

The Virgin Islands Consortium

They Met, Mingled. It Was Fabulous

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Ernice Gilbert **April 12, 2015**



ST. CROIX -- Usually, when modeling is brought to the fore in conversations, you think style, fashion, skinny girls walking down a runway with expensive wear. 'Trend' is also a word that comes to mind; as the latest designs usually debut on a model's body before making their way to boutiques and stores.

Yet, while the aforementioned may be true, there are positive benefits linked to modeling that leave lifelong impact, but are yet often forgotten. These benefits were relayed to *VI Consortium* incessantly at Jason Gardener's VI Model of the Year exclusive meet and greet event, held at the Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts in Frederiksted on Friday night.



part of her 7-year-old daughter,
modeling program.

Florence Marsh and daughter

Venessia Burgos

"Jason is superb, Florence began. "When I first started with my daughter, I was a little iffy about it because I didn't know anything about the modeling industry. However, when I saw the passion that Jason Gardener had, I was so impressed and, being a teacher, I know what it means to have passion when it comes to the youth. And I saw that in him -- he is such an inspiration and he doesn't do it for the show, he does it because he really wants to fulfill those children's dreams."

Marsh added that since her daughter joined Gardener's modeling program six months ago, she's noticed positive changes in her demeanor.

"I remember when she went to school from the first grade — not even 2nd grade because that is the grade she's in now — she would talk about bullying and say that she doesn't want to go to school sometimes because of the way that people treated her. But now, she is a different Venessia Burgos." Now, since she has been a part of JG's Management, what she does is say, 'I'm confident, I'm not afraid to stand up, express myself and I've seen the growth,' Marsh said. "She can actually speak to anyone now and do an interview like it's nothing. You would think that she's older than 7."

Asked if she thought there was a correlation between Gardener's efforts and academic performance, Marsh said, "of course, because with Jason Gardener, you have to do well in school in order to be a part of JG modeling. It's a must. He asks for report cards, progress reports -- you have to have at least a 3.0 average."



Jason Gardener, founder of JG

Productions

The museum was filled with models seemingly confident in who they are, what they are about and intend to be. From the young children, teenagers and young adults -- most of whom will be participating in this Sunday's VI Model of the Year show, which will be held at the Central High School gymnasium.

They mingled with one another, snapped photos and conversed about the big day. Everyone in attendance wore red outfits, bar a group of teenagers who were adorned in blue to perform a special dance.

"Tonight is a night for the models to have fun, loosen up, relax before the intense seminars and first judging competition tomorrow, and of course the big competition Sunday," Jason Gardener, founder of JG Management told *VI Consortium*.

On Sunday, Gardener said people should look forward to JG Management keeping up to its brand, which he says is marked by unmatched quality.

"We focus on the in-house training. It's not a lot of props and hair and makeup change. The models look very age-appropriate and the production will be really, really great.

At tomorrow's event, 24 models will compete in six divisions: child female and male, junior female and male and the female and male divisions. Gardener said the manner in which the competition is setup, the show should flow seamlessly without any hiccups. Categories include swimwear, jeans, runway, high fashion, TV commercial and fashion print competitions.



Nneka Howard-Sibilly and

Jadyynn Sibilly

Nneka Howard-Sibilly, also attending in support of her 9-year-old daughter, Jadyynn Sibilly, said Gardener's program has benefited her child in multiple ways.

"It's been a great experience for my daughter. She has learned a lot in terms of public speaking and runway modeling and etiquette, so it has really been beneficial for her." Howard-Sibilly added that while her daughter has always been confident, Jason's program has been able to magnify that self-assurance even more.

For Gardener, while it's great that children learn to be confident at home, "It's also good to not just hear it from home; but when you have somebody from outside who truly cares about them, not only their well-being and excelling in school, but letting them know that they have an opportunity to become a professional model, actor, singer, dancer. To train and develop the right way, then that's great," he said.

The show starts at 4 p.m. sharp on Sunday. Tickets are \$25 if purchased in advance and \$30 at the gate.