

The Virgin Islands Consortium

FBLA Installs 36 Officers, Inducts 81 Members In Candlelight Ceremony

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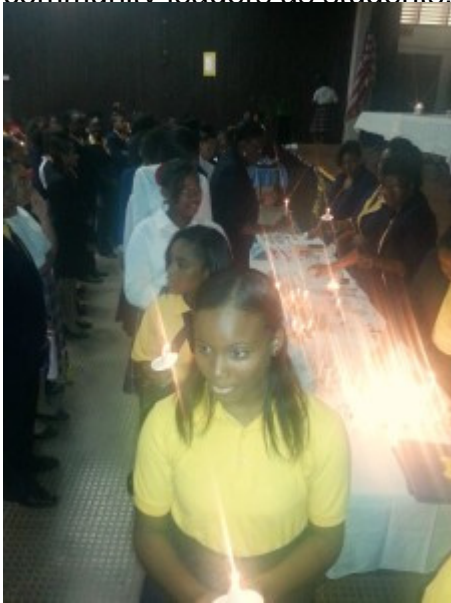
Cynthia Graham **December 08, 2014**



The Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA)-Phi Beta Lambda, St. Croix District, installed 36 new officers and inducted 81 members into the organization for the 2014-2015 school year, in a special candlelight ceremony held at the Arthur A. Richards Junior High School on Sunday.

The event was a combined effort between the organization's five chapters on St. Croix, including FBLA-Middle Level chapters at the Arthur A. Richards Jr. High, Elena L. Christian Jr. High, and John H. Woodson Jr. High schools, along with FBLA chapters at the St. Croix Central High School and St. Croix Career & Technical Education Center.

The Arthur A. Richards auditorium was filled with family, friends, well-wishers and community leaders as students, mostly dressed in the organization's trademark gold and black, gathered for the ceremony. Students of office and lit a variety of color-coded candles that represented their leadership within the organization.



FBLA-PBL members being inducted into the

organization for the 2014-2015 school year at a special candlelight ceremony on Dec. 7.

A highlight of the gathering came with the keynote address from St. Croix native, Fernando Webster, Jr., territorial program coordinator for the V.I. Dept. of Labor. Webster began his brief remarks by providing a comparison between his employer's mission statement and that of FBLA-PBL's, which states: "To bring business and education together in the positive relationship through innovative leadership and career development programs."

"Our mission statement at the Department of Labor is to administer a system of effective programs and services designed to develop, protect and maintain a viable workforce," Webster said.

With that he told the students, "I really found it interesting that you guys are already doing things, as an entity, that we kind of mirror and we look forward to. So, really and truly, when it comes to looking at a viable workforce, I don't only see you guys as future business leaders of America, you're future business leaders of the Virgin Islands."

Webster went on to reference the ceremony's theme, "Step Up to the Challenge," and, he said, rather than addressing some of the challenges local youth face, he opted to offer the students three challenges he believed would help them become successful in life.

He first implored students to embrace mentorship.

"You have eighth graders in this crowd that's sitting down with juniors and sophomores, get to know them," he said. "Juniors and sophomores, find out who the seniors were that have already graduated from FBLA, find out who your alumni are. Find that person who is going to guide you and set the foundation for you for the things you need to do today and tomorrow. The important thing about leadership that you need to know is that leaders learn from leaders."

Next, he challenged students to serve.

"Serve your community, serve your school, serve your neighborhood, serve each other," Webster said. "As you heard in my bio, being involved in all those different organizations is what opened my eyes to a lot of different things. Volunteer at different workplaces; find out what you want to do and find the person that does that, speak to them."

Lastly, Webster told students they should "understand that the first step to success is failure."



"If you don't understand that, the minute failure hits you, it's going to shut you down," he explained. "You have to embrace it, learn from it, harness your energy and move forward with it. Because you're not going to be perfect. You're going to try several times to get something right and have to understand that failure comes with it, but it's what you learn from it."

Maureen Moorhead, member of the Virgin Islands FBLA advisory committee, also gave remarks, calling FBLA an "awesome organization" and adding that she was pleased "so many of you made a decision to become a member of the FBLA."

However, she called that decision "only the first step," and implored students to "step up to the challenge and make the decision that you will be an active member of the FBLA."

"Membership in FBLA ... is an opportunity for you to actively participate in your organization to help prepare for an effective transition from school, to college and/or career, but more importantly, to life," she said.

Each of the 36 new officers were called to the stage to affirm their decision to serve in the offices of chaplain, parliamentarian, reporter, historian, treasurer, secretary, vice president and president. They each lit a single color-coded candle that represented the duties and responsibilities of the offices to which they were elected.

Next, the 81 inductees, each with a lit candle, and announcing their names and schools they attend, filed across the stage as part of the ceremony.

A group of four students gave a special presentation on the meaning of the FBLA organization, which was founded in 1940 and is the largest business career student organization in the world, by offering insight into the meaning of each letter in the



FBLA-PBL officers

installed at a special candlelight ceremony on Dec. 7.

Then, the entire body of students was inducted into the organization after being formally presented to Donte Harris, state vice president and student at St. Croix Central High School, who carried out the duties of State President Kareem Todman, who was not present at the ceremony. As part of their swearing in, students recited the FBLA-PBL pledge and creed, of which one of the seven tenets of the creed states: "I believe that every student should prepare for a useful occupation and carry out that occupation in a manner that brings the greatest good to the greatest number."

FBLA-PBL has a combined membership of more than 250,000 in over 13,000 nationally chartered chapters in the United States, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Germany, the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, Bermuda, Ontario, Canada, and the Department of Defense Dependent Schools worldwide.

Headquartered in Reston, Va., a suburb of Washington, D.C., the nonprofit education association has seven active chapters in the territory, including the five chapters in the St. Croix District, and one each at the Charlotte Amalie High School and Ivanna Eudora Kean High School in the St. Thomas-St. John District.