

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## At A School-Like Prom, In Old Age

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ST. CROIX -- Good deeds. The difference they make in the lives of their beneficiaries could last a lifetime, and that's now long the blessings poured upon residents of the Lutheran Social Services' Flamboyant Gardens housing community in Barren Spot on Friday afternoon, will last.

The event was a low-key affair. Visiting students from the University of South Florida (USF) College of Nursing created a scene and atmosphere that mimicked a traditional high school prom for the twenty or so residents who attended.

Dressed in fancy attire with prom corsages tied to their arms, the residents, ages 58 to 100, danced, sang and laughed while being entertained by the twelve students, who

visited the territory as part of their academic training in community health nursing.











Residents who were bound to wheelchairs worked around the hindrance and danced in their seats. Nothing, it seemed, would keep them from time-traveling back to their teenage years when life was free from the aches of old age.

But how did this happen?

“Last year, the USF College of Nursing students were presenting healthy snacking to the Flamboyant Gardens residents and we started singing and dancing. It was at that moment the group of students and residents discussed the activities and we decided to host a ‘senior prom,’ said Dr. Elizabeth Jordan of USF. “We are very excited to have the opportunity to socialize and share experiences,” added Jordan.

The students have also planned visits for several other Lutheran Social Services’ program sites, including Flamboyant Gardens senior housing community, Genip Gardens housing community for seniors and adults with disabilities, and Queen Louise Home for Children. The USF nursing students will provide supervised home visits, home safety checks, one-on-one client health education, a health seminar on hypertension and blood pressure checks for residents, and socialization.

This is the second time nursing students from University of South Florida have made a trip to St. Croix. They will also be working with the Department of Education and several local middle, junior high and high schools to provide health education services.

*Feature Image: Dr. Elizabeth Jordan of USF CON, Judy Velasquez of Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands’ Flamboyant Gardens housing community, and residents of Flamboyant Gardens housing community.*