

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Locals On The Rise: Young St. Croix Model Is Face Of New Toys “R” Us Handcrafted Jewelry

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**Egypt Jackson**

When nine-year-old Egypt Jackson competed in and won the *VI Child Model of the Year* competition on St. Croix in April 2014, a part of her prize package was a signed contract with renowned New York-based model management agency, Funny Faces Models NYC. But, she could not have imagined that less than two years later she would be the face of a new handcrafted jewelry product being introduced by mega toy retailer, Toys “R” Us.

But, that's exactly what happened for Little Egypt. Beating out over 200 girls who attended the casting call for the international retailer this summer in New York City, Egypt's beautiful face will be splashed across boxes of the jewelry product, expected to be on store shelves across the U.S. between February and March 2016.

And none could be prouder of her than Jason Gardener, principal at JG Management USVI, the St. Croix modeling agency that trained Egypt and for which the young model has signed a mother-agency agreement.



When asked how he felt when he got the news that Egypt had booked with Toys “R” Us, Gardener’s excitement bubbled over.

“They absolutely loved her. It was beyond amazing, my head was so big,” he laughed.

Then, more reflectively, Gardener said Egypt’s success served to validate the hard work he and his team has been doing at JG Management since he founded the company in March 2011.

“It really feels good to know that what we’re doing, you’re seeing the results of it,” he pointed out, adding, “That we have a product that works. “

But Egypt’s road to Toys “R” Us was not necessarily easy. Gardener said it took him some years to convince the once-painfully-shy girl to attend his classes; and when she eventually enrolled in 2013, he worked on building her self-confidence.

“Now, her confidence is great and to hear the way she projects her voice is remarkable,” he said.

While the Toys “R” Us deal is the first major contract any of his models/talent have signed, Gardener said four others of his models are currently participating in New York City Fashion Week events and 11 others have been placed with agencies in New York, Miami and Chicago.

JG Management is now entering its fifth season and Gardener said auditions for interested male and female participants are being held Sun., August 30 from 1-4 p.m. at his studio above Jane’s Bridal in the Mt. Pleasant Mall. Auditions will also be held Sat., September 5 from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. and Sun., September 6 from 1-4 p.m. at the same location.

This year, Gardener is expanding. He has added more instructors to the agency’s roster and has “expanded to all forms of modeling, as well as included acting, singing, theater and, arts-and-crafts,” he explained.

Not to mention, The JG Center of Excellence, the charitable arm of JG Management, will host its first charity gala dubbed *St. Croix Style* in November 2015. Gardener said proceeds from the event will benefit several of his young models who are expected to travel to Paris next summer. These models, Gardener said, are ones he sees with the potential for “high fashion” and that have “the right height and body type—who have feature red carpet interviews, dinner and dancing. It’s a real star in the industry.



Jason Gardener

Under its umbrella, JG Management hosts several competitions each year. The agency's signature competition, *VI Model of the Year*, is going into its third year and will have its annual weekend-long celebrations, workshops and competition on April 8-10.

Additionally, Gardener's popular *Kids Rock* competition is back for its fourth year and, he said, realizing the need to take the event to “another level,” he has expanded the traditionally one-day competition into a weekend he’s calling “Kids Rock Fashion Weekend,” to be held March 5 and 6. On the Saturday, an agency that works specifically with children will conduct a go-see commercial audition and live photoshoot with the

participants. That same evening, the young models will enjoy a “Pink and Blue” party in their honor. And on Sunday, they will hit the runway for the annual competition.

At the end of the season in June 2016, JG Management will also host its first model and talent showcase, featuring performances in each category of the company’s offerings.

For more information or to register for the upcoming season that begins on September 14, contact Mr. Gardener at (340) 244-5544 or email [info@jgmanagementusvi.com](mailto:info@jgmanagementusvi.com).

*Feature Image: Egypt Jackson*

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