

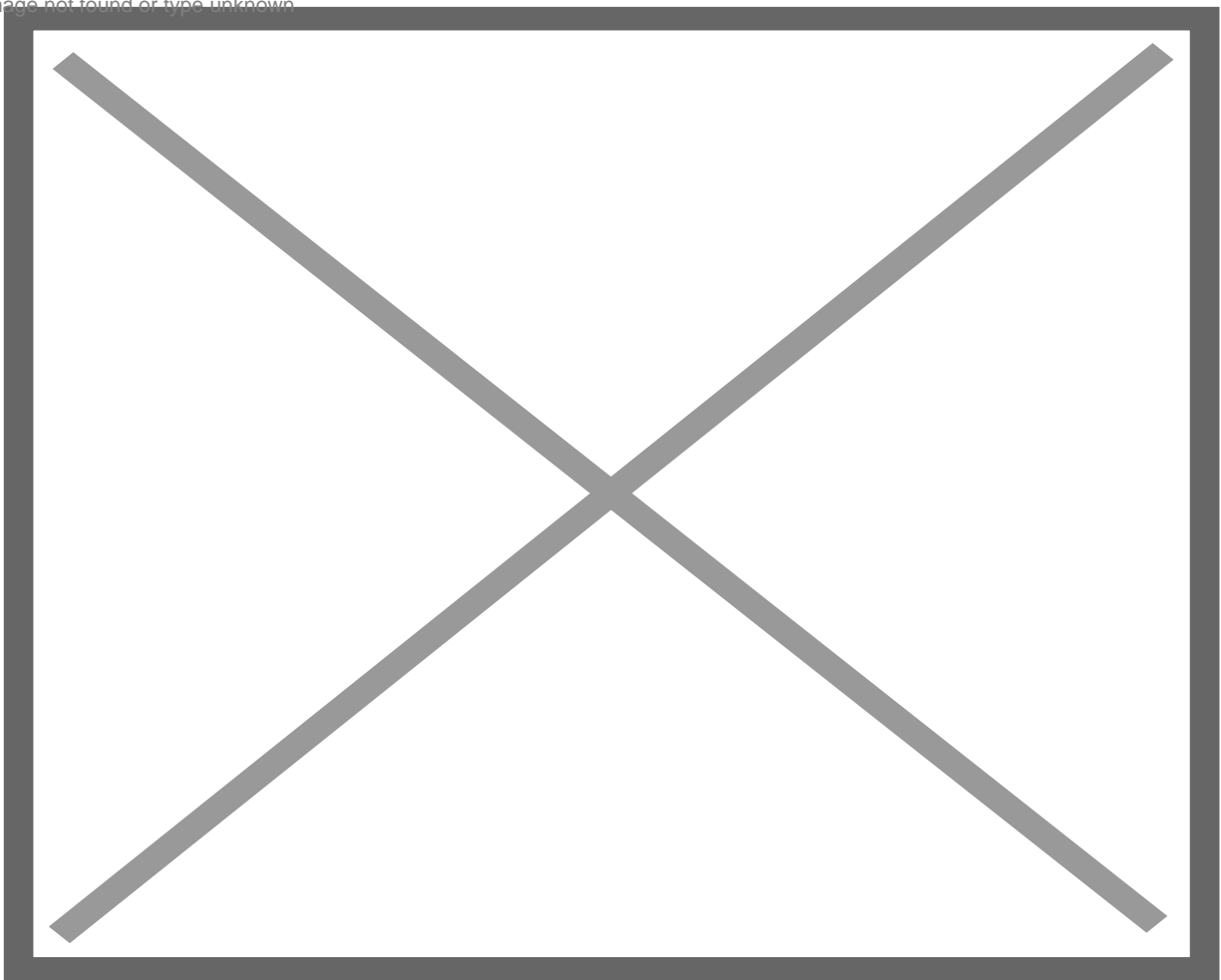
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Naturi Naughton, the Power Star With Roots on St. Croix, Launches Effort to Provide 100 Meals a Day for Full Week to Ease Coronavirus Burden on Those in Need

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Naturi Naughton By. BET

ST. CROIX — Naturi Naughton, the Power star who grew up in East Orange, New Jersey, but whose father was born and raised in Frederiksted, St. Croix, has not been a distant memory to the U.S. Virgin Islands.

On the contrary, the actress and former 3LW singer — who is also working on an album — spent time on St. Croix in 2019, bringing along her daughter, who celebrated her 2nd birthday with the

extended family on the Big Island, as St. Croix is called.

In fact Ms. Naughton is so connected to the territory that she sees herself as a Crucian. "For Virgin Islanders, as a Crucian girl, I feel like it's our duty to bring people together to help one another. And even though we have to stay home and keep our distance, there's a way to be supportive," said the actress, referring to her effort to help people affected by the coronavirus on St. Croix.

During an interview with the Consortium on Saturday, facilitated by Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, Ms. Naughton noted that repercussions caused by the deadly pathogen have resulted in many families being unable to make ends meet. In light of this, the actress will launch on April 27 a program called "Naturi Feeds, St. Croix", an arm of her Naturi's Dream Foundation. Naturi Feeds, St. Croix will provide 100 meals a day to St. Croix residents in need for an entire week. The meals will be prepared with partner restaurant, Ci Bo Ne, which is located in Frederiksted.

Congresswoman Plaskett, who Ms. Naughton has partnered with to bring to fruition the effort, said Ci Bo Ne owner Greg Richards has invited a number of other local chefs to help. Ms. Plaskett also found ways to ascertain that local farmers and taxicab drivers — tapped to deliver meals to elderly individuals unable to drive to Frederiksted — would benefit.

"We're going to be sourcing as much as we can from some of our local farmers as well, and then we've even brought in some of the taxicab drivers who may be out of work for them to be the ones distributing the food. So we're really trying to engage as much of the community and as much of the supply chain as possible while helping Virgin Islanders out," Ms. Plaskett said.

Along with the free meals, Ms. Naughton has also donated funds to four food banks on St. Croix: My Brother's Table, The Light House Mission, Catholic Charities and the Frederiksted Baptist Church. "It's an opportunity for them to have a little bit more financial support in order to feed people in the community, and I thought that was important," she said.

Even though she's currently best known for her role as Tasha St. Patrick in the TV series "Power", Ms. Naughton has had many successes throughout her career. Between 2005 to 2008, she starred in the Tony Award-winning Broadway musical Hairspray as Little Inez. In March 2008, the actress was cast to portray Grammy Award-winning rap artist Lil' Kim in Notorious, a biopic film about The Notorious B.I.G., which went on to gross \$43 million worldwide.

During the early 2000s, Ms. Naughton was part of 3LW, the American girl group that saw modest success with hits such as [No More](#). The actress said singing remains one of her passions, and revealed that she was working on a new album.

Ms. Naughton said she chose to provide the meals for a full week because that's the amount of time she believes people would actually feel a sense of relief.

"I believe that people get a real sense of relief when it's more than just a day or two. We're giving the entire week, which I thought was worth the investment because we want to make sure that if you didn't get it on Monday, or someone hears about it by Wednesday, it's not over, [they] can spread the word and tell other people in need and say, 'you know what, there's Naturi Feeds at Ci Bo Ne. Call the restaurant.'"

Ms. Naughton praised Congresswoman Plaskett for her help in putting the initiative together. The two met in Brooklyn, New York last year, which was where Ms. Naughton shared her desire to do something positive for the island. "I've been discussing with her even then just wanting to do something for St. Croix and this is just a perfect time where people are really going through so

much — losing their jobs, people are getting sick, and I think that when challenges are presented, and when we're in the middle of a crisis, Islanders come together."

As for Naturi Feeds, St. Croix moving on to other efforts following the food bank donations and the provision of meals, Ms. Naughton saw the possibility of the initiative being taken up by others.

"...Sometimes planting a small seed and watching it grow, you'd be surprised how something can flourish outside of that one thing. So it's not just for me, it's for other celebrities and other people to carry on this giving back. To carry on the idea of doing good for your community and for your people," she said.

Congresswoman Plaskett said it was her hope that others would be prompted to do the same. However, she pointed to celebrities such as St. Croix Native Tim Duncan, who [recently partnered with Seaborne Airlines/Silver Airways](#) to get displaced college students from the Virgin Islands and in the Virgin Islands back to their respective homes, and a group of men who came together to help seniors at the Herbert Grigg Home for the Aged on St. Croix.

"I think that you see the best of people during times like this," Ms. Plaskett said. "I think that Virgin Islanders have had experiences with disasters and we always come out of it so much closer to one another. And I think that what causes us to thrive as a community is our ability to share."

Ms. Plaskett concluded, "I recall maybe 20 years ago hearing one of the elders say, you can never go hungry on St. Croix if you open your mouth and let people know, because someone will always share the last of what they have."