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Holiday Lights, Boat Parade, and Community Joy: St. Croix's Festive Weekend Delivers

Tree lighting, a dazzling boat parade, Kidsville activities, and a Caribbean soup festival highlight St. Croix's December festivities, celebrating culture, tradition, and unity

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Ernice Gilbert **December 16, 2024**

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St. Croix is once again demonstrating why it's the place to be in the U.S. Virgin Islands during December, offering a weekend packed with holiday cheer, cultural pride, and community spirit.

The weekend kicked off on Friday with the sixth annual "Ah Glow in Deh Park – Deh Village of Lights" at Limpricht Park (livestream [here](#)) in downtown Christiansted. This beloved event brought together residents and tourists to celebrate the season with dazzling displays, cultural performances, and a community-centered atmosphere that highlights the heart of St. Croix.

Organized by the Crucian Cultural Committee, which is chaired by Vivian Ebbesen-Fludd, the event's main attraction was the lighting of the park, where various groups decorated trees in service to the community. This year, Bria James led the efforts for the V.I. Department of Health and the Mu Gamma Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. The Department of Health's tree raised awareness about diabetes, a significant health issue in the territory. "Our display featured an iconic blue floating Christmas tree adorned with a large blue ribbon, symbolizing diabetes awareness," Ms. James explained. The tree was surrounded by educational facts to spark conversations about diabetes prevention and management.

The Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority contributed a vibrant display under the theme "Sweet Pearls of Sugarland." "Our vibrant showcase featured multicolored lights, pink and green lights, and a glowing base of twinkling white pearls," said Ms. James.

The event's success was driven by dedicated community members like Wanda Figueroa-Violet, who leads the Cruzan Cultural Group segment for the tree lighting. She described the event as an opportunity to unite the community. "Tonight is the Christmas tree lighting, Ah Glow in Deh Park, the Village of Lights. We have 13 tree sponsors and nine Friends of the Park who come in, decorate, and have a blast," she shared.

Ms. Figueroa-Violet emphasized the importance of preserving community traditions. "Celebrating culture, history, and traditions drives me. By lighting up the park, it brings the community together. We had people from Frederiksted, Christiansted, and all walks of life come out to enjoy tonight's celebration," she said. The park's decorations will remain on display until January 8, allowing families to visit, take photos, and enjoy the festive atmosphere.

Adding to the evening's enchantment was the performance by the St. Croix Instrumental Club, led by long-time chairman Mark Biggs. The group, which has participated in the event for five years, illuminated the inkberry tree and performed a medley of holiday classics. "Our contribution has been every year we light up the town of Christiansted," Mr. Biggs noted. The club's medley of "Feliz Navidad" and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" brought joy to attendees.

Mr. Biggs underscored the importance of spreading joy during the holidays. "I believe in spreading joy. The islands need love. We need joy. We need peace. This is the perfect time to do that," he said. "If you look around, how can you feel anything but joy, peace, and love in this environment?"

The "Ah Glow in Deh Park" event set a festive tone for a weekend filled with activities that highlight St. Croix's cultural richness and community spirit.

The tree-lighting event was followed on Saturday by the annual boat parade on St. Croix (live stream [here](#)) — one of the most celebrated December events for well over two decades. The event's widespread appeal continues to draw large crowds year after year, with the night culminating with a massive fireworks display.

This year's event featured approximately 20 boat entries. Taking first place was entry number 5, Bully – 23 M/V Polar, helmed by Captain Bully. Second place went to entry number 15, Big Beard Adventure Tours, helmed by Captain Michael Gerardi, while entry number 33, Hook & Cook – M/V Pursuit 3250, helmed by Captain David Claeys, secured third place.

West Gyul's Kidsville

On Sunday afternoon, West Gyul's Kidsville (live stream [here](#)), which [made its debut](#) during the Crucian Christmas Festival in December 2023, once again captivated children and families this year. Held at the [beautifully upgraded](#) Midre Cummings Park, Kidsville offered a variety of activities designed to engage young minds and celebrate the island's culture. From fun games and interactive learning stations to cultural exhibits, the event brought smiles to countless children and spoke to the importance of passing on Crucian traditions to the next generation.

Soup for Your Soul Festival: A Culinary Celebration

Running alongside Kidsville was the Soup for Your Soul Festival, organized by House of Printing. The inaugural event drew large crowds eager to taste a diverse selection of traditional Caribbean soups. Vendors served up steaming bowls of favorites like callaloo and red pea soup, which sold out quickly as hundreds of patrons flocked to the festival.

Mosis Robles, the festival's organizer, expressed immense pride in the event's success. "We're feeling great. We're very excited. I want to thank the community for coming out in full force," Robles shared. The festival not only celebrated culinary delights but also included educational elements, teaching attendees about the history and preparation of local soups. "I just thought that we needed to highlight our culinary cuisine... That's culture very enriched in our Caribbean history," she explained.

The festival, a year in the making, showcased the dedication of Robles and her team. "I was constantly checking up on the vendors, making sure they were ready," she said, stressing the effort that went into making the event a success. Despite the challenges of organizing a first-time event, Robles remained optimistic about future editions. "Hopefully next year we will be here, same place, same time. And maybe with more sponsors, we can make it even bigger."

The weekend's festivities concluded on Sunday night with the lighting of the Ruins at Contentment in Christiansted (livestream is [here](#)), near the Bypass. Also organized by the Crucian Cultural Committee, this smaller, more intimate gathering featured caroling and holiday-themed performances. During the event, Mrs. Vivian Ebbesen-Fludd expressed gratitude to the volunteers who made the celebration possible.

She also shared the heartfelt motivation behind their labor of love. "We, the Crucian Cultural Group, do this because of you — our community — and because of our love for our culture and our people," she said. She noted that these events have inspired many individuals to join the effort to preserve Crucian culture and spread holiday cheer.