



A Passionate Advocate

First lady launches inaugural CHADD support groups in the Virgin Islands

by Karen Sampson, MA

Two of the newest CHADD support groups have an unusual, but passionate, founder. Cecile deJongh, first lady of the U.S. Virgin Islands, decided with her husband's election as governor that she would help improve the lives of Virgin Islanders affected by attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.



Prominent at the first CHADD support group meetings in the Virgin Islands were, from left to right, Vivian Fludd, Commissioner of Health; Chris Finch, Commissioner of Human Services; Lynn Spampinato, Acting Commissioner of Education; Anne Teeter Ellison, President of CHADD; Governor John deJongh, Jr.; and Cecile deJongh, First Lady.

Karen Sampson, MA, the communications manager of CHADD, is assistant editor of Attention magazine.

"When I was first interviewed after my husband's inauguration I said this was my goal," deJongh said, "to raise awareness through a CHADD support group."

Nine months later, she accomplished that goal. CHADD President Anne Teeter Ellison, EdD, joined deJongh, Governor John deJongh Jr., and the territory's commissioners of health, education and human services on September 26 and 27, 2007, for the first meetings of CHADD support groups on the islands of St. Croix and St. Thomas.

"It was such a powerful meeting because you have the governor and first lady making a commitment to their citizens that they were going to address the problem of AD/HD and do it in a coordinated fashion," Ellison said. "I kept telling the audience and the first lady that this is remarkable."