

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Opening Of School Celebration Service Offers Prayers For 2015-16 School Year

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ST. THOMAS -- The Virgin Islands Department of Education, in conjunction with the Mapp-Potter Administration, hosted the First Annual Opening of School Celebration Service, Sunday, September 13 at the St. Thomas Assembly of God Church in Estate Contant, a DOE press release issued late Sunday has made known.

The gathering commemorated the first opening of a new school year under the Mapp-Potter Administration and brought together top Education officials, parents, students, teachers and administrators for a time of prayer and praise. The gathering also reflected the solidarity of those in attendance with embracing the Department's 2015-16 theme: Transformation Through Teamwork.

During her remarks, Education Commissioner Sharon Ann McCollum, Ph.D., thanked Governor Kenneth Mann and Lt. Governor Osbert Potter, who were both in attendance, and stated that she is relying on God's guidance as she moves forward with the Department of Education's plan to reform public education in the Territory.



Charlotte Amalie High School student

performs vocal selection of Tamela Mann's "Take Me To The King."

In his remarks, Governor Mapp reiterated his commitment to the Department of Education and the success of the Territory's students.

Highlights of the day came with a solo saxophone rendition of Richard Smallwood's "Total Praise," performed by an Ivanna Eudora Kean High School student and a solo vocal performance of Tamela Mann's "Take Me To The King," performed by a Charlotte Amalie High School student. Both performances received standing ovations from the packed church.

St. Thomas Assembly of God Senior Pastor Dr. George Phillip spoke about the importance of family.

"There is no place for raising a child like home," he said, when addressing the responsibility parents must take for the education of their children. Pastor Phillip went on to say that the family is the first institution God created and it should be a place where children are loved and are able to flourish.

Senators Clifford Graham, Justin Harrigan and Marvin Blyden were also in attendance; as well as UVI President Dr. David Hall, Assistant Commissioner Chermaine Hobson-Johnson, St. Thomas Superintendent of Schools Dionne Wells-Hedrington, Deputy Superintendent Racquel Berry-Benjamin and other notables. The Kean football team was also present as part of its 6th annual church outing.

A similar gathering will be held on St. Croix on Sunday, September 20.

Feature Image: Chermaine Hobson-Johnson hold hands in prayer at the First Annual Opening of School Celebration Service, Sunday, September 13.

Image Credit: Virgin Islands Department of Education.

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