

# PRESS RELEASE

## Over 250 copies of *The Irma Diaries* Donated to Schools as Read to Heal Launched

On Monday 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2018, Hon. Myron Walwyn, Mrs. Butler - Principal of the Alexandrina Maduro Primary School and Mr. Francis - Principal of the Virgin Islands School of Technical Studies (VISTS) accepted over 250 copies of *The Irma Diaries* that were donated to schools across the Territory during the official launch of *The Irma Diaries' Read to Heal* school programme.

The launch ceremony was held at the Alexandrina Maduro Primary School and was attended by students and faculty of the school and the neighbouring VISTS, representatives of other schools and the Ministry of Education and Culture as well as survivors featured in *The Irma Diaries* and sponsors of the Read to Heal Programme.

In her remarks about Read to Heal, Author of *The Irma Diaries*, Ms. Angela Burnett, explained that the programme is designed to actively bring the book into schools to share its important life lessons, help heal the lingering trauma from Hurricane Irma and to educate about climate change in a very personal way. Burnett further explained that the donated books will be available to students at their school libraries and available for integration into classroom activities and that the programme would be supported by in-class readings and discussions hosted by survivors, reigning Miss World BVI – Miss Yadali Thomas Santos, other community volunteers and herself. She also shared a vision of *The Irma Diaries* eventually forming part of the formal school curriculum so that this important part of our history and its lessons could be preserved through the generations.

During the ceremony, Kais Masson, a student of the VISTS shared an excerpt from Mr. Albert Wheatley's survivor story captured in *The Irma Diaries*. Mr. Wheatley built on the reading, stressing the importance of building more resiliently for the stronger hurricanes we will experience as a result of climate change.

In his remarks expressing thanks for the donation, Hon. Myron Walwyn echoed this theme and spoke to students about their rights and responsibilities as global citizens. He encouraged them to do their part in reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change and ensuring their homes are ready for future hurricanes. Hon. Walwyn also highlighted the importance of food security as a measure of resilience and encouraged the students to be active in their school garden programmes.

Ms. Burnett thanked the several sponsors whose kind donations have made the Read to Heal programme a reality, including BDO, BVI Finance, Carey Olsen, Caribbean Insurers Ltd, Harneys, Hon. Archibald Christian, James Todman Construction, JOMA (Properties) Ltd., LJD VI Block Ltd., Meridian Construction, the National Bank of the Virgin Islands Ltd., Ogier, One Mart Superstore,

Rufred Forbes and Associates (RFA Construction) and Sable Trust. She also announced a personal donation of 28 copies dedicated to her alma mater, the Elmore Stoutt High School.

Persons interested in volunteering to read and host discussions with students under Read to Heal can sign up through *The Irma Diaries'* website: [www.TheIrmaDiaries.com](http://www.TheIrmaDiaries.com).