

Jeffrey Epstein, Education Philanthropist, Funds the First Head Start Program in the Caribbean

The Jeffrey Epstein VI Foundation has provided needed funds to Lutheran Social Services (LSS) of the USVI, which launched the first Head Start program for young children in the Caribbean. Head Start is a long standing federal program enacted by Congress in 1981, to advance the education of young children during their formative years leading up to kindergarten.

Founded in 2000 by Jeffrey Epstein, the Jeffrey Epstein VI Foundation has its roots in supporting science research around the world but has since expanded into education and youth initiatives across the US Virgin Islands.

The success of Head Start caught the attention of LSS which is located on the island of St. Croix in Frederiksted. LSS is the oldest known charitable entity for children in the US Virgin Islands. Founded in 1904 by Crown Princess Louise of Denmark, to combat infant mortality, it expanded in 1917 to three buildings, and included an orphanage for girls. In 1967, the Queen Louise Homes were transferred to a local board of directors and became known as Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands.

Today, LSS provides houses for the disabled, the elderly and orphanages for abandoned, neglected and abused children. Their education program for children is remarkable and stands as a role model for the rest of the Caribbean. Started in 2003, their Center-Based Program of Early Head Start serves the younger children that are housed there as well as low income children in Frederiksted. Classrooms focus on encouraging each child's individual development. With an emphasis on manipulatives, as well as visual and audio stimuli, and an emphasis on guided but independent discovery, the program seeks to develop cognitive, physical, creative, social and emotional needs. The program also assists parents with skills to support their child's growth. LSS also provides a vast outreach Head Start program, encouraging each child's development in their own homes. The Early Head Start Program works in partnership with the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health.

In addition to their education program, the Early Head Start staff provides free child day care, health coordination, family education, special social services and pre and post natal support.

“Lutheran Social Services’ Head Start program is a critical example of how early development dramatically, if not physiologically stimulates a child’s mind for a lifetime of motivation and achievement.” Jeffrey Epstein remarked. Jeffrey Epstein is a former member of Rockefeller University, the New York Academy of Science, the Trilateral Commission, the Council on Foreign Relations and sits on the board of the Mind, Brain and Behavior Committee at Harvard University.