

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Home Depot Scores A Home Run With Fire Safety Workshop

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Cynthia Graham **October 05, 2014**



For the third year in a row, the St. Croix branch of The Home Depot partnered with the Virgin Islands Fire Service, Virgin Islands Police Department and VITEMA to put on its "Fire Safety and Prevention Workshop." The four-hour event was held on Saturday in the store's parking lot and featured K-9 and fire-extinguishing demonstrations, as well as a host of fun children's activities all with the goal of educating youngsters on keeping themselves safe from fires and how to prevent them.

Rebecca Elkins, operations assistant store manager, explained that every year the Home Depot organization plans a fire-safety event at all of its stores nationwide. Of the St. Croix branch's partnering with local safety agencies, she said, "We try to get every organization

involved to make it more fun and to give more information to the community and to the kids."

Elkins explained that on the first Saturday of every month, Home Depot offers a free kids' workshop and Saturday's event was planned to coincide with the celebration of national Fire Safety Week. Children who attended the workshop had the opportunity to make an



ess and this is our fire awareness," she

Fire extinguishing demonstration by VI

Fire Service at Home Depot's "Fire Safety and Prevention Workshop."

When asked why it was important for Home Depot to put on an annual fire-safety workshop, Elkins said the company does it with the goal of helping families.

"It is important because we do sell the products that can help them put out their fires and we feel that everyone should know how to work a fire extinguisher, everyone should know how the smoke detector works, and every home should have one no matter if [the house is] concrete or not, there are things inside of the house that can burn."

According to Clifford Joseph, fire marshal for the St. Croix district, this week is national Fire Prevention Week and fire departments across the nation has chosen as their theme: Working Smoke Alarms Save Lives.

"I'm out here today with a few smoke detectors, ensuring that parents do have them in their homes and also giving them other items to take home, like brochures and magnets for their fridge--reminders of testing your detector once a month," Joseph said.

When asked what was his sense of how well the St. Croix community is educated on fire safety and prevention, Joseph said the message is catching on.

"It's building up because most of the time, we're getting through most of our seniors and to the kids," he said. "The kids, to me, go home and tell the parents stuff...what they learn, and that's important. That communication between the parent and the child makes it a lot easier for us, because sometimes, you meet certain individuals, and they may say 'hey, thanks to you guys that you're doing what you're doing because my son came home the other day and told me, 'hey, mom, you need to test your fire alarm or I shouldn't be playing in the kitchen when the stove is on'."

Of his agency's participation in the day's event, Sgt. Issac Porter, supervisor for the Crime Prevention Bureau of the St. Croix District of the Virgin Islands Police Department, said, "Crime prevention goes hand-in-hand with safety."



St. Croix Fire Service attends Home Depot's "Fire Safety and Prevention Workshop."

Porter went on to say that his group was there to help residents know how to set up a crime watch program in their neighborhoods and help children learn how to handle dangerous situations.

"We're also letting the children know what to do if they see a gun lying around" as well as "talking to them about anti-bullying, because some kids are being bullied in school and in their neighborhoods. We're helping adults to become aware of the signs to look for if their children are being bullied."

As for the role VITEMA played in Saturday's event, Shanavia Martin said, "We're here to explain our role as an agency. We're dual agency, which means we respond to all hazards to include hurricanes, tsunamis...typically any hazard that you may have. We also do the 911 call center."



with the children as well as provided
children safe in the event of an
that children should keep in mind.

Delilah Trinidad shows off her

handcrafted EMS truck at Home Depot's "Fire Safety and Prevention Workshop."

"We always want to make sure that you make an adult aware if something is going on," Martin said, adding that children should also learn the proper use of the emergency number.

"Learn how to use 911 instead of playing with it," she explained. "We want you to be able to give your location of where you are, know your name, your address and basically what's going on, and answer operators' questions when they ask, so we can get you help in a timely manner."

The police department's K-9 unit performed a demonstration showcasing the tactics a police dog would use when attacking a target. Firemen demonstrated how a house fire is extinguished. There were also appearances by Smokey the Bear, Sparky the Fire Dog and McGruff the Crime Dog.