



**ROYAL ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES POLICE FORCE
Public Relations and Complaints Department**

P.O. Box 835

Kingstown

Tel: (01-784) 485-6891 or (01-784) 485-6697 Fax: (01-784) 456-2816

E-mail: relations.complaints@gmail.com

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PRESS RELEASE

RSVGPF DONATES SOCCER BALLS TO HIS MAJESTY'S PRISON

May 01, 2023, Kingstown – The participants and organizers of the Prison's Behind the Walls Five-a-side Street Soccer Tournament were the beneficiaries of six (6) new soccer balls. On Friday 28th April 2023, the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Colin John gifted the balls to the Acting Superintendent of Prison, Mr. Dwayne Bailey at the Prison compound in Kingstown. The donation was witnessed by Retired Station Sergeant of Police, Mr. Meldon James, who is the founder of the aforementioned soccer tournament.

In his brief remarks at the event, the Commissioner of Police praised the initiative between His Majesty's Prison and Mr. Meldon James to assist in the rehabilitation of the inmates at the Prison. "The Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force (RSVGPF) is happy to collaborate with the Superintendent of His Majesty's Prison and Former Station Sergeant Meldon James in making sure that the football programme is a success. It was a very good initiative by Mr. James to have started the programme. As part of our

assistance to the programme, the RSVGPF solicited six (6) soccer balls from a friend of the police who wish to remain anonymous”, said Commissioner John. The Commissioner further stated “Rehabilitation is a part of the sentencing aim and this football programme is very much in sync with the rehabilitation of offenders. The RSVGPF hopes that this programme would help to reduce the recidivism levels among inmates at His Majesty’s Prison and that they would utilize their time while serving their sentence in a meaningful way.”

The Acting Superintendent of Prisons thanked the Commissioner of Police for the donation. “This would assist to provide more recreation for the inmates and give them an excellent form of exercise. Presently, a football competition is ongoing at the Belle Isle Correctional Facility, which would be extended to the prison in Kingstown. So the balls are very timely”, said Mr. Bailey.

Retired Station Sergeant of Police, Mr. Meldon James gave an overview of the programme. “While prosecuting cases in the Serious Offences Court, I noticed that most of the persons who appeared before the court were repeat offenders. This made me think about what I could have done to minimize the problem. In 2015, I started with a bible distribution programme in the prisons because it was my dream that every prisoner being discharged should leave with a bible.”

Mr. James remarked that in 2018, he started a Street Soccer Rehabilitation programme at His Majesty’s Prison called Behind the Walls Five-a-side Street Soccer Tournament. The tournament’s theme is “Free on the Inside –It’s a mind thing while the motto is “Don’t waste time while doing time.” According to Mr. James, one of the exciting features of the tournament is a friendly game between the inmates and a police team.

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