

March 14, 2011

Contacts: Bruce Claflin  
President, Kids First  
[claflinb@yahoo.com](mailto:claflinb@yahoo.com)

Dee Baecher-Brown  
President, CFVI  
[dbrown@cfvi.net](mailto:dbrown@cfvi.net)

## **KIDS FIRST! AND THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS LAUNCH**

### **“BORN LEARNING TRAIL” PROGRAM**

Kids First! and the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands (CFVI) have launched the **Born Learning Trail** program on St. John. This program consists of portable signs that will be displayed across St. John which promote the importance of creating a fun, learning environment in the home by giving information on how to turn everyday activities into enjoyable educational experiences for your children. The signs also provide links to a web site which offers many more tips and techniques on how to start children learning from the day they are born. This Born Learning program was originally launched by CFVI in 2008. Today there are 3 permanent Born Learning Trails on St. Thomas, and a portable trail on St. Croix, St. Thomas... and now, on St. John! Working with CFVI, Kids First! has sponsored the St. John Born Learning Trail which can be displayed wherever parents congregate on St. John.

The idea behind the program is simple but profound--children are born *ready to learn*. In fact, the most important learning years in a person's life are from birth until age 5. If during this time, children are stimulated in positive ways, particularly in their home, they will more fully develop all their skills at a far greater rate than would otherwise be the case. Many parents aren't aware of how important learning is during these years and many don't know how to take advantage of this fact. The Born Learning Trail signs and supporting web site help parents develop their skills as teachers of their children.

Commenting on this announcement, Bruce Claflin, President of Kids First! said “Kids First! wants to positively impact the development of our island's children. Over the 3 years we have been operating, most of our efforts have gone into support for early learning programs in quality pre-schools. We have more recently supported good health care for children and child development experiences during the summer months when school is out. This is our first effort to support parents and children in the home. Leveraging the success CFVI has had on St. Thomas and St. Croix supporting child development in the home, we have brought one of their programs to St. John”.

Dee Baecher Brown, President of CFVI said “We are thrilled to have Kids First! as a partner on St. John in the Community Foundation's efforts to support parents and child care providers and to enhance the early childhood experience of all Virgin Islands Children.”

St. John Born Learning Trail Signs have already been displayed at the St. John Montessori School, Guy Benjamin School, and Julius Sprauve School. They will be on display at The Marketplace on Saturday, March 19 and will be shown at many island locations where parents work, shop and play.

About Kids First!—Kids First! is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation registered in the Virgin Islands. Its mission is to provide support so that all the children of St. John can have a quality education in a safe and nurturing environment. To learn more please go to [www.kidsfirststj.org](http://www.kidsfirststj.org)

About CFVI-- The Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands was established in 1990 with a \$540,000 endowment and today has more than \$7 million in assets. In 2010, CFVI provided \$2 million in grants, awards and scholarships across St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John and Water Island. CFVI manages more than 100 named funds, administers scholarships and award programs, and coordinates the establishment of memorial funds. One of CFVI's most important initiatives is The Family Connection, an effort to enhance the early childhood environment in the USVI. For additional information about CFVI phone 774-6031 or visit the website at [www.cfvi.net](http://www.cfvi.net)