

>> Good day, this is Ability Radio bringing to you news and information not only relevant to the disability community but to the entire community.

We want to make sure that you are plugged into this is Mental Health Awareness Month, and we want to highlight issues regarding mental health illness as well as just general health issues relevant to this community.

One of the aspects of having good mental health is having outlets and ways to calm oneself and be connected to your community.

One of the biggest things I've found to making those connections through music is with The Forum, which holds not only musical events but movies as well brought to the community.

We have today with us Niccole Parsons, who is the President/CEO, I guess, of The Forum, Inc., as well as another organization relevant to the Virgin Islands community. So good morning, good day, Nicole Parsons.

How are you?

>> Hi, good morning, Mr.

Jennings.

I am doing well, and thank you for inviting me on your show.

That is really an honor.

>> Well, thank you for having us.

We've made a good connection.

Do you want to explain what is happening next week that this connection took place?

>> Yes, so a quick correction.

I'm the Executive Director of The Forum; that's a nonprofit on St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

Then I'm the CEO of United Jazz Foundation, which does music education. So one is music education, and The Forum is focused on performances and presentations.

>> Good to know.

>> Yes, and no "s" on the Parson (laughing).

>> Okay.

>> That is always a family thing.

It's all family though.

It's all great.

>> Great, great.

>> Yes.

>> And what's happening with The Forum next week?

>> Yes, so we actually started last week.

In May, we typically have our Film Festival.

In the Film Festival, we always try to focus on documentary films and films that we can screen that make sense for the community but also make sense from the perspective of enrichment. So we like to bring subjects that you normally maybe would not maybe choose directly; or maybe you do, but you don't see it on the big screen.

Because these days a lot of material is already available before May of this year, but then we still choose to show it because we think it's a great community effort to see it with a group of people who are really interested in it to see that

movie or that documentary film on a bigger screen and that we then can expand on it, on the subject.

So last week we had Summer of Soul, which is the documentary film about the Harlem festival in 1969 that they found material on.

Then also we had a Q&A with the producers of the documentary film.

So, yes, you can already get it on Amazon (laughing).

You can see it at home.

But because we have the connections, we can then bring in producers and talk a little bit more about the context than just seeing a movie.

So that's what we're doing in May.

Tonight we actually have a - I'm sorry, we also on May 11, we have Writing with Fire, which is also about change and about diversity.

It's just more on the Indian community site, where you have the (inaudible) system; and this is a lower class that works itself to a better life functioning in their community through new technology.

They started already their own broadcasting station - or actually a newspaper, and now it's gone viral.

But why we're here it's very exciting that next week, Wednesday, at 7:00 p.m.,

we are screening CODA, which is a really interesting movie.

It's a film about this young lady that grows up in a family of disability.

So her parents are deaf.

She's not, her brother as well.

And she tries to find her way towards her passion of music and build her future without letting her family down.

So that is also a very interesting subject because normally we see those movies and we think, "Oh, nice," without knowing what else comes with it.

It's not just a movie of a girl that works herself through her puberty and then through her goals, but it entails so much more; and it really showcases the domino effect emotionally if you're living in a certain environment.

>> And for the listening audience, CODA stands for Children of Deaf Adults.

>> Oh, right.

>> And this is a very critical aspect that I had contacted Ms.

Parson with regard to the VI Deaf and Hard of Hearing Association being a part of the presentation because what is depicted in the film really hits home for a lot of children here in the Virgin Islands who basically become the spokesperson and intermediary between their parents and the outside world since the parents are deaf.

And interacting as a deaf person in the Virgin Islands -- not easy on many respects.

What we hope to have is that discussion there at that time from the deaf community itself.

Is this a first time kind of event for having persons with disabilities come to the Forum?

>> Well, I must honestly say we always try to reach out or see how we can accommodate.

Interestingly enough, there was a lady that came to me when we started in March and February - no, sorry, March and April --

we had around the Met Opera but also around a live performance.

The Met Opera has a screening of the Met Opera in New York.

We started to have children's events.

So the Met Opera, for instance, we showcased that earlier in the day so that people with little kids can come

and see it.

Now, it was brought to my attention - which I felt really not ashamed, but I just didn't think of it before.

A lady stepped to me and said, "Well, this is such a wonderful event because my child has a disability.

I can actually," and it was an adult child - it was an adult -- "I can come to these performances and these events because it's really connected with him."

She was asking, "Can I bring more people with me that I'm connected with?"

I said, "Well, of course."

So then the next time, she was able to bring more people.

So when you reach out to us to see According to CODA how we can accommodate people with hearing disabilities or challenges, I

was actually double-thrilled and honored because after CODA, which is really essential and which I am very honored that we

can present the deaf and hearing challenged community of the Virgin Islands so we build understanding for the broader

community - very happy to work more.

>> All right, and we'll certainly work hard to make more come about.

>> Exactly.

>> This is the first time we're going to have to take a short break with regard to getting information out to the community

and complying with the standards of our radio broadcast.

So we're going to come back in a minute.

This is Ability Radio.

>> Welcome back to Ability Radio.

We have a lively show this morning - today rather - with regard to The Forum and community outreach and making

certain connections within the community for not only the entire community but the persons with disabilities as well.

One thing about CODA - I think Hollywood tried a couple other movies - one was Quiet.

This is not a horror movie.

>> No.

>> People are not involved in a horror situation.

That's the first thing I think really rang true for this movie for me - that it presented a more realistic vision of a

family who works in the community and that they are deaf and have employment; they have their own issues; and it's a

family situation that's replicated in every community in the United States and here in the Virgin Islands.

But one of the things that we really don't realize, the deaf community also has its own mental health issues; and the

biggest problem, which I saw from the very beginning many, many years, was that what kind of therapy is given within the United States, it's called "talk therapy."

So one of the biggest barriers for the deaf and persons who are hard of hearing is that therapists who have sign language skills that could assist them are very few and far between. I think that this movie sort of highlights that when they are under stress, it sort of, I guess, bores itself into almost the situation where it blows up within the family.

Also this month, I want to bring to the attention that we just got confirmation from the governor for Mental Health Month 2022, where he says, "As amended here, I proclaim the month of May as Mental Health Month.

I call upon citizens, government agencies, public and private institutions, businesses, and schools to recommit our community to increasing awareness and understanding of mental illness, reducing stigma and discrimination, and promoting appropriate and accessible services for all people with mental illness."

One of the biggest things that I ever use to, I guess, replug or relax is jazz music.

That's where Dion Parson comes in.

From my college days on, that was one of the issues where in a stressful situation, I put on a jazz album and zone out and be right out again.

How many times do other people say that to you as well?

>> Besides other people, I can definitely relate to that as well.

There's this one CD from John Coltrane that is a ballot.

There's one CD with all ballots.

Well, I can tell everybody who don't feel that well, put that on and that will definitely work.

Going back to where you started, congratulations on the recognition of the governor.

I think that's essential for the work you're doing and very important. A lot of things that I in my life encounter towards disability and also hear people talking about it is, one, for deaf people it's a challenge because you cannot see it, right?

People are not always aware of what the challenges are when you really don't hear.

In that concept, it's not sad in the sense that we always think that we need to adjust emotionally; so there's a lot of humor.

I remember (inaudible) didn't want to make jokes about deaf people, and the deaf people were like, "Why not, we make joke ourselves."

>> Right, right.

>> And then this is the serious side of how we can make more adjustments to help the whole community be participating in whatever we're bringing at The Forum to the people.

So I am really, again, honored that you connected; and The Forum is 100% in also now, next week, with CODA that we're bringing something extra to the table.

But for future performances as well, however we can accommodate, we definitely would like to build that relationship.

>> Yes, and on reaching out to the entire community, especially those who are professionals and provide services, come to this movie so that you can have a better understanding of the circumstances in which the deaf community tries to reach out.

One of the things that's brought up is that many times because they can't express mood or internal feelings, many people see their hand movements - while many sign, not very many read lips - as some sort of attack or erratic behavior. So a lot of times they're misinterpreted when they're trying to communicate to a hearing person.

Therefore, there's always that aspect - not only the stigma but the lack of empathy for persons unless they understand this person's deaf or hard of hearing.

So hopefully we can convey that message to the entire community and have more interaction.

Again, at the meeting itself, at the movie, let the persons from the deaf community express themselves and hopefully get some interaction from the community.

Have them ask questions about how things are handled and what else can be done.

One of the things I showed them last night was the new airport.

There's a video showing a new rendition of the upcoming airport, which have jet bridges; but on the inside, they don't show any visual information screens.

So that's one of the questions because if you go to the airport right now, all information is verbal by sound; but that doesn't help the deaf person navigate through the airport if they only are supposed to hear it.

So they have to travel with someone at the present time in order to navigate through at least the airport here in the Virgin Islands.

So one of those things is trying to sort of pick those things out and get those obstacles and barriers removed.

>> Yeah, and I think it's a great opportunity for community members on next Wednesday, May 18th, when we have the deaf community on the stage talking and explaining or showcasing how they have their challenges and what this movie means to them and having an interpreter there so that people really can see if they have a question it really needs to go through an interpreter, right?

>> Right.

>> Or if there's an answer, it really needs to go through it.

Sometimes because we know people can move, they think they can at one point hear something --; but total silence.

And I think in the movie they gave great examples.

There's a segment that is totally silent because you're not hearing, so you're experiencing what a not-hearing person actually experiences.

>> That's what really captured me as well.

>> Yes, and it is something definite.

Sometimes for us hearing people, it's very hard to grasp that it is indefinite.

It's not something you can turn on and off or you hear a little bit.

It's just not there, and I hope we can get that message across so that it is not just something that passes by and then you move on.

But if there is no sign, you really cannot practice, right?

>> Right, one of my awakenings in working with the deaf community, after some of our meetings they would go dancing down at (inaudible).

And I went by and I saw them.

I went in there, and then they told me they can feel.

They cannot hear, but they can feel the vibrations.

>> Yes.

>> So a lot of times, I don't think we understand that when you see them in the movements, it may seem erratic to us.

But they would go dancing after the deaf and hard of hearing movie.

I think that was a way to keep my office in (inaudible) because they could go dancing after.

So that was a plus, to have the meetings here at the office.

So again, they know how to enjoy life.

They take things in stride, and they're good examples of very upbeat, positive people.

A lot of people don't get to really know or understand that aspect.

Any other movies besides those two that are coming up with The Forum?

>> Well, CODA is actually our last movie.

>> Okay.

>> So we had Summer of Soul and we had Writing with Fire, and they all were about deaf persons.

So that was really our theme for this month.

>> Correct.

>> But diversity and uplifting ways -- It's the same as just saying CODA is not a movie or a film focused on being depressed about your situation, but really like how can we work through it and respect each other from both ends - from the not-hearing and from the hearing end.

I think that was the main reason why we chose the movie - because it was real.

>> Okay.

>> It's the real example of both angles.

Like it gives the angle of how it is for the deaf people and how they get into their way of living but also for the hearing

people, how they're (inaudible) sat next to each other and how to (inaudible) and how to make yourself available but also how to survive.

>> Correct, right, also I didn't realize - I think my daughter told me - it won a couple of Oscars.

>> Yes!

It actually won the Oscar for Best Documentary Film.

>> I see.

>> Yep, they won it; so that is great.

The other one, Writing with Fire, was a nominee.

So they were (inaudible) against each other; so we made some good choices, I think.

>> And I think the male lead was deaf.

Didn't he win a personal Oscar?

>> Yeah, they won a personal Oscar as well, correct.

But that's also - what they said was how he brought the emotion into the film, that was the treat.

That was the extra treat in the film -- is that even if you cannot relate by not hearing, the way he is presenting himself is very relatable and real.

That's what we understood from the deaf community - that that's how it is.

>> Right, right, and the evolving issue with regard to deafness and the technology that's coming in.

Sometimes it's - I hope they go into that as well.

I don't know if they will.

Within the deaf community, those who have cochlear implants and those who remain deaf their entire life, parents have to make that decision for that child.

So that's also some issues within the community as well.

So hopefully this will bring a lot of awareness to the community and getting into some of the issues.

Because one of the pleas, they're going to ask for more professionals to stand up and at least come forward to make sure their offices and their locations have interpreters, or people may be inspired to become interpreters themselves so we increase the number available here where there's a shortage across the United States as well.

But that's a very big aspect of being here in the Virgin Islands and not having enough interpreters.

The only time we had adequate interpreters was after the hurricane.

>> Wow!

>> There were teams of interpreters who came through and built a very deep relationship with the community here.

That's another aspect of living in a community and making sure you can communicate and have those services available on an equal basis, or as near equal as possible.

>> How many interpreters are there in the territory?

>> That's always a good question (laughing).

>> Yeah.

>> We're going to go ahead and take a break right now.

We're going to come back, and then let's go into the issue of your second nonprofit with regard to education.

Again, this is Ability Radio here with Niccole Parson.

Coming back at you in a minute.

>> Welcome back to Ability Radio.

Again, as always, if you missed any portion of this show, you can always catch it on our website, www.DRCVI.org.

We have a lot of other relevant information for a lot of issues - be it education, be it health, be it relatives needing health care.

So check out our website for resources not only available here in the Virgin Islands, but we are affiliated with Cornell University, Northeast ADA Center as an affiliate.

If we don't have information available, we can redirect you to the 800 number on the website to contact Cornell directly.

Lots of resources through that university, and it's part of the national network of ADA Centers.

Again, welcome back with Niccole Parson and getting down to the downbeat with Dion Parson.

What's happening on that music side?

>> Oh my goodness, there's a lot happening.

There's a lot happening.

One of the things for the people that don't know Dion is Dion Parson was born and raised on St.

Thomas, went to college.

Always during his college and after it, always came back a couple of times a year to work with students in the school because it takes a village to raise a child.

>> Yes.

>> And he was privileged to have people in his life that really made a difference.

That's why he could go to college.

Besides his mother and his sisters, who was very instrumental, he had then directors that were very helpful

to plow through all the emotions and all the other things that are just in a teenagers life to make it here to the Mainland.

One of the things that he struggled with, since we're talking about mental health awareness, is once he went to

college that first year, that was so intense because the difference between things here and going to a university where

there are thousands of people and you have kids that have been growing up in big cities with all the access in the world, here you come.

Especially in his time, in the '80s, you didn't have Internet like that; you didn't have Google like that.

So that was a lot to go and run into, but news from the very crushing things that you don't know.

The emotional change you don't know either.

So after he plowed through that, he was determined, like, "Okay, I'm going to travel the world first and make my name;

and then I'm going to make sure along the way that I always give back to my community and give the younger people that are coming behind me - the one person or more of them - the chance to learn from the struggles I had."

Everybody should be allowed at the buffet.

He's a big guy and knows what he's doing.

Yes, he knows what he's doing now.

It was a little different back then.

That's the growth throughout the years.

At one point in his career, he was always teaching around the world.

Then in New York, he came and encountered the students that he taught to make it in the music scene, which made him even more

aware of his passion but also his role in life and for his own community.

He was like, "As I see these people that are teaching all around the world and they make it, I want to see my own people

in New York and make it if I have the ability to teach like that to make it a better - put it to use (inaudible)."

So that was his determination, one of always coming back.

So he did it over the years but really moved back home and invests here.

That was his major decision.

It was like this is the time in my life.

My purpose is to really build my community and give them the gift of music by sharing my knowledge.

Of course it's already a very useful community; and, yes, everybody loves music in certain ways and there are all different tiers.

But they really want to make it around the world.

Music education is a very important part, and not every music performer is an educator; and he is blessed on both sides

- of being a performer and also a great educator.

>> Oh, okay.

>> Seeing that result between his 20th and 40 years old, that he was actually good at it, that made him decide to come back

home and teach the kids -- teach the kids the things you need as a student, you need to know, and the basics of music and music education to be able to make it or pursue your dream.

And it doesn't have to be in music because the beautiful thing that music is that it triggers so many parts of the

brain that it helps you with all other aspects of your curriculum and of your other subjects, like math and reading and writing,

but also socially because you need to be able to function in a group and to be able to hear your critique, build up on the

critique, and move forward.

So there's a lot of aspects with music and music education that are being challenged for young people, which is great

because one of the biggest talents besides performing is that he has the ability to teach the whole person.

Not always easy if you are that person (laughing) because he will teach you as a whole person.

So a lot of people can be like, "Yeah, I just want to know the skill and whatever.

I don't need you to tell me how to set up my drums or how I need to put my paper in my folder."

You know what I mean?

>> Right, right.

>> But it's the whole package.

>> Well, tell us about how that coordinates with your skill background and what you did for a number of years in Special

Education.

>> Yes, so now besides personal (inaudible) because we're married, but professionally it was a great match because in the

Netherlands, I worked for the Department of Education my whole professional life in the Netherlands.

I was 37 when I moved.

But between my 20th and 35, I worked the first ten years purely Special Education and Special Ed focused on children

with disabilities; but nobody really knew what the disability of that particular child was.

So these are kids, K through 12 - no, sorry, I must say K through 8 that are having challenges of not being

understood for the first couple of years of their life.

So there are all kinds of other aspects of the disability and the mental state that were caused because they were not

understood.

So that's what I did my first ten years in an observation setting. So in about two-three years observation setting looking at the child, working with a group of children in classroom settings - but not more than ten - to really work out with an institution that is connected to it what each individual issue really is and then get the right care for them. That's actually my biggest passion.

I can do it tomorrow, I guess; but it is also very intense.

>> Right.

>> So after that, I devoted my time to make and to focus on developing curriculum for any particular child.

So then it was a lot for children on the spectrum.

That means now autism-related issues - so having general curriculum so that they can learn and have a safe environment in any context.

It can be in a regular classroom; it can be at home.

So it's focused on that core work, a couple of years on that aspect, including ADHD and topics for ADHD and kids that were on the spectrum.

Then from there, it really developed into building - using certain knowledge that is there to really move that brain development - specifically, what are the subjects in the world that are out there that are really stimulating the brain in a positive way to make more connections than are actually there.

Especially with kids on the spectrum, that's a very interesting part because it's a communication issue, right?

So when I met Dion, it was really interesting because he developed a profession to use music and music education to give children in his own community the chance to build a bridge to the rest of the world in any subject - if you want to pursue music or if you want to use music as an extra curriculum so you get your scholarships because that's what they look at, at colleges of course.

So between his knowledge as a great music educator and for me my knowledge in developing a curriculum specifically to get kids to another level - not general like the reading or the writing, but really go a little deeper.

That made us decide we can do this because we know, and you know from your angle of work, the Virgin Islands is a challenging community.

There are a lot of aspects - there's a lot of mental health aspects.

There's a lot of underlying challenges that these young people have - if it is because of the silence, it's because of the challenges of access that they have or not.

Now we have the hurricanes and then on top of it the pandemic.

So that made us really decide specifically this is what we're doing now and being here.

We're not coming in and out; we're just here to build this community.

>> For the listening audience, do you want to explain what ADHD is and the spectrum - for those who don't understand the language yet.

>> Yes, so the interesting part is if I start with ADHD because people have a common sense of it, but if we go back in the

days, it was actually called MBD, minimal brain dysfunction. That's how they called it in the past, and that was all children that are either more - it sounds really not nice - but more restless; and they have more of a challenge in focusing on the work that they have in front of them.

And that, over time, develops into different sections with us. MBD, minimal brain dysfunction, was so broad that you had people that could perfectly function in society but only had an issue with focusing on the work in front of them.

So they made categories; and ADHD is one category that came out of that, which is really standing for - it's a challenge in focusing and getting control over your own thoughts and also over your own reactions.

So you're more reactive than proactive.

So you hear a sound and you go that way.

>> Right, right.

>> And, yes, the school systems back in the days - because everybody is like, why do we hear more about ADHD these days?

Back in the days, school systems were very rigid.

You sit in your chair; it's very structured, and you listen to your teacher because they have also a ruler or you get your behind or whatever if you don't listen.

So for ADHD kids that's perfect, right?

No, it's not perfect in the sense of where we are in this day and age; but it is a structure.

So they could function.

So why do we see more kids that people are talking about?

Well, he's challenged because he has ADHD.

It also comes because classrooms are more broad.

They're more open; they have more movement - so, yes, more challenging for kids that are just more reactive than proactive.

That is the ADHD side.

We have different tiers in that as well, which makes each child unique.

It's why you cannot really have one common thing.

You can only say they're all reactive (laughing).

That's the only common thing you can say about the ADHD.

Then if we look at the spectrum, of course for me it was very interesting because it was just in the time that people started to be more diverse with autism.

I'm talking back in the beginning of the 1990s.

They start to look more and have more research of, hey, wait a minute, there's not just autism.

There are aspects of autism.

Autism is a communication disorder.

So people that are autistic live more in their heads than out.

So it's very hard for them to communicate.

Sometimes people say it's a communication disorder.

They don't like to look at you straight.

There are all kinds of fears that come with it.

Some are born with it, and some actually get it at a very young age out of a very distressed moment in life.

Sometimes people think that you always need to be born with it, but it can also come if you're sensitive for it when

you're in a very distressed moment when you're two and three years old that you literally turn back in.

>> Oh, okay.

>> So I am talking about that group mostly - not that it's always stressed.

But they turn back in instead of back out.

That's how they see the world because you're shutting yourself off because of that distressed moment.

So those are the two main categories of autism - by birth or in a very stressed moment that everything blew up inside and made the choice to shut off the world.

Now, the spectrum is all kinds of shades of autism.

So you have on a gray scale - from black to very light gray -- that's how it is with the spectrum.

You have all these shades of autism, but it's not autism; it's an autism-related disorder.

So it can be kids that really can look you in the eye - so they don't have that (inaudible); they can talk to you.

But they have certain fears that are based off of autism, and it's not a regular fear.

Because for people who don't have it, a lot of those fears don't make sense, like why are you scared of that or why are you...?"

So there are a lot of elements to it, and every child is unique with it. But it's very hard for parents and very difficult for parents.

I mean on a spectrum, I think I can honestly say out of my experience of the last 20 years or 25 - time goes by so fast - I can honestly say that this is the most difficult group for parents because your spouse cannot understand it and your family cannot understand it.

So it's a challenging part, which we'll talk about later.

>> Okay, well, one question with regard to autism and the spectrum, hasn't that information grown from like the '80s?

>> Yes.

>> Because now when I first started in the legal business, it was like 1 in 1,500 kids had autism.

When I was in law school, I lived with a Special Ed teacher who was teaching those areas.

Then by the time I got to here in the Virgin Islands, 10-15 years later, it was like 1 in 77 came with autism spectrum.

What changed in those few years?

Was it the more testing, or what gave way to the increase in numbers?

>> Well, the increasing numbers came about with more knowledge; that's one.

We have a huge group in mental health in general - on not only the spectrum - that 50-60 years ago we always would say, oh, that's typical such and such in the middle small towns, and they do their own thing.

So knowledge is one.

So there was more research; so they're seeing and they're understanding more the diversity within the spectrum, which is

great because 50% of the spectrum kids were easily put on a pile of autism and put aside.

So with the more research and the more knowledge also came more options for these kids to be functioning in a regular environment with extra help.

The other challenging part though I must say is that society changed. Jobs are more complicated.

There's more elements to different jobs - like the diversity in that sense exploded, which also shows more of the challenges certain people have.

Because if you're all in this little town, every day from nine to five go the same factory and you go back home, there's only a certain part of your skills that you're using that day.

Well, now with new technology and with society being more complicated, more connected, more based on community than on doing things with your hands, it all of a sudden shows way more because now you that normally would maybe walk to even a university and do research in a lab and go back home, now all of a sudden it is communicated way more with different elements than back in the days.

So it's not that it's only the factory worker - no, it's the person in the laboratory or the person that is teaching this high chemical class that could stand there and just generate its knowledge.

But these days, you need to more interact for your teaching.

So all subjects and all professions got just way more complicated.

>> I see, yeah.

>> And that's why it got more important to look at the challenges -- so that there can be adjustments and there can be certain people that can help you.

Now, the flip side on a very honest note is we as human beings always like to overexaggerate.

So there's also some elements to it that we normally would have left certain people or kids alone that we're now focused on.

>> All right, well, we're going to have to take a short break here.

Again, this is Ability Radio here with Niccole Parson; and we'll get right back to you.

>> Again, welcome back.

This is Ability Radio and Niccole Parson.

You gave us a lot of information on two different subjects, but I think I want you to wrap up and advertise about

the movie as well as any contact information for those who may want to attend that's coming up not only tonight but next week -

what, Wednesday - as well?

>> Yes, the Film Festival is every Wednesday in May - or three Wednesdays in May.

So CODA will be May 18th starting at the Prior-Jollek Hall at 7:00 p.m.

The courtyard will be open for small meals and beverages and dessert from Amalia Café.

You can sign up/get your tickets online, which I prefer because with COVID we don't like the interaction with cards and

money that much.

You can go to The Forum - Promotix, and then you see it right there.

It's an online ticketing system, and they have more information about CODA as well.

Or you can always send us an email at TheForumUSVI@gmail.com or look at my Facebook site -- because we're having some challenges with The Forum Facebook site -- which is

Niccole Parson.

>> Okay, and any information about your music program that you wanted to--?

>> Yes, so we're working hard thanks to Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory.

We had some challenges between the hurricanes and COVID, but we could start back up our programs last January.

So students are gearing up to perform later this month.

Because of COVID, it's a private party or setting - so with parents and some of our sponsors.

But after the summer, we are in full force; so please reach out if you're child likes music and is in need of music education.

We're launching our website by the end of the month where you also click and get your teaching parts as educators but also as community members.

If you want to learn an instrument or you want to know more, you can definitely contact us.

One quick thing related to what we spoke about before with the kids on the spectrum and also ADHD, music - music, music, music, is so important for both categories.

A lot of the settings that are worked in, we use music to get the brain focused on certain things but also to calm the brain down.

So music therapy is definitely one of the things we want to explore; and once our programs are all set for the fall, we would love to work with your foundation and your organization to advance towards the disability rights.

>> Okay, well, thank you very much, Niccole.

This has been a great show.

Don't forget, everybody, to check it out at TheForum@Antilles and go online for the tickets.

Again, this is Ability Radio.

Come back at you next week and enjoy the good weather that we have before we go into hurricane season.

Take care.

>> Yes, and thank you for having us, thank you so much.

>> Thank you.