

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Herbert Grigg Home Rings In The Christmas Season In Grand Style

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For the fourth year in a row, the Herbert Grigg Home for the Aged and the Crucian Christmas Carnival Committee joined forces to put on a one-of-a-kind Mini Carnival for nursing home residents on Saturday that seemed to rival the real thing in January.

The carnival, held on the well-manicured grounds of Herbert Grigg, was the second of 19 events slated for the 2014 Crucian Christmas Carnival season, and it did not disappoint. Just like the big carnival, Herbert Grigg's, although scaled down, introduced for the first time a mini parade led by the Educational Complex Barracuda Marching Band, and featured dance numbers by Jumbie Jammerz; a spirit squad comprised of cheerleaders and majorettes from Arthur A. Richards Jr. High School; and traditional quadrille and

modern dance selections from students of Alfredo Andrew Elementary School.

And, what Crucian Christmas Carnival and parade would be complete without a Grand Marshal? None. So, Herbert Grigg's had two. Wearing a flowy, soft-pink dress and elegant head wrap adorned with a dainty crown, Leonelda Rivera, 92, sat alongside her



as the pair held their titles.

Educational

Complex Marching Band performs at the Herbert Grigg Mini Carnival 2014.

Ana Velez-Martinez, executive director, explained the event's purpose, "Most of our residents can't go out on a regular parade day or they can't take the long hours, so we bring it to them. This is an opportunity for them to get to exchange cultures, the history, have family members visit and have a good time."

And organizers made sure residents and visitors would have a good time, as the event also featured the melodic quelbe sounds of Stanley and The Ten Sleepless Knights, musical selections from La Fuerza and Kulee bands, as well as a modeling segment by JG Management Modeling Agency.

"We have really a good show for our residents and the community who has come out to support us," Valez-Martinez said.



Stanley and The Ten Sleepless Knights perform at the Herbert Grigg Mini Carnival 2014.

And, in true carnival style, four Herbert Grigg staffers vied for the coveted title of Miss Pearl of Herbert Grigg. The 2014 contestants included Ann Esprit, Akilah Roberts, Carina Nibbs and Coanne Brereton-Hassell. The Miss Pearl title is bestowed upon the employee who brings in the most money through her fundraising efforts. The first and only other Miss Pearl pageant was held in 2011, and the title was given to Carol Blatchly.

"This year, our fundraising efforts were successful," Valez-Martinez said. "We were able to [for the residents], buy beds, buy some other things we plans for the rest."



Parade Grand Marshals Victor Sanes, 80 and Leonelda

Rivera, 92, enjoy the festivities at Herbert Grigg's Mini Carnival 2014.

Valez-Martinez, who has been at the helm of Herbert Grigg for the last four years, said it had been the dream of her predecessor, Mrs. Vera Falu, to bring carnival to the residents.

"When she retired, I said, 'Ok, we're going to make this dream happen' and that's how the whole process started," she said. "We have partnered with the Crucian Festival, so this year we did it early because there's so much activity so we decided to do it right after Thanksgiving."

Putting on the event was truly a community affair. Velez-Martinez said the bands donated their services and the festive holiday decor that could be seen all around the grounds were Diageo USVI and Zumba with Evelyn.

So, just how do Herbert Grigg residents feel about having a carnival in their backyard?

"Our residents have a good time. They look forward to it; they get dressed and look forward to coming out," Velez-Martinez said.

And speaking of getting dressed, she pointed out that each of the residents received the hand-sewn madras outfits they all could be seen wearing as they sat together under a tent enjoying the festivities.

Looking out on the sizable crowd, Velez-Martinez said she may have to expand the perimeter in 2015.

"It's actually growing, so I have a feeling that by next year we'll have to expand it to the back of the facility," she said.

"Hebert Grigg is a caring facility," Velez-Martinez continued. "We care for our residents and we love what we do, and we provide excellent care and we are known for having an excellent team, so it's really our pride and joy to be able to cater to our residents."

Santa also made his first appearance of the season atop a local fire engine that was flanked by McGruff the Crime Dog and Sparky the Fire Dog.

For a full line up of Crucian Christmas Carnival events, go [here](#).

Feature Image: Contestants vying for the 2014 Miss Pearl of Herbert Grigg crown.