle of poverty is better education. Increasing the rates of school success and completion will allow our young people to get higher paying jobs. It will also make it easier for the territory to attract businesses that depend on an educated workforce. Delaying pregnancy until education is completed also increases eventual employment opportunities. Finally, reducing the size of families is an important step in assuring that resources are available to support children.

In this year's KIDS COUNT report, CFVI introduces the SILVERBELLS and COCKLESHELLS awards to recognize people, programs and organizations that are working to improve the lives of our most vulnerable children and families. In spotlighting the work of these award recipients, CFVI intends to remind our community how much we already know about what it will take to improve the lives of our most vulnerable citizens. The continuing challenge is less about know-how than it is about will – the willingness to care enough and to do enough so that all families have the opportunity and the help they need to realize their aspirations for their children.

We hope this KIDS COUNT report is helpful, that it sheds light, raises questions and, most important, energizes individuals and organizations to do all they can for all of our children.

Ricardo J. Charaf  
*Chairman of the Board*

Dee Baecher-Brown  
*President*





## Acknowledgments

The Virgin Islands KIDS COUNT Data Book for the Year 2002 was made possible by the generous support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. This third annual report is the result of a sustained partnership involving the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands, the University of the Virgin Islands, the Virgin Islands Government, community organizations, and service-providing agencies and individuals.

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## What is KIDS COUNT?

KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. By providing policymakers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being, KIDS COUNT seeks to enrich local, state and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children. At the national level, the principal activity is the publication of the annual KIDS COUNT Data Book, which uses the best available data to measure the educational, social, economic and physical well-being of children. The Annie E. Casey Foundation also funds a network of state and territory KIDS COUNT projects that provide a more detailed, community-by-community picture of the condition of children.

The U.S. Virgin Islands KIDS COUNT report is the product of a partnership involving the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands (CFVI), the University of the Virgin Islands, and the Departments of Education, Human Services, Health and Police. CFVI produces the KIDS COUNT report annually to allow the community to track progress and to learn over time about what works to improve the lives of our children and families.

In October 2000, with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands released the first annual KIDS COUNT Data Book for the U.S. Virgin Islands. The 2000 report, *OUR CHILDREN NOW! A Call to Action*, showed disturbing trends in the well-being of the children in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The 2001 Data Book, *“OUR CHILDREN NOW! Views from the community,”* documented the unfortunate continuation of many of these trends. Sadly, we note that in 2002 the percentage of children living below the federal poverty level continued to grow to 42% for the territory, with an alarming percentage of 49% on the island of St. Croix. On a positive note, teen pregnancy rates in the Virgin Islands continue to decline along with the nation as a whole.

“OUR CHILDREN NOW! Where Is Our Commitment?” is released in conjunction with the announcement of CFVI’s first annual SILVERBELLS and COCKLESHELLS Awards. The purpose of this award program is to acknowledge and reward the hard work and tenacious spirit of non-profit organizations and individuals in the U.S. Virgin Islands that have demonstrated success in serving our children and families. Each year nominations selected for awards will represent the people, programs and organizations across the territory working on behalf of our most vulnerable children and families.





## Community Foundation Of The Virgin Islands (CFVI)

Established in 1990, the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands (CFVI) administers an endowment of \$2 million, with almost 40 named funds. The income from these funds is disbursed to institutions and programs whose purposes are to enhance the educational, physical, social, cultural and environmental well-being of the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands. The CFVI mission is to "ensure the highest quality of life for both present and future generations."

CFVI's audited financials for the year 2001 report that CFVI gave out over a quarter million dollars in direct support to community organizations and individuals in St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John through grants, scholarships, and a wide range of other types of assistance to the not-for-profit community.

Annual grants and programs administered by the Community Foundation include:

- A mini-grants program which provides financial support to innovative programs that benefit the children and families of the Virgin Islands;
- Scholarships to Virgin Islands students through four funds: the Anna Greene Walsh Scholars Fund, J. Epstein Virgin Islands Fund, Artrelle M. Wheatley Scholarship Fund and the Theodore E. Sharp Fund;
- Grants to teachers in the public schools through the Anderson Fund for Education;
- Grants to families in crisis through the Rapid Response Fund;
- The Fatherhood Collaborative which encourages responsible fatherhood in the Virgin Islands community, and
- KIDS COUNT Data Book, funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands introduces the first annual SILVERBELLS & COCKLESHELLS Awards in this year's KIDS COUNT Data Book. These awards acknowledge the hard work and tenacious spirit of non-profit organizations and individuals in the U.S. Virgin Islands that have demonstrated success in serving our children and families. Each year nominations selected for awards will represent the people, programs and organizations across the territory working on behalf of our most vulnerable children and families.



# Silverbells & Cockleshells Awards 2002



The SILVERBELLS AND COCKLESHELLS AWARDS program was launched by the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands in 2002 as an annual KIDS COUNT event. The purpose of the program is to acknowledge and reward the hard work and tenacious spirit of non-profit organizations and individuals in the U.S. Virgin Islands that have demonstrated success in serving our children and families. Award recipients are working to address the findings in KIDS COUNT including poverty, teen births, dropouts and child abuse and neglect.

Individuals, civic, grass roots and/or non-profit groups are invited to submit nominations for creative, innovative and effective programs or projects. They may self-nominate or propose others for consideration.

Each year nominations selected for awards will represent the people, programs and organizations across the territory working to secure better futures for our most vulnerable children and families. In 2002, a total of \$5,000 will be awarded to selected honorees.

## SILVERBELLS AND COCKLESHELLS 2002 AWARDS

### **GOLD AWARDS (3): \$1,000**

- PARENTS AND KIDS DISCOVER ST. CROIX, Whim Museum
- ON TRACK, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
- MARINE KIDS KORPS, Lindbergh Bay Beach

### **SILVER AWARDS (2): \$500**

- SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS AND CAREERS, Fort Christian Museum
- “A SENSE OF FAMILY” and “TEEN PARENTING,” Women’s Coalition of St. Croix

### **BRONZE AWARDS (4): \$125**

- CASA OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS, St. Croix
- CARABANA ENSEMBLE THEATER CO., Coral Bay
- YOUTH PROGRAMS, St. Andrews Episcopal Church
- JOANNE MATTHEWS-SAUNDERS, Visual and Performing Arts Specialist

### **Special Commendation Certificates (6)**

- CAHS BAND BOOSTERS, Charlotte Amalie High School, St. Thomas
- JUNIOR FIREFIGHTERS CORP., St. Thomas
- V.I. RESOURCE CENTER FOR THE DISABLED, INC., St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John
- GENERATION WWW.Y, John Woodson Junior High School, St. Croix
- REFORMED CHURCH FUTURE LEADERS PROGRAM, St. Thomas
- SPECIAL EDUCATION FITNESS FOR LIFE PROGRAM, Charlotte Amalie High School, St. Thomas.





## The United States Virgin Islands

The United States Virgin Islands is an unincorporated territory of the United States located 50 miles east of Puerto Rico in the Caribbean Sea. Sixty-eight islands and cays comprise the U.S. Virgin Islands. St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John and Water Island are the principal inhabited islands, with a total area of 144 square miles. St. Thomas and St. John are characterized by a mountainous topography with numerous sandy beaches and inlets along the shoreline. St. Croix is larger and flatter, with rolling hills and a broad central plain, bordered on the west by lush agricultural areas. The total population of the four main inhabited islands in 2000 was 108,612: 53,234 on St. Croix, 51,020 on St. Thomas, 4,197 on St. John, and 161 on Water Island.

The group of islands called the Virgin Islands was encountered by Christopher Columbus in 1493 on his second voyage to the New World. (This group includes islands now under the British flag). Originally inhabited by Ciboney, Arawak, Taino and Carib Indian peoples, none of these early settlers remained following the European conquest. The islands were ruled temporarily by the Spanish, English and French before the Dutch established the first permanent European settlement on St. Thomas in 1670. Between 1665 and 1733, under the influence of Denmark, the U.S. Virgin Islands developed as European-owned sugar plantations worked by an African slave population. St. Thomas was a key Caribbean port for transshipment of goods between Europe and the Americas and was inhabited by Europeans, African slaves, free Blacks and free Coloreds.

The United States purchased the islands from Denmark in 1917 for strategic military purposes. Between 1917 and 1931, the Virgin Islands were administered through the Department of the Navy. In 1931, the administration of the islands was transferred to the Department of the Interior and a civilian government was appointed. In 1968 legislation was passed to permit the popular election of the governor. The Revised Organic Act of 1954 provides for the election of a 15- member legislature.





## The University of the Virgin Islands

The University of the Virgin Islands, founded in 1963, is a four-year, liberal arts, coeducational, multi-cultural, land-grant institution with two campuses, one on the island of St. Thomas and the other on St. Croix. Degrees awarded include the Master of Arts in Education, the Master of Business Administration, the Master of Public Administration, the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science, and the Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees.

The Eastern Caribbean Center (ECC) is an outreach division that engages in domestic and international research activities. It also facilitates collaboration among regional institutions and organizations to fulfill the university's mission and improve the quality of life for people in the region.

The Social Research Unit of the ECC, which contracted to conduct this research effort, compiles and analyzes social and economic data and supports the work of the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The Survey Research Unit designs and carries out scientific sample surveys, which are among data sources for the KIDS COUNT Data Books.

## Overview of 2002 Data Collection

This data book compiles information available on children in the U.S. Virgin Islands for the years 1999 and 2000. Additionally, comparisons are made with available data for 1995, 1997 and 2000, revealing trends in the status of Virgin Islands children. Population statistics are drawn from the 2000 Census of Population, or estimated based on the most recent data available. Other data on the Virgin Islands is drawn from the 2002 United States Virgin Islands Statistical Digest, compiled by the Eastern Caribbean Center and issued by the University of the Virgin Islands in September 2002, as well as from Virgin Islands government sources, particularly the Departments of Health, Human Services and Education.

The U.S. Virgin Islands KIDS COUNT 2002 report is fortunate to have data from the 2000 U.S. Census published this year. Population statistics for 1999 are interpolated by the Eastern Caribbean Center from data available for preceding and subsequent years.

Statistics in this data book are reported as percentages and rates. Like percentages, rates convert the actual numbers of an indicator of interest into a number that can be compared with the same indicator in other jurisdictions, regardless of differences in the overall size of the population. Rates may be reported per 1,000 or 100,000 of a defined subset of the population. The rates used for specific indicators in this data book are selected because of their use in the national KIDS COUNT Data Book. Rates are used when, because of small numbers, the corresponding percentage would be very small, often below 1%. Due to the small population base of the U.S. Virgin Islands, small changes in the absolute numbers of an indicator can result in large changes in rates.

[As an example of the conversion of raw data into rates: In 2000 there were 93 births to teenage girls aged 15 to 17, out of a total population of 2,943 females aged 15 to 17. This number converts to 31.6 births for each 1,000 girls aged 15 to 17, a rate of 31.6 per 1,000.]



Table 1. Comparison of Virgin Islands Children's Indicators and National Rates: 2000 Data

US Virgin Islands Children's Indicators*	US Virgin Islands		National Rate/ Percent
	Number	Rate/%	
Percent low birth-weight babies	151	9.0	7.6
Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	14	8.3	6.9
Child death rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1-14)	4	15.0	32.8
Rate of teen deaths by accident, homicide or suicide (deaths per 1,000 teens ages 15-19)	7	80.6	53 <sup>1</sup>
Teen birth rate (births per 1,000 females 15-17)	93	31.6	27.4
Juvenile violent crime arrest rate (arrests per 100,000 youth ages 10-17)	95	611	NA
Percent of teens who are high school dropouts (ages 16-19)	1,143	16.9	10 <sup>1</sup>
Percent of teens not attending school and not working (ages 16-19)	852	12.6	8 <sup>1</sup>
Percent of children in poverty (data reflect poverty in 1999)	14,103	41.7	16.2
Percent of families with children headed by a single female parent	6,450	45.7	22.4
Percent of children under age 6 living with working parents	6,413	68.9	NA
Child abuse and neglect referral rate (per 1,000 children ages 0-18)	381	10.6	12.2
Median income of families (data reflect income for all families in 1999)	\$28,553		\$48,950

\*See 'Definitions and Data Sources'.

NA: Not available

<sup>1</sup>: National rate is for 1999



Table 2. Island Comparisons of Children’s Indicators: 2000 Data

US Virgin Islands Children’s Indicators*	St. Croix		St. John		St. Thomas		US Virgin Islands	
	Number	Rate/%	Number	Rate/%	Number	Rate/%	Number	Rate/%
Percent low birth-weight babies							151	9.0
Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	4	4.8	<sup>1</sup>		10	11.9	14	8.3
Child death rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1-14)	2	14.1	<sup>1</sup>		2	17.1	4	15.0
Rate of teen deaths by accident, homicide or suicide (deaths per 100,000 teens ages 15-19)	4	87.4	<sup>1</sup>		3	73.0	7	80.6
Teen birth rate (births per 1,000 females ages 15-17)	50	31.5	<sup>1</sup>		43	31.8	93	31.6
Juvenile violent crime arrest rate (arrests per 100,000 youth ages 10-17)	25	304	<sup>1</sup>		70	956	95	611
Percent of teens who are high school dropouts (ages 16-19)	633	18.1	27	14.8	483	15.8	1,143	16.9
Percent of teens not attending school and not working (ages 16-19)	494	14.1	11	6.0	347	11.3	852	12.6
Percent of children in poverty (data reflect poverty in 1999)	8,838	49.3	222	21.7	5,043	33.9	14,103	41.7
Percent of families with children headed by a single female parent	3,476	47.3	189	39.5	2,785	44.4	6,450	45.7
Percent of children under age 6 living with working parents	3,124	63.2	261	82.1	3,028	74.8	6,413	68.9
Child abuse and neglect referral rate (per 1,000 children ages 0-18)	151	8.0	<sup>1</sup>		230	13.6	381	10.6
Median income of families (data reflect income for all families in 1999)	\$24,235		\$39,567		\$31,724		\$28,553	

\*See ‘Definitions and Data Sources’.

<sup>1</sup>: Included in St. Thomas data



**Table 3. Trends in Virgin Islands Children's Indicators: 1995 to 2000**

<b>US Virgin Islands Children's Indicators*</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Percent Change**</b>	<b>Trend<sup>#</sup></b>
Percent low birth -weight babies	9.2	8.1	9.0	-20%	variable
Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	13.4	10.8	8.3	-38.1%	better
Child death rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1-14)	28.5	42.1	15.0	-47.4%	better
Rate of teen deaths by accident, homicide or suicide (deaths per 100,000 teens ages 15-19)	67.0	82.0	80.6	+16.9%	worse
Teen birth rate (births per 1,000 females 15-17)	41.7	39.0	31.6	-24.2%	better
Juvenile violent crime arrest rate (arrests per 100,000 youths ages 10-17)	809 <sup>1</sup>	310 <sup>1</sup>	611 <sup>1</sup>	-9.8% <sup>1</sup>	variable
Percent of teens who are high school dropouts (ages 16-19)	18.0	22.0	16.9	-6.1%	variable
Percent of teens not attending school and not working (ages 16-19)	0 <sup>3</sup>	5.4	12.6	+57.1%	worse
Percent of children in poverty	34.6 <sup>2</sup>	40.5 <sup>2</sup>	41.7	+17.0%	worse
Percent of families with children under age 18 headed by a single female parent	44.8 <sup>2</sup>	44.3 <sup>2</sup>	45.7	+2.0%	worse
Percent of children under age 6 living with working parents	59.9 <sup>2</sup>	62.0 <sup>2</sup>	68.9	+13.1%	better
Child abuse and neglect referral rate (per 1,000 children ages 0-18)	13.6	9.0	10.6	-22.1%	better
Median income of families <sup>2</sup>	\$27,908	\$30,530	\$28,553	+2.3%	variable

\*See 'Definitions and Data Sources'.

\*\*Change in indicator from 1995 to 2000

<sup>#</sup>Trend includes 1995, 1997 and 2000

<sup>1</sup>: The 5 year average violent crime arrest rate per 100,000 youths from 1995 to 2000, excluding 1999, is 555. The trend is compared to this average.

<sup>2</sup>: Data reflect employment and income in 1994, 1996, and 1999

<sup>3</sup>: Because the figure for 1995 is unlikely and may be due to a loss of data following Hurricane Marilyn, trend data compares 2000 with 1997



## Family and Community

### Child population

The proportion of children under age 18 in the U.S. Virgin Islands declined by 3.2% from 1990 to 2000, from 35,427, or 34.8%, to 34,289, or 31.6%. By contrast, the overall population increased from 101,809 to 108,612, an increase of 6.3%. The decrease in child population is attributable to a decline in the birth rate over the same period. More women are remaining childless, delaying childbearing, and having fewer children. Relative to the national average of 26%, however, the proportion of children in the overall Virgin Islands population remains high.

On St. Croix, the number of children decreased from 18,706 in 1990 to 18,169 in 2000, a decline of 2.9%.

On St. Thomas, the decrease was 4.3%, from 15,754 in 1990 to 15,077 in 2000. During the same period the number of children living on St. John increased by 7.3%, from 967 to 1,043.

### Distribution by race and sex

The overall population of the U.S. Virgin Islands in 2000 was 78.3% black, 14.4% white, 10.5% other races. Racial categories in the 2000 census allowed individuals to designate membership in more than one race, resulting in percentages that may add up to more than 100%. Hispanics of any race made up 14.0% of the population.

The racial and ethnic composition of the child population in 2000 is not yet available. However, of 1,682 children born in 2000, 76.9% were born to black women, 18.3% to white women, 4.8% to women of other racial/ethnic groups, and 21.8% were born to Hispanic women of any race.

In 2000 the child population was almost evenly divided between 17,153 females and 17,136 males, or about 50.0% each.

***Definition: Child population is the percentage of the total population that is under the age of 18.***



Silverbells & Cockleshells

### **BRONZE AWARD**

*(Family &  
Community)*

CARABANA  
ENSEMBLE  
THEATER CO.

*“Advances the  
literacy and  
appreciation of the  
arts among young  
people through  
workshops, a  
cultural arts  
summer day camp,  
and a library  
specifically  
targeted to the  
literacy needs of  
youth.”*





Silverbells & Cockleshells

**GOLD AWARD**

*(Children in Families)*

**PARENTS AND KIDS**

**DISCOVER ST. CROIX**  
sponsored by St. Croix

Landmarks Society in partnership with Paternity Division, Dept. of Justice

*“Encourages non-custodial parents – mostly fathers - to spend time with their children by providing fun, educational activities at the Whim Museum grounds and other selected sites.”*

## Children in Families

### Family Composition

Of the 34,289 children under age 18 in the Virgin Islands in 2000, 82.2% live with one or both parents, and 16.3% live with other relatives, including grandparents. Small numbers of children live with non-relatives, in foster care, or are institutionalized. This contrasts with 95.8% of children in the United States living with one or both parents, and only 4.2% living with relatives or non-relatives. Children coping with the absence of one or both parents may often have problems in areas of adjustment and functioning, including health, educational attainment, risk behaviors and psychological well-being. Married couple families provide economic and emotional stability for children under age 18, and children growing up in these families may show higher educational attainment, decreased risky behavior and lower levels of teenage pregnancy and drug experimentation. Grandparents may be present in both married couple and single-parent families, and provide an important additional resource to strengthen the family system.

There was an increase in the percentage of children living with their own families in single female-headed households, from 44.3% in 1997 to 45.7% in 2000. Forty-seven percent of children living with their own families on St. Croix live with a single female parent, as do 44.4% of those on St. Thomas, and nearly 40% of those living on St. John. This is nearly four times the rate of single-parent families in the United States, where the average percentage of single-parent families in 2000 was 12.2%, 7.2% of which were headed by women. Nearly 27% of all children in the United States live in single-parent households, 22.4% in mother-only households.

Married couple families comprised 41.9% of all families in the Virgin Islands living with their own children under age 18. In half of the 4,802 households with children that included a grandparent, the grandparent was the caregiver responsible for the child. In these situations, the grandparent was providing babysitting and other care for preschool age children, and had primary responsibility for school-aged children over the age of 5.

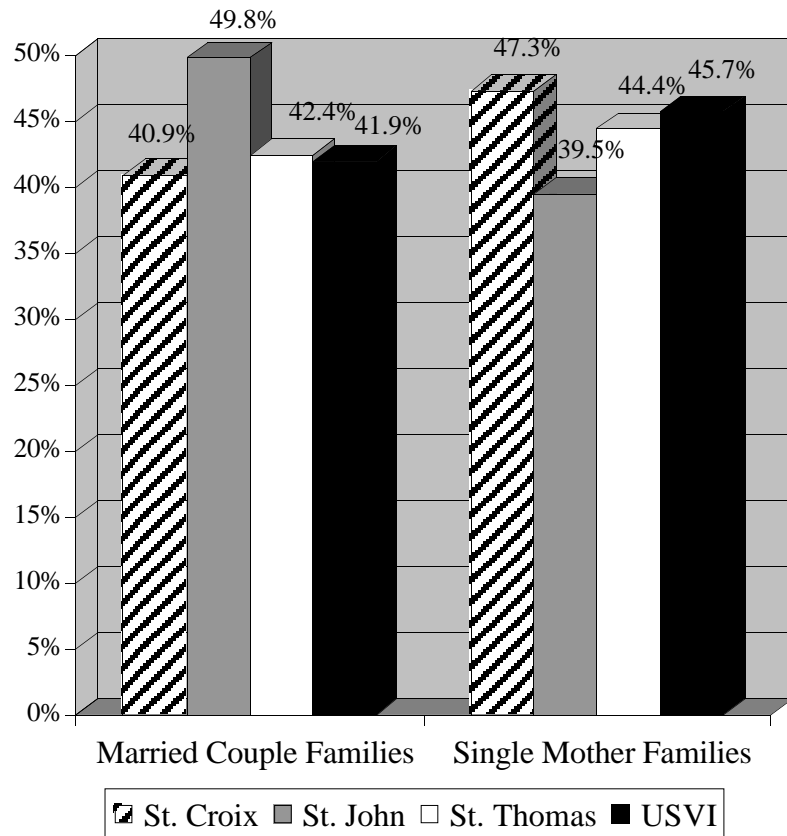
Twelve percent of households in the Virgin Islands with a child or children under the age of 18 are neither married couple nor single mother households. These may include single father families, families of relatives, grandparents, godparents or other non-relatives who are raising children with or without legal guardianship.

***Definition: Children in single-parent families is the percentage of children under age 18 who live with their own families headed by a woman without a spouse present in the home. The definition of “own children” is those children who are related to the householder by birth, adoption or marriage.***

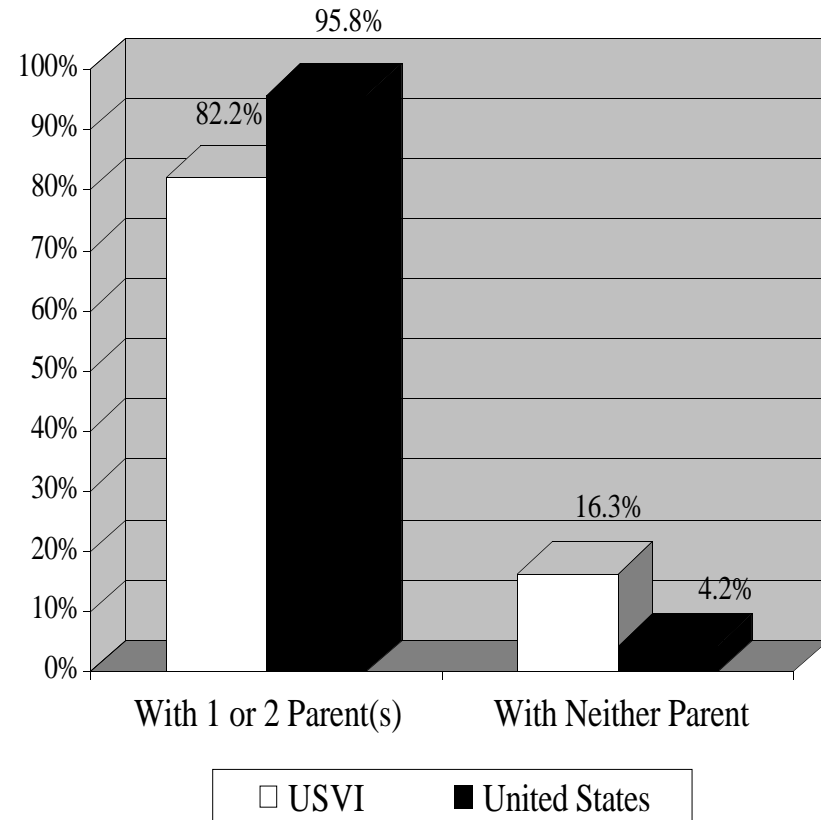


# Virgin Islands Children in Living Arrangements: 2000

**Figure 1: Children in Families by Type**



**Figure 2: Children with Parents**





Silverbells & Cockleshells

## Economic Well-Being

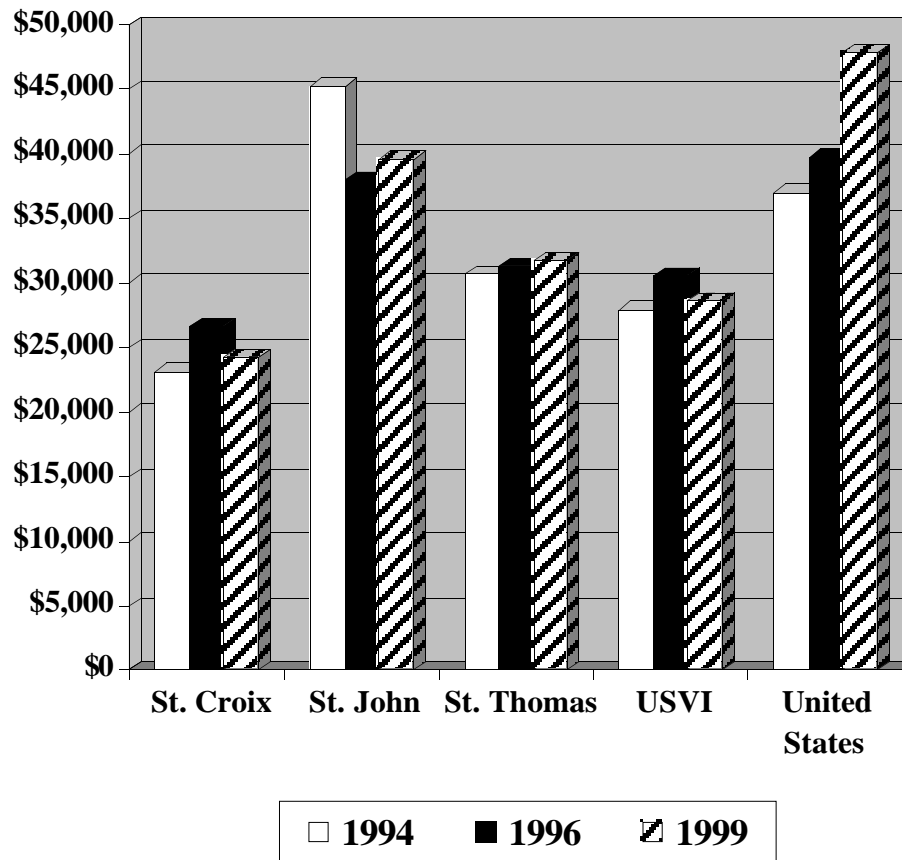
### SILVER AWARD

*(Economic Well-Being)*

SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS AND CAREERS at Fort Christian Museum

*“Provides intensive and individualized training in the visual arts and helps students develop a college or professional portfolio. Youth participate in design and graphic arts workshops which culminate in marketing the product produced.”*

### Figure 3. Median Family Income



### Family Income

The median income for all Virgin Islands families in 1999 was \$28,553, a decrease of 6.5% from the 1996 median income of \$30,530. By contrast, the national median income for families with children grew from \$39,700 in 1997 to \$47,900 in 1999, an increase of 17%. The median income for all United States families in 1999 was \$48,950.

Family income increased by 4% on the island of St. John, to \$39,567, rebounding somewhat after the decline following Hurricane Marilyn in 1995. St. Thomas showed a smaller increase of approximately 1.3% to \$31,724. On St. Croix family income decreased significantly by 9% to \$24,235.

**Definition:** Median income is the dollar amount which divides the income distribution in Virgin Islands households into two equal groups--half of households have incomes above the median and half have incomes below the median. Data for the Virgin Islands is estimated for all families rather than for families with children.



## Children in Poverty

### Child Poverty

The U.S. poverty guideline for a family of four with two children in 2000 was set at \$17,463. Federal poverty guidelines include higher income thresholds for a family of four in the non-contiguous states of Alaska and Hawaii. It is probable therefore that poverty in the U.S. Virgin Islands is underestimated based on a higher cost of living for non-contiguous territories.

The proportion of children in poverty in the U.S. Virgin Islands has continued to increase since 1995. In 1995, 11,783 children, or 34.6% of the child population, lived in families with incomes below the poverty level. By 1997, this number had increased by 6% to 14,353 children. Despite decreases in the total child population in 2000, the child poverty rate for the Virgin Islands further increased by 7%, representing 14,142 children, or 41.7% of all children under age 18.

This overall increase in child poverty is accounted for by a 7% increase in the percentage of children in poverty on St. Croix, to 49.3%, nearly half of all children. Child poverty on St. Thomas was largely unchanged at 33.9%, and on St. John child poverty decreased to 21.7%. The national child poverty rate decreased slightly to 16.2% in 2000.

There is a strong relationship between the rate of single mother families and child poverty rates, because single women have substantially lower incomes than married couple families. The reverse is also true. When the rate of both parents working in a family with children under 18 is higher, the rate of child poverty is lower. Female-headed households make up one quarter of all households in the Virgin Islands, and nearly two-thirds of these women care for children under age 18 (63.7%). By contrast, children under age 18 are present in only 43.7% of married couple family households. The Virgin Islands rate of female-headed single parent households has continued to increase from 44.3% in 1997 to 45.7% in 2000, representing 6,450 out of 14,107 households with their own children. Poverty is significantly higher in female-headed single parent households with children under age 18 -- 49.2% of these families live below the poverty level, compared to 35.3% of married couple families. An astonishing 56.7% of female-headed households with children under the age of 5 live below the poverty level. The poverty rate for female householder families in the United States was 24.7% in 2000, half the rate for the Virgin Islands.

Despite the increasing percentage of children under age 6 living with working parents, (from 59.9% in 1995 to 68.9% in 2000), the child poverty rate in the Virgin Islands has continued to rise, along with the rate of female-headed single parent households. Because of low wages and seasonal employment, living with one or two working parents is not a guarantee of escape from poverty.

***Definition: The percentage of children in poverty is defined as the percentage of children under the age of 18 who live in families with incomes below the U.S. poverty guidelines. Income and poverty data represent status in the preceding year, that is 2000 poverty levels represent poverty status based on income earned in 1999.***



Silverbells & Cockleshells

### **GOLD AWARD**

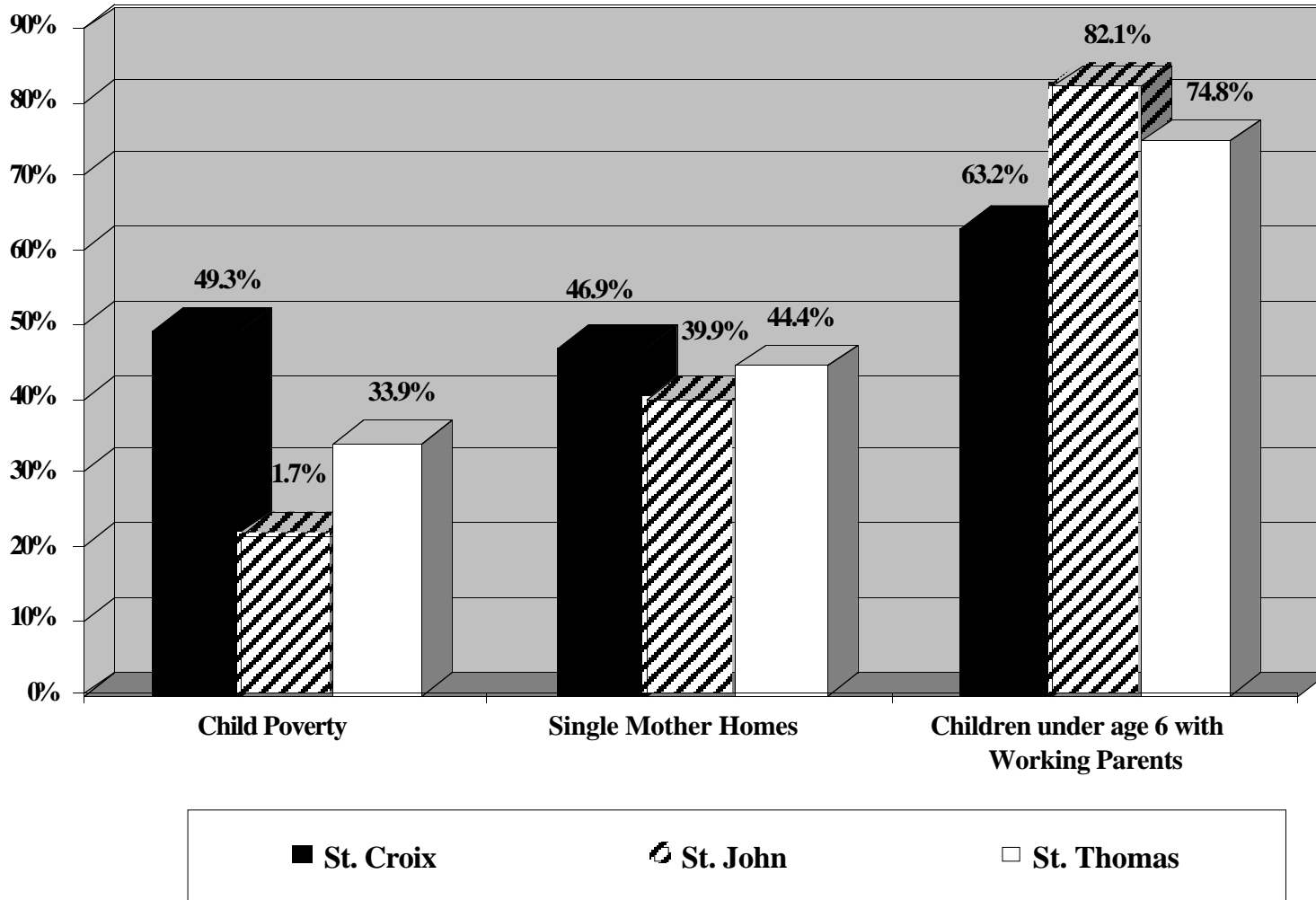
*(Children in Poverty)*

### **MARINE KIDS KORPS**

*“Assists underprivileged and disabled children to develop into productive adults by giving them access to aquatic programs through which the children are mentored and nurtured. Youth are taught swimming, water safety, CPR, snorkeling and scuba diving. Lifeguard training is offered for teenagers.”*



Figure 4. Child Poverty, Single Motherhood and Parent Employment in 2000



## The Health Status of Children

### Low Birth-weight

Birth-weight is an indicator of infant health and is directly related to survival, overall health and development. Babies born weighing less than 5.5 pounds are at high risk for physical and cognitive developmental problems. These data are not available by district.

The U.S. Virgin Islands has had variable success in reducing the incidence of low birth-weight in newborn infants. A decrease of 1% from 1995 to 1997 was reversed in 1999 when the incidence rose to nearly 10%. There has been a slight decrease in 2000 to 9.0% low birth-weight, essentially the same as in 1995. One hundred fifty-one infants were born weighing under 5.5 pounds in 2000.

Anecdotal evidence for the lack of success in reducing low birth-weight points to low levels of prenatal care among women, in part driven by low income levels, especially among single mothers, and the lack of health insurance. The national average in the United States also increased, from 7% in 1995 to 7.6% in 1999.

### Infant Mortality

By contrast, infant mortality has improved by 38%, declining from 13.4 infant deaths per thousand live births in 1995, to 8.3 per thousand in 2000. A total of 14 infants died of internal causes in 2000, four on St. Croix, and 10 in the St. Thomas/St. John district.

This trend is due to a sharp drop in infant mortality on St. Croix, from a rate of 14 deaths per thousand births in 1997, to only 4.8 deaths per thousand births in 2000, significantly better than the U.S. national infant mortality rate of 7.1 per thousand births in 1999. This dramatic turnaround was attributed to the presence of a neonatologist at the Juan Luis Hospital in St. Croix, who was able to respond immediately to the needs of St. Croix infants and young children. By contrast, the rate of infant mortality in the St. Thomas/St. John district rose by nearly 60% during the same period, from 7 deaths per thousand births in 1997, to 11.9 deaths per thousand births in 2000.

Infant mortality is closely linked to poverty, inadequate nutrition and poor living conditions, a lack of preventive health care during pregnancy and low birth-weight.

***Definition: Low birth-weight babies is the proportion of infants born alive weighing under 2,500 grams (5.5 pounds) compared to the total number of live births.***

***Definition: Infant mortality is the number of deaths occurring to infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 live births. These rates must be interpreted with caution because very small absolute numbers and small changes can have very large effects on the calculated rates.***



Silverbells & Cockleshells

### BRONZE AWARD

*(Health Status of  
Children)*

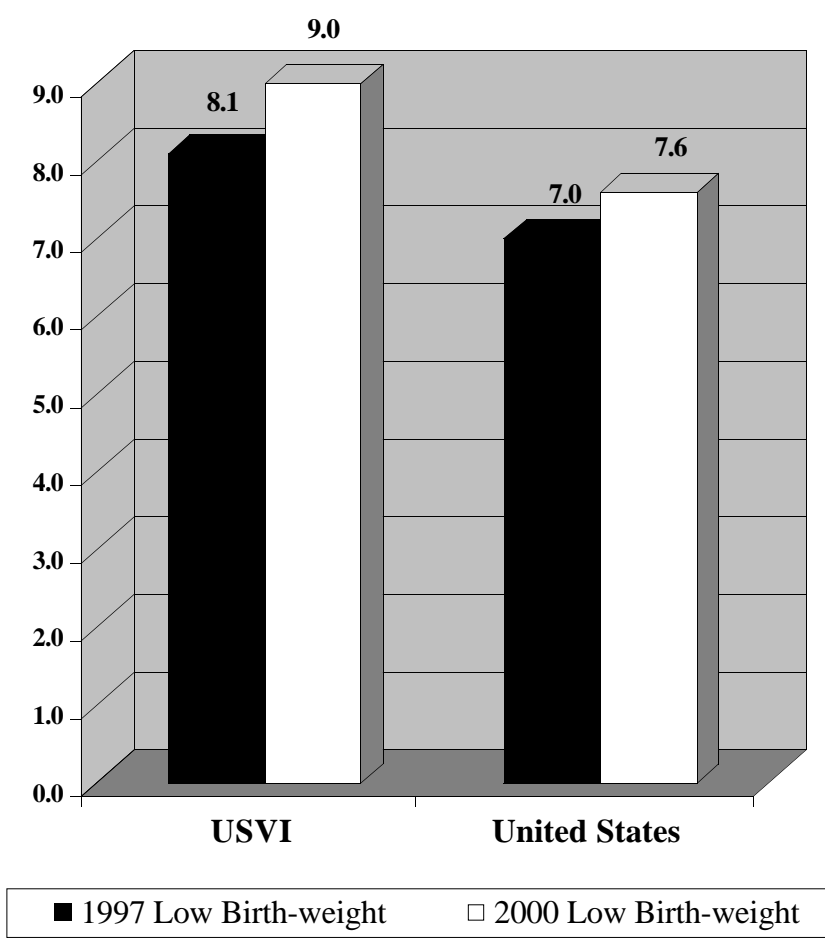
JOANNE  
MATTHEWS –  
SAUNDERS,  
Visual and  
Performing Arts  
Specialist.

*“Teaches children  
with learning and  
emotional  
disabilities  
utilizing creative  
activities in an  
inclusive setting  
where dance, music  
and theatre are  
used so that the  
children improve  
both academic  
achievement and  
self-esteem.”*

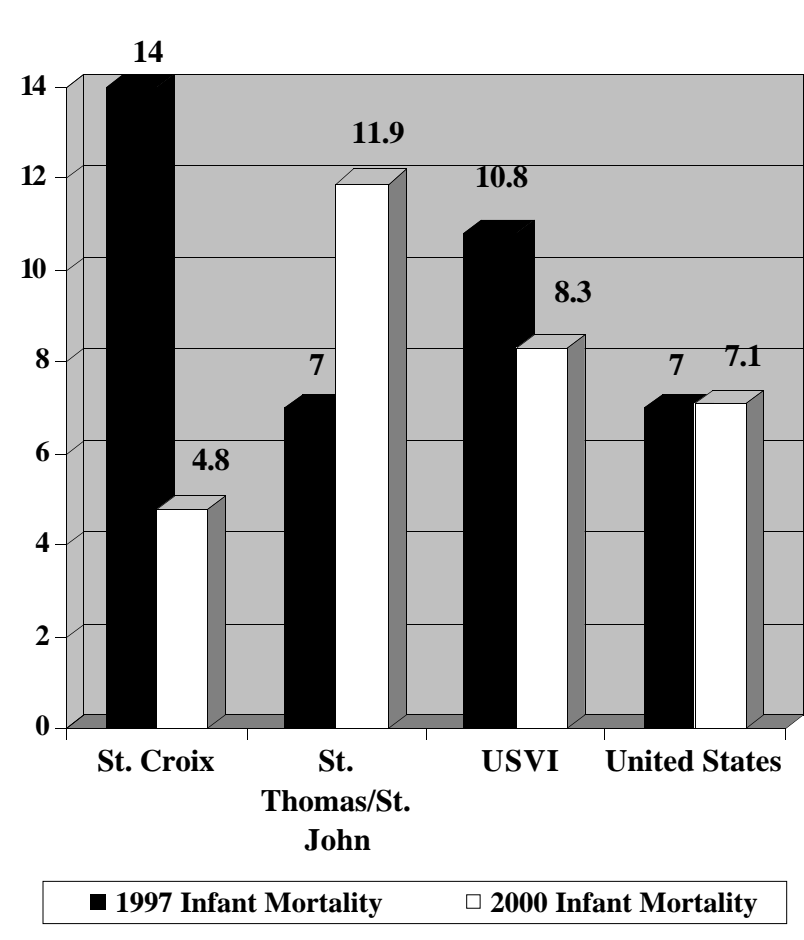


# Infant Health Risk Indicators

## Figure 5. Low Birth-weight



## Figure 6. Infant Mortality Rates



## Child Safety

### Child Deaths

The child death rate is another area that has continued to improve significantly in the U.S. Virgin Islands. In 1995, 8 children between the ages of 1 and 14 died in the U.S. Virgin Islands, for a rate of 28.5 per 100,000. 1999 saw 6 child deaths for a rate of 22.2 per 100,000, and in 2000 there were 4 deaths among young children, 2 on St. Croix and 2 on St. Thomas. Accordingly the rate has decreased by over 47% to a rate of 15 per 100,000 in 2000.

Because of very small absolute numbers, these rates should be interpreted cautiously, because a small increase or decrease in the absolute number of deaths can lead to a very large rate change. Nevertheless, the continuing trend toward declining numbers is encouraging.

The national child death rate in the United States in 1999 remained at 24 per 100,000.

### Rate of Teen Death due to accidents, homicide or suicide

The teen death rate due to accidents, homicide and suicide remained relatively high in 2000, at 80.6 deaths per 100,000 teens between the ages of 15 and 19. This rate is slightly lower than the rate of 82 per 100,000 in 1997, but 17% higher than 1995's rate of 67 per 100,000. The U.S. national rate for 2000 is 53 per 100,000 teens.

Seven children died due to accidents and homicide in 2000, three due to motor vehicle accidents, all on St. Croix, and four due to homicide, 3 on St. Thomas. All of the homicides were to black teens age 18 or 19, and all motor vehicle traffic accident deaths were to teens age 18 or younger. One female teen was the victim of a homicide. These tragic and preventable deaths constituted 77.7% of all teen deaths in 2000; only 2 teenagers died due to medical causes.

***Definition: Child deaths are the number of deaths to children between the ages of 1 and 14, per 100,000 children. Deaths from all causes, including illness and injury, are included in this figure.***

***Definition: Teen deaths by accident, homicide or suicide is the number of deaths to teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19 due to these causes, per 100,000. Factors contributing to teen deaths include risk-taking behavior and violence.***



Silverbells & Cockleshells

**BRONZE  
AWARD**

*(Child  
Maltreatment)*

CASA OF THE  
VIRGIN  
ISLANDS

*“Recruits and  
trains volunteers to  
be child advocates  
to insure that the  
needs of children  
in the court system  
are identified and  
addressed and that  
child victims of  
abuse and neglect  
have stable,  
permanent homes.”*

## Child Maltreatment and Foster Care

### Child Abuse and Neglect

Child maltreatment has been shown to be associated with physical injuries, delayed physical growth and the potential for neurological damage, and has emotional and behavioral consequences such as increased rates of aggressive behavior, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, alcoholism and drug abuse. The consequences of abuse are serious and long-term. The rate of referrals to the Department of Human Services for cases of child abuse and neglect was 10.6 per 1,000 children 18 and under in 2000. Two hundred seventy-five children were referred territory-wide in 1995, 331 children in 1998, 323 in 1999, and 381 in 2000.

Department of Human Services statistics show a steady decline in the number of children referred on St. Croix, from a high of 339 cases in 1996, to 151 cases in 2000. By contrast, the rate of referral in the St. Thomas/St. John district has been more variable, ranging from a low of 68 cases in 1996 to 230 cases in 2000.

The majority of these referrals are for neglect of minor children, with 161 cases territory-wide in 2000. Physical abuse accounted for 117 referrals in 2000, a decrease from 199 referrals in 1998, and there were 78 sexual abuse cases, up from 40 in 1998 and 58 in 1999.

The increase in referrals does not necessarily represent an increase in cases of abuse. There has been a growing awareness of child abuse and neglect in the Virgin Islands community, particularly focused on child sexual abuse, due to intense public education efforts on the part of community-based organizations, the strengthening of legislation, prosecutions and convictions of perpetrators, and the availability of treatment alternatives for victims. All these efforts have succeeded in reducing the stigma against reporting such abuse.

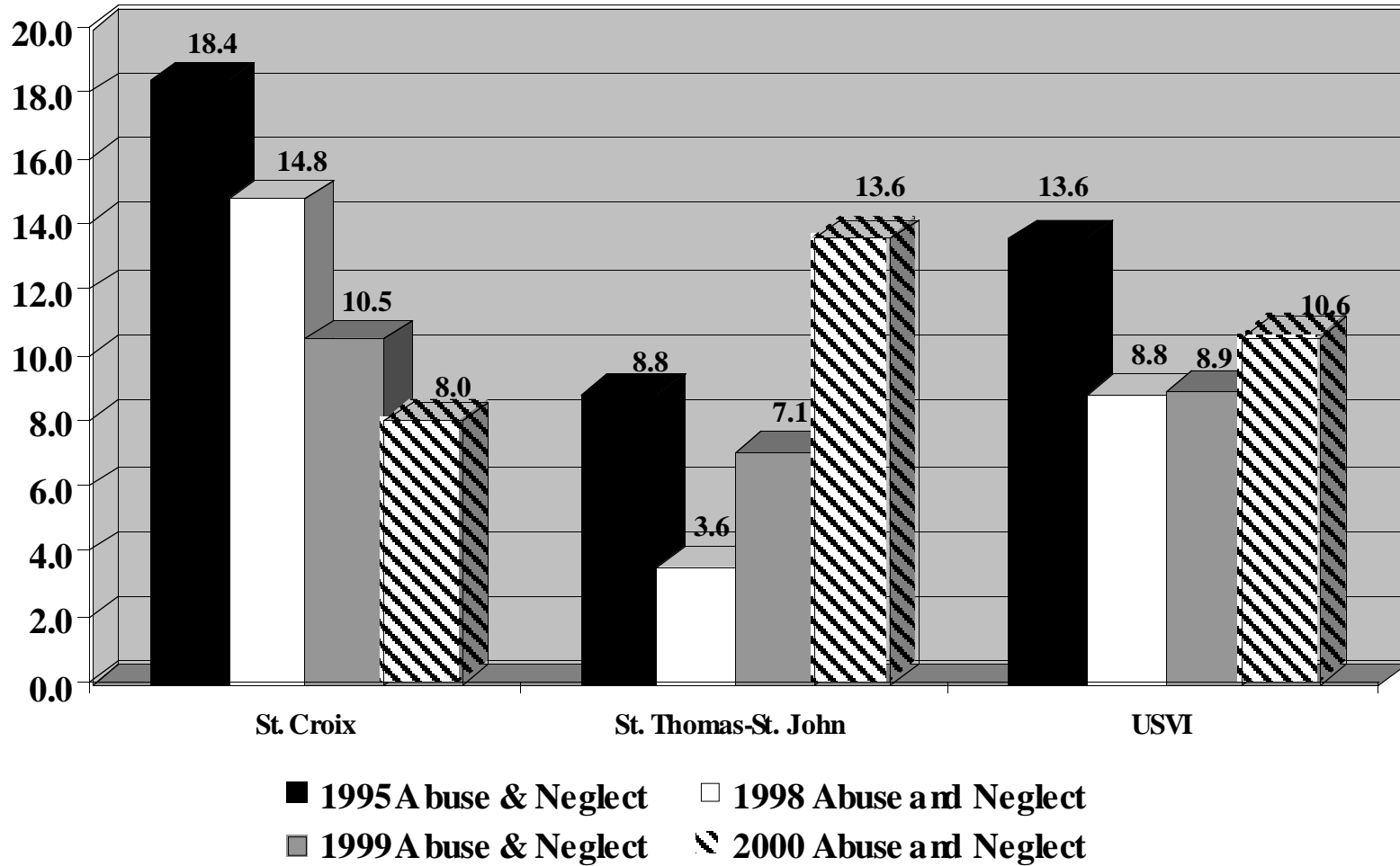
### Foster Care

Foster care placement rates declined in 2000 from 283 placements territory-wide in 1997 and 270 placements in 1999, to 198 placements in 2000. This resumes a pattern of declining placements beginning in 1993 when 337 children were placed in foster care. This trend may represent either a decrease in the need for placements, or in the availability of appropriate families. Placements on St. Croix have been consistently higher than in the St. Thomas/St. John district, reflecting more unstable economic conditions.

***Definition: Child abuse and neglect is the number of children between ages 0 and 18 who have been reported to the Department of Human Services as victims of child abuse or neglect per 1,000 children. This number does not include children who are in foster care, who may have been placed due to abuse or neglect. Foster care is the number of children who are removed under the authority of the Department of Human Services from the custody of a parent or caregiver due to abuse or neglect, and placed temporarily with a family who will provide care.***



**Figure 7. Child Abuse and Neglect Rates per 1,000**





Silverbells & Cockleshells

**SILVER AWARD**

*(Teenage Births)*

“A SENSE OF FAMILY” and “TEEN PARENTING” sponsored by Women’s Coalition of St. Croix

“Improve the quality of life for young people by conducting parenting skills classes. ‘Sense of Family’ for adults provides parents with information and support. ‘Teen Parenting’ provides classes which address the unique set of parenting challenges that face adolescents.”

### Teenage Births

#### Teen Birth Rate

Teenage pregnancy and parenting are a threat to the development of both mother and child. Teen mothers are less likely to obtain adequate prenatal care, more likely to have low birth-weight infants, and less likely to have adequate financial resources to care for their children.

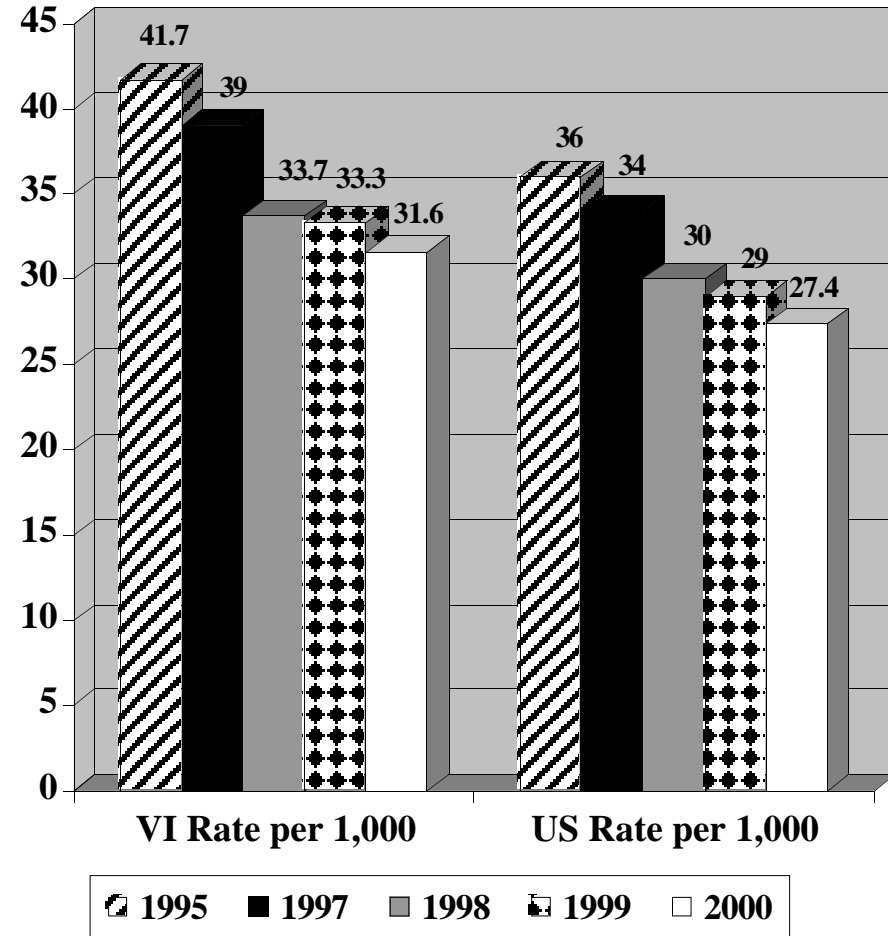
The rate of live births to teenage girls between the ages of 15 and 17 has been steadily declining over the last decade, both in the U.S. Virgin Islands and in the United States. The number of births in the Virgin Islands has moved from 141 in 1995, to 134 in 1997, 99 in 1999, and 93 in 2000, an overall decrease of 24%. The Virgin Islands teen birth rate in 2000 was 31.6 per 1,000.

Although Hispanics made up only 14% of the Virgin Islands population in 2000, 26% of teen mothers in 1999 were Hispanic. While nearly all young teens giving birth were unmarried (91%), 15% had 2 or more children.

The national teen birth rate for the United States continued its decline from 36 births per thousand teens in 1995 to 27.4 per thousand in 2000.

**Definition:** Teen births is the number of births to teenagers between ages 15 and 17 per 1,000 females in the same age range.

**Figure 8. Teen Births by Year**



## Juvenile Crime Arrests

### Juvenile Crime

#### Violent Crime

Following a brief downturn in 1997, arrests for violent crimes committed by children have begun to increase. The 5-year average rate for juvenile violent crime arrests from 1995 to 2000 has gone from 532 to 555 per 100,000. (St. Croix data was unavailable for 1999)

In 1999, significantly more arrests for assault and robbery were made on St. Thomas, from 14 and 33 in 1997 and 1998, to 66 and 70 in 1999 and 2000.

In 2000, 95 youths were arrested on suspicion of having committed a violent crime, up from a 5-year low of 51 in 1997, for a rate of 611 per 100,000 youths aged 10 to 17. Seventy of those arrests were in the district of St. Thomas/St. John, and 25 on St. Croix. The alleged infractions are primarily assault and robbery rather than the crimes of rape and murder.

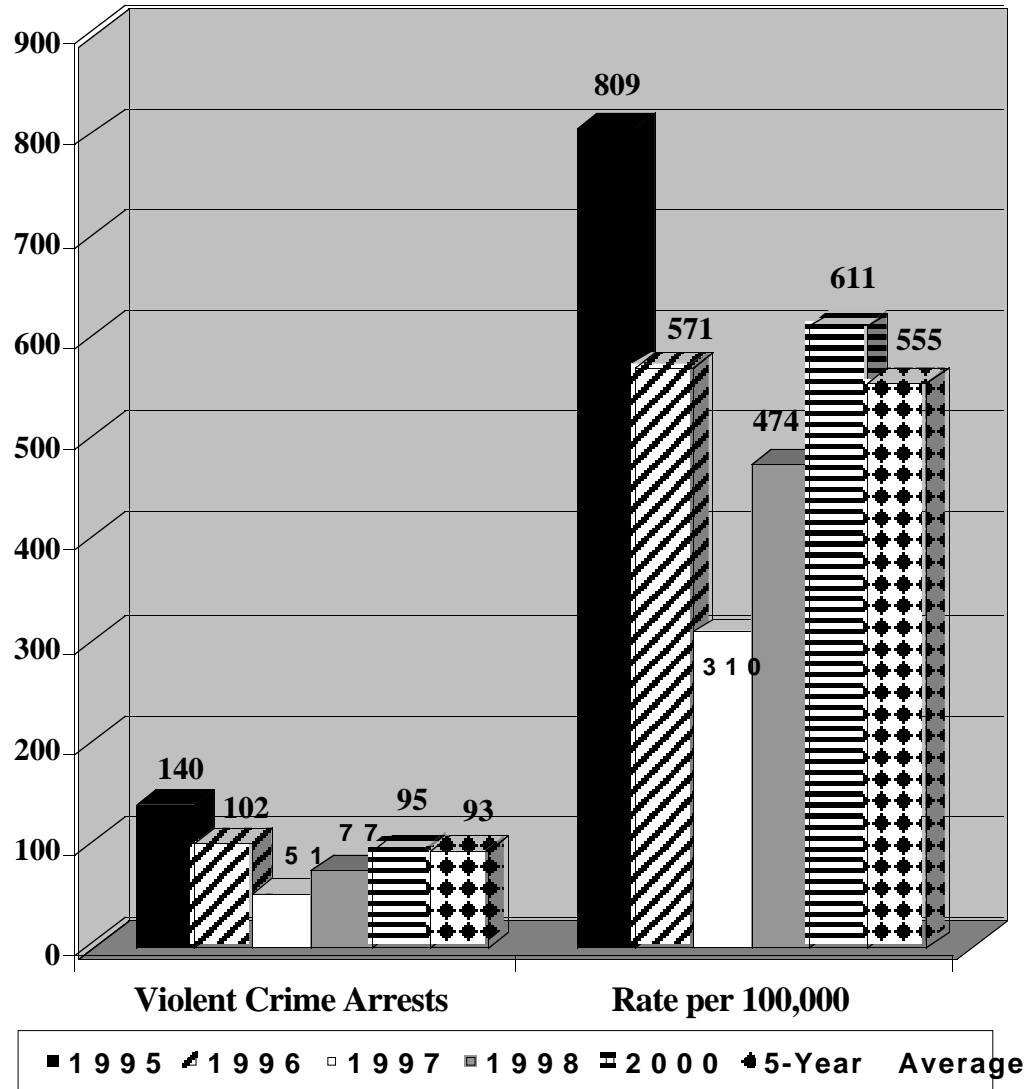
Two youths were arrested for homicide in 2000, both on St. Croix, and 8 were arrested for rape, 6 on St. Thomas. The rape arrests for juveniles have doubled over the past five years on St. Thomas, while declining from 6 to 2 on St. Croix over the same period.

#### Property Crime

In teens aged 10 to 17, arrests for crimes against property have generally increased on St. Thomas since 1996, from 24 to 38 arrests. Arrests for burglary and larceny are the most frequently occurring. On St. Croix, arrests for property crimes have fluctuated severely, driven primarily by 11 arrests for arson in 1998. Forty-one arrests were made in 1996 and 1998, compared to 11 arrests in 1997 and 14 arrests in 2000. Arrests for burglary and larceny have significantly decreased, from a high of 19 arrests in 1998 and 1996 respectively to 5 arrests for burglary and 9 for larceny in 2000.

***Definition: Juvenile violent crime arrests is the number of arrests of youths between ages 10 and 17 for indexed violent offenses per 100,000 youths. Offenses included are homicide, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault. Property crime arrests are for offenses including burglary, larceny/theft, auto theft, arson and destruction of property.***

**Figure 9. Juvenile Violent Crime Arrests**



## Teenage Alienation: Dropouts and Unemployment

### **Percent of teens who are high school dropouts, and not in the labor force**

High school dropouts are those who have failed to become engaged by the most important socialization institution for children in society. These are young people who will have a more difficult time securing employment, obtaining career advancement and receiving a salary that can support a family adequately. Further, these are youths who, if unemployed, are readily available for engaging in risky behavior and possibly criminal activity.

The dropout rate in 2000 was 16.9%, somewhat down from 22% in 1997; however it is significantly higher than the U.S. average rate of 10%.

Even more alarming is the high rate of youth who are neither in school nor working, 12.6% in 2000, up from 5.4% in 1997. The average rate of unemployed youth in the U.S. was 8% in 1999.

These statistics suggest a significant disenfranchising of Virgin Islands youth, linked with the worsening economic conditions in the territory and the increase in poverty and juvenile crime.

This disaffection of young Virgin Islanders is highlighted in the 2001 Youth Risk Behavior Survey results, responded to by 48% of public secondary schools. Fifteen percent of students stated they had carried a weapon to school in the past 30 days. Over 30% reported significant depressive symptoms, 12% had formed a plan for attempting suicide, and 10% of respondents reported having actually made the attempt. Twenty percent of students had taken alcohol and 15% smoked marijuana in the 30 days prior to filling out the survey. Fifty-two percent were sexually active, about 1/4th without using a condom, and 10% reported having been coerced into sexual activity.

***Definition: Teens who are high school dropouts is the percentage of teenagers between ages 16 and 19 who are not enrolled in school and are not high school graduates.***

***Definition: Teens not in school and not working is the percentage of teenagers between ages 16 and 19 who are not enrolled in school and not employed. Employment may include part-time as well as full-time work.***



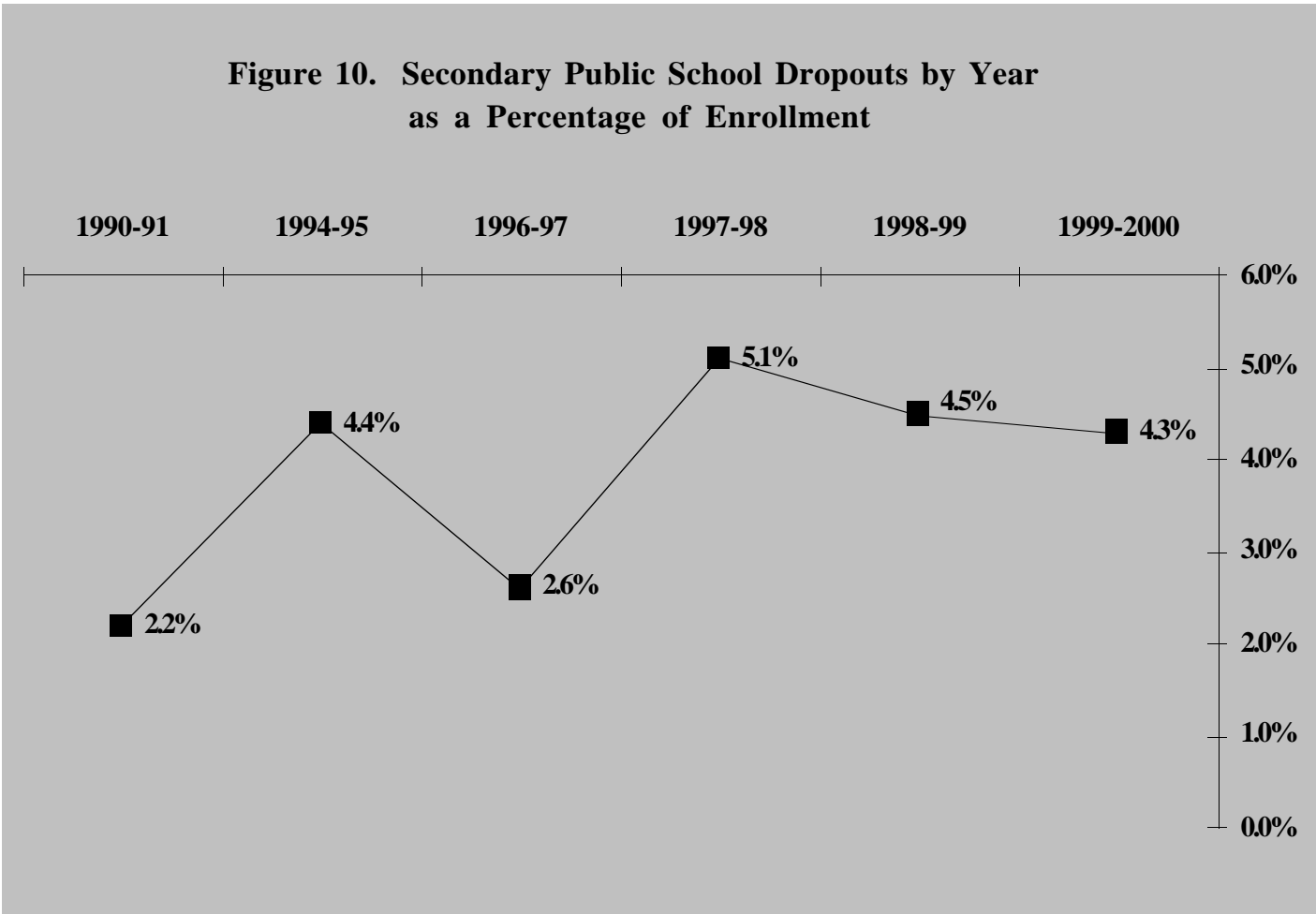
**GOLD AWARD**

*(Public School Dropouts by Year Figure 10)*

ON TRACK sponsored by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Mu Gamma Omega Chapter

*“Provides learning experiences and opportunities that will promote communication and life-skills for at-risk students in grades 3 to 6. Members of community groups and agencies interact with the youngsters on a regular basis and the students are exposed to social and cultural events.”*

**Figure 10. Secondary Public School Dropouts by Year as a Percentage of Enrollment**



*Following a sharp decrease in the dropout rate in 1996-97, yearly dropouts from the public school system have stabilized at between 4% and 5%, double the recorded rate of dropouts in 1990-91. However 2000 Census data points to a more serious problem with 17% of survey respondents between ages 16 and 19 reporting having dropped out of high school.*

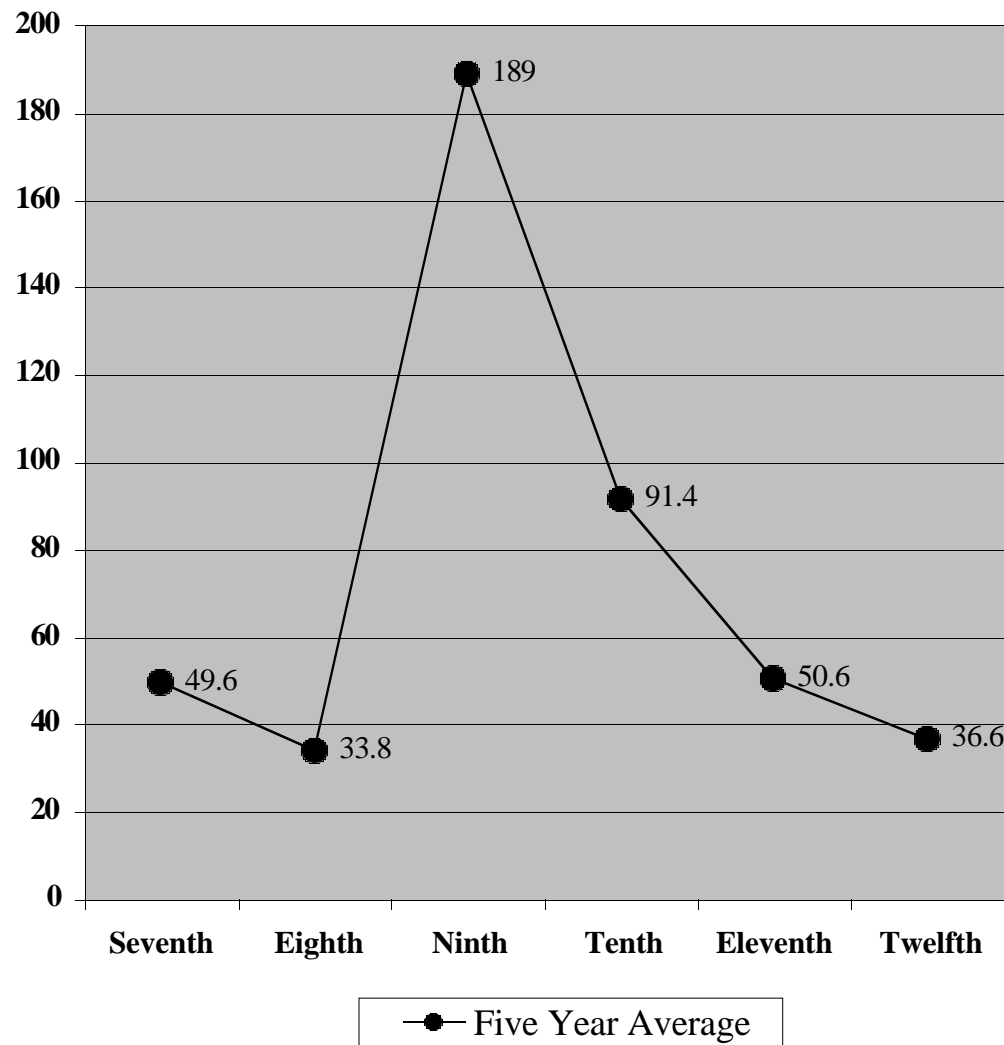


## Public School Performance

Department of Education statistics show that the peak risk for dropouts to occur is in the ninth grade. The numbers of students dropping out of school in the ninth grade, the first year of high school, is approximately double the number of students dropping out of school in the tenth grade, which is second highest. This is a consistent pattern from year to year. Generally, dropout risk is higher in high school than in junior high school. However seventh grade students are also at some risk for dropping out of junior high school.

Of concern for those children remaining in school are the very poor results achieved by Virgin Islands 4th and 8th grade children on the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading and writing, and the 2000 NAEP results in math and science. In all cases the Virgin Islands placed at the bottom of the rankings, below the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Figure 11. Public School Dropouts by Grade - 1995-2000



Silverbells & Cockleshells

### BRONZE AWARD

(Public School Performance)

YOUTH PROGRAMS sponsored by St. Andrews Episcopal Church

"Provides a safe, after-school environment for children between the ages of 5 and 13 years old, with a consortium of programs including a steel orchestra, a youth choir, and a wind ensemble."



## Definitions and Data Sources

### **Percent Low Birth-weight Babies**

The proportion of births 2500 grams (5.5 pounds) or under compared to the total number of live births.

SOURCE: Virgin Islands Department of Health.

### **Infant Mortality Rate (Per 1,000 Live Births)**

The number of deaths occurring to infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 live births. SOURCE: Virgin Islands Department of Health.

### **Child Death Rate (Per 100,000 Children ages 1 -14)**

The number of deaths to children between ages 1 and 14, from all causes, per 100,000 children in this age range.

SOURCE: Virgin Islands Department of Health.

### **Rate of Teen Deaths by Accident, Homicide or Suicide (Per 100,000 teens ages 15-19)**

The number of deaths from accident, homicide and suicide to teenagers between ages 15 and 19, per 100,000 teenagers in this age group. SOURCE: Virgin Islands Department of Health.

### **Teen Birth Rate (Per 1,000 Females ages 15 - 17)**

The number of births to teenagers between ages 15 and 17 per 1,000 females in this age group. SOURCE: Virgin Islands Department of Health.

### **Juvenile Violent Crime Arrest Rate (Per 100,000 Youths ages 10 - 17)**

The number of arrests of youths under the age of 18 for indexed violent offenses (homicide, forcible rape, robbery or aggravated assault) per 100,000 youths between ages 10 and 17. Data may include repeated arrests of the same individual at different times and for different offenses. SOURCE: 2001 U.S. Virgin Islands Statistical Yearbook, Eastern Caribbean Center, University of the Virgin Islands.



**Percent of Teens Who Are High School Dropouts (ages 16 - 19)**

The percentage of teenagers between ages 16 and 19 who are not enrolled in school and are not high school graduates. Those who have a GED or equivalent are included as high school dropouts. SOURCE: U.S. Virgin Islands Population and Housing Profile: 2000. U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

**Percent of 16 - 19 Year-Olds Not In School And Not Working**

The percentage of teenagers between ages 16 and 19 who are not enrolled in school and not employed. SOURCE: U.S. Virgin Islands Population and Housing Profile: 2000. U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

**Percent of Children In Poverty**

The percentage of children under the age of 18 who live in families with incomes below the U.S. poverty guidelines, as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. “Related children” of households with reported income are included in this analysis. SOURCES: U.S. Virgin Islands Population and Housing Profile: 2000. U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000. 1999 Population Statistics and Data: Eastern Caribbean Center, University of the Virgin Islands.

**Percent of Families With Children Under Age 18 Headed By A Single Parent**

The percentage of all families with “own children” under age 18 living in the household, who are headed by a single, female householder. SOURCE: U.S. Virgin Islands Population and Housing Profile: 2000. U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

**Percent of Children Under Age 6 Living With Working Parents**

The percentage of “related children” under the age of 6 living with a householder who worked. The proportion of households in which the householder worked is applied to the total number of related children under 6. SOURCES: U.S. Virgin Islands Population and Housing Profile: 2000. U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

### **Median Income Of Families With Children**

The median annual income for families with related children under age 18 living in the household. Virgin Islands data is available only for all families, irrespective of related children. SOURCES: U.S. Virgin Islands Population and Housing Profile: 2000. U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000. 1999 Population Statistics and Data: Eastern Caribbean Center, University of the Virgin Islands.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

The number of children between ages 0 and 18 who have been reported as abused or neglected. SOURCE: Protective Services Statistics, Department of Human Services, U.S. Virgin Islands.

### **Teenage Dropouts and Repeating Students**

Public secondary school dropouts: The number of children enrolled in public schools between the 7th and 12th grades inclusively, who did not enroll, graduate, report for class at the beginning of the school year, or meet the exclusionary conditions of transfer to another school, suspension or illness, or death, in the new school year. Repeating students: The number of children enrolled from grades 7 to 12 who were retained in the same grade from one year to the next. SOURCE: V.I. Department of Education



SILVERBELLS & COCKLESHELLS AWARD, 2002  
**GOLD AWARD**

**PARENTS AND KIDS DISCOVER ST. CROIX** sponsored by  
**St. Croix Landmarks Society in partnership with Paternity Division, Dept. of Justice**

**Established** January, 2001

**Location** Whim Museum

**# Served** 65 non-custodial parents and their children

**Goals:** “To encourage non-custodial parents to spend time with their children at the Whim Museum grounds and other selected sites. Scheduling fun, educational activities at a “neutral” location ...facilitates visitations between parent and child.”

**Program Description:** Since so many children are growing up without fathers in the home, this program provides an opportunity for fathers to take a more active role in the lives of their children. Sixty five non-custodial parents and their children are registered in the program, facilitating regular visitations that were formerly random or non-existent. Activities are planned with input from parents. Some non-custodial dads expressed concern about keeping up with a child’s academic progress. To respond, a resource room has been established. Open once a week, the resource room creates an atmosphere where parents can assist their children with homework.

**Evaluation:** Participation in this program has had a positive effect on “extended family” relationships. Communication between children and their non-custodial parents has definitely been enhanced. Activity evaluations completed by both parents and children indicate that this program is both needed and successful. As parents and their children enjoy learning and being together, it is hard to decide whose smile is brightest – the happy child’s or the proud parent’s.



SILVERBELLS & COCKLESHELLS AWARD, 2002  
**GOLD AWARD**

**ON TRACK** sponsored by  
**Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Mu Gamma Omega Chapter**  
Established April 14, 2000

**Location:** Eulalie Rivera Elementary School, Frederiksted, St. Croix

**# Served** 30

**Goals:** To provide learning experiences and opportunities that will promote communication skills, i.e. reading, writing, listening, speaking, and academic achievement (mathematics, science and technology); to provide training for improvement of study habits; to provide life-skills for at-risk students in grades 3 to 6; and to adopt a mentoring project for students.

**Program Description:** Students are provided with academic/homework assistance, conflict resolution techniques, decision-making skills, and character building exercises. Their progress is monitored regularly. Sorority members request copies of the students' report cards and establish ongoing relationships with classroom teachers and parents. Community groups and agencies are invited to interact with the youngsters on a regular basis. The students are exposed to social and cultural events in the community.

**Evaluation:** Most of the students continue to be on the honor roll each month. There have been definite improvements in their overall self-esteem and confidence. As the students prepare to leave the elementary school setting, there is little doubt that these youngsters are well-equipped to handle the pressures of adolescence and of the real world.



SILVERBELLS & COCKLESHELLS AWARD, 2002  
**GOLD AWARD**

**MARINE KIDS KORPS**

**Established:** 1998

**Location:** Lindbergh Bay Beach

**# Served:** 15 – 35 per session

**Goals:** To assist underprivileged and disabled children to develop into productive adults morally, intellectually and vocationally by giving them access to aquatic programs that they could not otherwise afford. Through the aquatic programs the children are mentored and nurtured.

**Program Description:** St. Thomas youth are taught swimming, water safety, CPR, snorkeling and scuba diving. Lifeguard training is offered for teenagers.

Program participants include both able and disabled students. Disabilities range from learning and attention-deficit disorders to physical limitations that require the use of a wheelchair. Marine Kids Korps includes an academic mentoring program, and teaches basic moral principles. Young teens are provided with something constructive to do which distracts them from unproductive behavior.

**Evaluation:** In existence for 4 years, MKK has trained several children who are presently employed as lifeguards. Many other children have earned certificates in swimming, First Aid and Water Safety, and American Red Cross Certifications. In two years, a number of MKK students will be ready to go to college. Partnerships are currently being built with two universities so that they will accept and welcome our students.



SILVERBELLS & COCKLESHELL AWARD, 2002  
**SILVER AWARD**

**SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS AND CAREERS**

**Established:** 1983

**Location:** Fort Christian Museum

**# Served:** 35 students per program year

**Goals:** To provide intensive and individualized training in the visual arts to as many students as possible.

**Program Description:** Training is provided through a number of workshops: basic workshop in which students begin with classes in drawing and painting skills; the Portfolio class, where students develop a college or professional portfolio and receive assistance with college selection and application; design and graphic arts workshops which culminate in marketing the product produced; and our summer photography workshop. Guest artists in the community provide special workshops in a variety of media and techniques, including fashion design, sculpture, advertising, Carnival costumes, pastels, computer graphics and video and television production. Other guest speakers talk with our students about the dangers of chemical dependency, teen pregnancy, AIDS, and criminal activity. The program works with the whole student, not only their hands, but also their characters.

**Evaluation:** The best measures of success are the students. For the past five years, all the graduates have been accepted into the colleges or schools of their choice. Although there were no graduating seniors in 2002, the effectiveness of the program is evidenced by a 19-year history of training students who stay in high school and go on to further education and careers in the arts. The artwork produced by the students, which is exhibited at Fort Christian Museum, attests to the quality of work achieved with training and support.



SILVERBELLS & COCKLESHELLS AWARD, 2002

**SILVER AWARD**

**“A SENSE OF FAMILY” and “TEEN PARENTING” sponsored by  
Women’s Coalition of St. Croix**

**Established:** “A Sense of Family,” 1996; “Teen Parenting,” 2001

**Location:** #7 East Street, Christiansted. STX Educational Complex

**Goals:** To improve the quality of life for young people by conducting parenting skills classes, “A Sense of Family” for adults and “Teen Parenting” for adolescents.

**Program Descriptions:** “A Sense of Family” provides training to parents, including those with reported cases of child abuse and neglect. This program provides parents with information and support through group discussions, guest speakers, videos and other resource materials. One-on-one support is provided to parents who need additional assistance. “Teen Parenting” provides 12 to 15 weeks of classes to provide valuable skills which address the unique set of parenting challenges that face adolescents.

**Evaluation:** By providing access to services during school hours, these programs are able to reach a larger number of teen parents and provide increased one- on- one access. Evidence of the impact is seen in weekly support groups for adults who were sexually abused as children and in encounters with adult victims and batterers who were also child victims. Twenty-four hour services to children are available and are vital to the mental health of the children of St. Croix.



SILVERBELLS & COCKLESHELLS AWARD, 2002  
**BRONZE AWARD**

**CASA OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**

**Established:** January 2001

**Location:** 3017 Orange Grove, St. Croix

**# Served:** over 100 children

**Goals:** To insure that children have stable, permanent homes and that this be accomplished by the Human Services and Court system in the shortest time possible. To insure that the needs of children in the court system are identified and addressed.

**Program Description:** CASA recruits and trains volunteers from the community to become advocates for child victims of abuse and neglect. CASA volunteers monitor government agencies and private service providers to assure that they are fulfilling their obligations to the children and families.

**Evaluation:** There is a difference in the action taken on child abuse and neglect cases when CASA volunteers participate in cases. Children with a CASA volunteer are more likely to have issues identified and addressed while in the system. They are less likely to be faceless numbers or get lost altogether. In CASA's cases there is more emphasis placed on the Department of Human Services to work with the family instead of accepting an easier solution allowing children to remain indefinitely in foster homes.



SILVERBELLS & COCKLESHELLS AWARD, 2002  
**BRONZE AWARD**

**CARABANA ENSEMBLE THEATER CO.**

**Established:** 1993

**Location:** #1 Kingshill Road, Coral Bay, St. John

**# Served:** Variable

**Goals:** To advance the literacy and appreciation of the arts among young people.

**Program Description:** CARABANA conducts arts-in-education workshops geared to young audiences and sponsors a cultural arts summer day camp. CARABANA has opened the only privately funded library in the Caribbean, specifically targeted to the literacy needs of young people. This project serves as a vehicle for young people to borrow books, videos and gain access to the internet. It has initiated a program to assist adults in getting their high school diplomas.

**Evaluation:** Participants in this program have toured elementary schools with theater presentations about the environment and have provided regular performances at the V.I. National Park Amphitheater at Cinnamon Bay Campgrounds. The talents of Virgin Islands emerging playwrights have been successfully showcased in a ten-week play-writing series.



SILVERBELLS & COCKLESHELLS AWARD, 2002

**BRONZE AWARD**

**YOUTH PROGRAMS sponsored by: St. Andrews Episcopal Church**

**Established:** 1992

**Location:** St. Andrews Episcopal Community Center, 1st Avenue, Sugar Estate, St. Thomas

**# Served:** approximately 90

**Goals:** To provide a safe, after-school environment for children between the ages of 5 and 13 years old.

**Program Description:** St. Andrews provides a consortium of youth programs including a steel orchestra, choir, and wind ensemble. After-school tutorial and academic enrichment programs include preparation for PSAT and SAT exams. Opportunities for participants to share their skills are provided through religious programs and recitals on and off-island.

**Evaluation:** In ten years of operation, there has been a marked increase in the number of participants. Members of the music programs have performed locally, on neighboring Caribbean islands, and on the mainland. The after-school program has produced two merit scholars, two valedictorians, one salutatorian and five students who graduated in the top ten of their class. Recently, a student improved SAT scores by 200 points, and proudly attributed that accomplishment to the program.



SILVERBELLS & COCKLESHELLS AWARD, 2002

**BRONZE AWARD**

**JOANNE MATTHEWS-SAUNDERS, Visual and Performing Arts Specialist.**

**Address:** 80V Commandant Gade, Apt. D, St. Thomas, V.I.

**Goals:** To teach children with learning and emotional disabilities, ages 5 to 17, in an inclusive setting which enables academic success by developing positive attitudes and improved communication skills.

**Program Description:** Creative activities are used to train children with various learning and emotional disabilities so that they can improve academic achievements, socially acceptable behavior, and self-esteem. Activities include dance routines featuring “Wheelchair Ballerinas;” musical theater dance routines pairing hearing-impaired and hearing students; creating theater where “human statues” or “moving spirits” allow shy or disfigured children to perform in public in disguise; and organizing a carnival troupe for the V.I. Resource Center for the Disabled Achievers.

**Evaluation:** Students have been successfully mainstreamed into the regular curriculum. Many have won awards in various extra-curricular activities that were previously inaccessible to them because of their behavioral and/or learning difficulties. 98% of participants have been promoted each year.



**SIX SPECIAL COMMENDATIONS:**

**Charlotte Amalie High School BAND BOOSTERS** provides a vehicle for families to become more involved in the lives of their children.

**JUNIOR FIREFIGHTERS CORPS.** assists youth in the development of leadership skills and community service.

**V.I. RESOURCE CENTER FOR THE DISABLED, INC.** provides at-risk youth with access to enhanced instruction and positive experiences.

**GENERATION WWW.Y, (John Woodson Junior High School)** student-teacher collaboration improves student learning and teacher integration of technology in their courses.

**REFORMED CHURCH FUTURE LEADERS PROGRAM** targets 2nd and 3rd graders with academic assistance and positive life skills experiences.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION FITNESS FOR LIFE PROGRAM (Charlotte Amalie High School)** increases the overall physical fitness in the severe and profound special education students through a specialized physical education program.







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**U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS KIDS COUNT DATA BOOK 2002**