



# St. Croix Avis



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A group of ladies discuss change in women's equality Wednesday at the Cormorant Beach Club during a women's seminar.

## Women talk empowerment at Cormorant Beach Club

MICHAEL NISSMAN

ST. CROIX — Helenita Scotland-Crosby took the day off from work Wednesday to come to a workshop she holds close to heart.

Scotland-Crosby took ill nearly five years ago during her pregnancy. After six months of being pregnant, she bled tremendously for unknown reasons. Due to the severity of her illness, she had to be flown to St. Thomas, where her son was born.

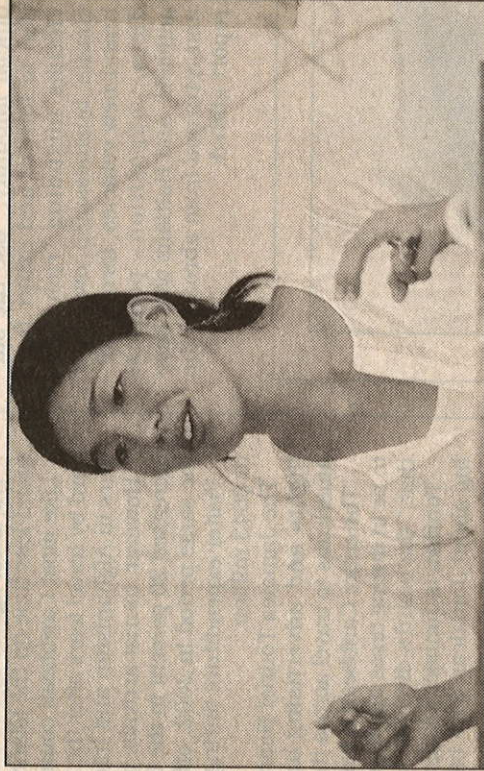
Saturday will make her son's fifth birthday. It is also the reason she joined more than 50 other women gathered at the Virgin Islands Women of Color: Path to Health Justice initiative workshop at the Cormorant Beach Club.

"I found out about inequalities," Scotland-Crosby said.

Scotland-Crosby was referring to the difference between the Juan Luis Hospital in St. Croix and the Roy L. Schneider Hospital in St. Thomas. Although JLH has made significant strides to become better, St. Thomas still has the better end of the stick, according to Scotland-Crosby.

Scotland-Crosby was joined by numerous women of different backgrounds who came to gain personal development and self-esteem skills. The groups also discussed how everyday problems can be changed to benefit the individual and their family.

"These problems are real," Aijen Poo said. Poo, a New York resident, is involved in the Committee



Aijen Poo of the Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence, Inc. speaks to a group of women Wednesday at the Cormorant Beach Club during a women's seminar.

Against Anti-Asian Violence Inc. and was the guest speaker at the workshop. Poo was invited by the Virgin Islands Perinatal, Inc., which is funded by a Ford Foundation grant.

"The goal is to understand how change is possible," Poo said. "The women in this room are extremely powerful."

Poo challenged the women to look for the community's problems and to do what they can to change them.

Barbara Lee Jackson, the Virgin Island's perinatal executive director, told The Avis that women have to take charge if reform is to take place.

"Basically, this is the first in a series of training for women in the Virgin Islands to assume their leadership roles in the communi-

ty, to give it the guidance and direction that we need to make this community a whole," Jackson said.

"Women can come and participate, bring their ideas, bring their energy, and their time and commitment. And we can make the changes happen."

One of the women's main concerns was health care.

"Women deserve access to good health care, quality health care, consistent health care and respectful health care," Jackson said.

Scotland-Crosby said, "Whatever it is that we need to do to change to support the women, to make them have a better outcome, in terms of birth, needs to be done. That's why we're here."