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Inspirational Ceremonies Mark New Beginnings for USVI Students

Principals and alumni inspire students with words of encouragement and visions of a promising future at the end of the school year ceremonies

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Eighth-grade students at Juanita Gardine School line up to receive their promotional certificates at the school's ceremony on Tuesday. By. TSEHAI ALFRED, V.I. CONSORTIUM

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As the school year comes to an end, elementary and middle schools including Juanita Gardine, Eulalie Rivera, and John H. Woodson Schools on St. Croix and Lockhart School on St. Thomas

held promotional ceremonies for their eighth-grade students on Tuesday and Wednesday.

For the faculty, parents, alumni, and community members of Juanita Gardine and Eulalie Rivera School, the ceremonies highlighted the growing potential and expansive future that lies ahead for the promoted students. “As you prepare to transition to high school, I want you to remember that you have the power to shape your future, to pursue your passions, and to make a positive impact on the world around you,” Loretta Moorehead, principal of Eulalie Rivera School, wrote in a letter to the advancing students.

The Juanita Gardine School ceremony, held at the school's auditorium on Tuesday, promoted 34 eighth-grade students, while Eulalie Rivera School held their event at the St. Croix Educational Complex High School auditorium on Wednesday, celebrating the promotion of 77 students.

“We have a dynamic group of students that we're sending off to high school,” Moorehead said before listing the achievements of promoted students in the crowd. She placed the spotlight first on promotée Joseph Greaux Jr., winner of the territorial spelling bee, and then on members of the territorial flag football team, other sports teams and academic clubs such as the National Junior Honors Society and Future Business Leaders of America.

However, only the first and second honors students— Terrance Charles Jr., and Onile Edwards, who were respectively described as students who are “fearless in embracing new knowledge,” and “diligent and dedicated”— were selected to speak to the crowd. Juanita Gardine School also celebrated first and second honors students, J-Marie Jordan and Zahryah Williams, during their ceremony.

As students prepared to leave their elementary and middle school communities behind, Cadet Lt. Col. Y’Sean Dee and Solé Rogers, current high school students and alumni at Juanita Gardin and Eulalie Rivera School, respectively, gave advice to the promotées on how to navigate high school and the years ahead during their guest speeches. “Always remember: be strong, be fearless. Anything is possible,” Y’Sean Dee said, echoing the theme of Juanita Gardine’s ceremony – “Anything is Possible!: The Unstoppable Class of 2024.” Along with the ceremony’s theme, the promotées performed “Nothing is Impossible” by Jah Cure as their class song after being officially promoted.

Solé Rogers, the eleventh-grade St. Croix Educational Complex student who spoke to the promotées of Eulalie Rivera School, took a more literary approach in her speech, weaving the poetic verses of Dr. Seuss’s book, “Oh, the Places You’ll Go!” with her own words of wisdom. “While we are here to celebrate your achievements and academic success, tomorrow I want you all to celebrate ‘the places you’ll go.’ Take the next forty years to reflect on the version of yourself that you would like to embody and share with the world,” Rogers said.