

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Territory's Children Dazzle Onlookers During Parade On Friday, Although Turnout Appeared Low

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ST. THOMAS -- Smiles were on their faces even as the unrelenting sun cast its rays long and hot, but the onlookers of this year's Children's Parade were glued to their positions on Friday, as the territory's youth made their way through Market Square -- dancing, waving, expressing with various costumes the culture of the territory, marching, singing and pausing on their arrival at Governor Kenneth Mapp's location to show respect -- and moving on to the Lionel Roberts Stadium to close.

But the crowds were not comparable to last year, and various locations along the parade route that would normally be jam-packed, had lots of room to fit more people. Some

blamed the low turn out on a horse race held on the same day as the Children's Parade.

St. Thomas 2015 Carnival: Children's Parade Pictures

































































































One concerned resident reached out to *VI Consortium* at about 11:27 on Friday night expressing frustration.

"It was extremely appalling to me to know that our children went through months of practicing to give us a great show and the community was more concerned about going to the horse race than they were about coming out to support our children," wrote Danica Miller. "I am so angry because everyone in the territory is quick to say "support your own"

but then turn their backs on the very children that will procure our future. Furthermore I feel that the carnival races should not be held on the same day as the children parade."

Miller suggested that the races be held the Sunday following the Adult Parade so as to not disrupt turnout for the youth event.

Nonetheless, the children gave it their best. Mapp, along with Lieutenant Governor Osbert Potter and some of their cabinet members -- including Beverly-Nicholson-Dutty, were sitting underneath the same tent, waving and clapping, seemingly enjoying the festivities. Some senators occupied another tent to the east of the square -- including Sen. Kurt Violet, while Sen. President Neville James could be seen standing alongside a barricade securing the paraders.

The parade itself was alive as it's always been with colors and dazzling customs from all groups -- including two from sister island St. Croix: Rising Stars Youth Steel Pan Orchestra and the Central High School Marching Band, in a show of unity that is custom during carnival.

It was evident that the efforts placed into performance and costume design were well-thought-out, as the youth brought their best to the islands' biggest culture celebration.

Festivities continue on Saturday with the Adult Parade beginning at 10:00 a.m.