

Martha C. Holder
The Valley
Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands

January 15, 2007

To Whom It May Concern,

About a year and a half ago, I met Marianne Larned and was immediately impressed with her dedication to a wonderful mission to inspire and develop leadership skills in young people from under-developed communities so that they will step into full adulthood with the tools, strength and commitment to make a positive contribution in their community and homeland.

I come to you as an educator. My husband and I have been actively involved with education in Virgin Gorda since 1979. We opened the Valley Day School, the island's first private school, under the aegis of Little Dix Hotel management and Mr. Laurence Rockefeller who provided a building for our use. Prior to coming to the island, we developed and ran a large children's center in Colorado for 19 years. In response to the community's request to tutor some students, we developed an after-school program open to all children on Virgin Gorda. The children came and went as their needs were fulfilled; some for a few weeks, or months, and even years.

We learned that the children of Virgin Gorda want to succeed -- they want to be successful. After a full day of school, they walked down to our school near the jetty on St. Thomas Bay and spent another hour and a half in serious, concentrated schoolwork.

The Virgin Gorda Youth Leadership Initiative could be a wonderful addition to the education of our young people. We are very lucky to have a woman with so much experience and expertise offer to share her talents and guidance with our children. The children are more than ready for this leadership program. The British Virgin Islands need these young people in the future as our country continues to address more and more issues as we move forward into the 21st century.

I look forward with hope for this BVI initiative for all of our children.

Most Sincerely,

Martha C. Holder