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Over 7,000 Books Distributed During Week-Long St. Thomas-St. John Book Fair

The “Ready to Read” book festival, hosted by the Insular Superintendent’s Office and Tutu Park Mall, promoted literacy with free books, live readings, storytelling, games, and cultural performances in celebration of Literacy Month.

Community Center / **Published On March 30, 2025 07:49 AM /**

Staff Consortium **March 30, 2025**

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Students, along with their teachers and chaperones, took full advantage of the Book Fair organized by the Office of the Insular Superintendent in the St. Thomas-St. John District.

ST. THOMAS — Bookworms, literary enthusiasts, and bibliophiles had the time of their lives last week at a book fair organized by the Office of the Insular Superintendent (OIS) in the St. Thomas-St. John District in collaboration with the Tutu Park Mall.

The week-long book festival, dubbed “Ready to Read”, showcased a diverse array of publications – from coloring books to fiction and non-fiction novels to bibliographies to professional development and industry-specific books – and featured a number of local, regional, national, and international authors. Attendees of every age walked away with something to stimulate their literary fervor.

Deputy Superintendent Dr. Desha Powell, the architect of the book fair, said the event was held to mark the observance of National March Into Literacy Month. “The district’s ultimate goals were to promote literacy and foster a love for reading,” Dr. Powell said.

Stacks of books that sat atop several tables lining the center court at the Tutu Park Mall found new homes as scores of students, teachers, parents, and members of the public capitalized on the opportunity to get their hands on free books.

More than 7,000 books were distributed, according to Dr. Powell, “to students from public, private and parochial schools, parents, government agencies, private businesses, and private citizens. Books were handed out to students from the Joseph E. Gomez Elementary School and the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School. Simultaneously, book distributions were conducted on a few school campuses upon request.”

Adding to the excitement of the event were storytelling by culture bearer, Glen “Kwabena” Davis; readings by Jessica Byrd and Technology Coordinator Kisha Corbett; and literacy games led by Health and Physical Education Coordinator Dr. Lorenzo Donastorg.

“In keeping with the intent of literacy month, we tailored our activities towards embracing the joy of reading and the power of words,” Dr. Powell said. “A scrabble board game was presented to each family that submitted evidence of reading as a family as well as to each student who participated in our activities. We specifically targeted reading for adults so that they can demonstrate the joy of reading to their children.”

The St. John community got its share of the book festival on Thursday. Students from the Julius E. Sprauve School and members of the wider community filled the Franklin Powell Park where they perused the myriad selection of copies and loaded up on their literary gems.

“The looks on the faces of the recipients were priceless,” Dr. Powell said. “Our book fair was a resounding success, and we hope it can become an annual event,” she added.

The St. John crowd was also treated to folk singing and steel pan music from the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School in celebration of “Music is Me” as part of National Music Month and Quadrille dancing from the “VI for Life Quadrille Group” in honor of V.I. History Month.