

Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands announces new “Hodge Senior Citizen Assistance Fund”

The Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands is pleased to announce the establishment of the Hodge Senior Citizen Assistance Fund from a financial settlement of close to a half-million dollars. This fund at CFVI will be the first dedicated to addressing the needs of senior citizens in the USVI. Ricardo J. Charaf, chairman of CFVI's board explained, "The board and I are thrilled to have a Fund which will enhance the lives of the elderly in the Virgin Islands. We have a deep appreciation of how much we owe these men and women for their lifelong contributions to our islands, and are honored to be in a position to give back to our senior citizens."

The money for the establishment of the Fund is from a court-approved designation of an undistributed portion of a settlement fund paid by Blue Cross in a class action suit brought by named plaintiffs Lawrence Hodge, Gloria Hodge Davis and the late Gerald E. Hodge on behalf of all retired government employees. The suit was filed and handled by Maria Tankenson Hodge and the law firm of Hodge and Francois.

Beneficiaries of the settlement are retired employees of the government of the Virgin Islands, who retired between January 1, 1998 and September 30, 2001, who had healthcare insurance with QCC insurance company ("Blue Cross and Blue Shield of the U.S. Virgin Islands"), and who were age 65 or older during that time. Covered spouses of such retired persons were also eligible to be members of the class.

Most members of the class received checks in 2003 or 2004 for their part of the settlement. However, some persons who were members of the class could not be located or did not cash their checks. For a period of 6 months, any persons who were class members and did not receive their settlement checks will be able to apply to CFVI for payment of their share of the settlement. A short form will be made available for this purpose. On confirmation that you are a class member who was not paid, CFVI will issue your check. Any person who received a check and was unable to cash it, can bring that check to CFVI, complete the short form, and obtain a replacement check.

At the end of the 6 month waiting period, the remaining funds will be put to work through the Hodge Senior Citizen Assistance Fund for the benefit of all Virgin Islands senior citizens, particularly those with medical needs, but also for other good causes in the Virgin Islands.

The Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands was established in 1990. The Foundation has more than 80 funds created by individuals and businesses to support educational, environmental, social and cultural initiatives in the Virgin Islands. CFVI has grants available for community organizations, teachers, scholarships and programs to benefit children, youth and families. For more information, please call 774-6031.

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