

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Students Showcase Talents In Academics And The Arts At 4th Annual Education Expo On St. Thomas

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ST. THOMAS -- From spirited selections of steel pan music from an award-winning elementary school orchestra to traditional quelbe music played by junior high students, and an ensemble of high school musicians that expertly fused rhythmic jazz and reggae influences into their tunes, the 4th Annual Education Expo held at the Tutu Park Mall on Saturday, Oct. 10 showcased the extraordinary talents of students in the St. Thomas-St. John District and drew crowds of parents, students and shoppers.

That's according to a press release the Department of Education issued this morning, with its officials describing the event as organized to showcase the many talents of Virgin Islands youth.

It was also a celebration of student achievements in academics, the arts, sports and more, was organized by DOE's Office of the Insular Superintendent, St. Thomas-St. John District, and was spearheaded by Deputy Superintendent Michael Harrigan.











McMuller Drive Thru Extracurricular Service

Panatics
Steelband

Boy's
Read
Club



Girl
Power
Club



Lashing
PUPS
Quellebe
Band

Maypole
Dancers

Bamboola
Dancers



Quadrille
Dancers







According to Superintendent Dionne Wells-Hedrington, there was participation from approximately eight of the 14 schools in the District, as well as community groups and organizations, including the Department of Labor, University of the Virgin Islands, the Board of Education and others.

"It's all about the children," Wells-Hedrington said. "Schools came up with wonderful displays and this is a wonderful opportunity for us to promote our schools. Tutu Park has been good to us and given us the opportunity to do this for the last four years."

Wells-Hedrington was right about the uniquely designed exhibits displayed by the schools. Principal Symra Dee Brown of Ulla Muller Elementary dubbed her school's booth 'McMuller', drawing inspiration from the popular fast-food restaurant chain, McDonalds. She pointed out that Muller School is tailored to suit students' individual

learning needs, similar to a restaurant menu. Additionally, the booth's theme, "I'm Learnin' It" played off of the restaurant chain's "I'm Lovin' It" slogan.

Gomez Elementary's 'Lions' display was a nod to the school's mascot and featured two of the Education Department's three state priorities: student achievement and school culture (the third is teacher-leader effectiveness), according to Assistant Principals Daphne Gonzalez-Thomas and Diana Tyson.

Charlotte Amalie High School displayed a host of student awards and achievements in academics, sports, community service, culture and other areas. Senior Graciela Samuel pointed out that the school also focuses on building strong bonds between students and teachers in an effort to cultivate a family-like atmosphere on campus.

Eudora Kean High School Rays showcased the school's hydroponics and aquaponics programs, in which the waste produced by farmed tilapia at the school supplies nutrients for plants to grow, such as lettuce, cucumbers, kale and tomatoes. According to Principal Stefan Jurgen, in addition to its hydroponics/aquaponics program, Kean's booth highlighted the coming together of first-time international, national and local teaching staff with its 'Education Melting Pot' display as well as showcased the high school's penchant for technology with its popular 'iPad Project'.

Christopher Williams, writer/illustrator and creative writing consultant at Addelita Cancryn Jr. High School, displayed several of his published books, including the most-recently published "New Story Time!" that features 38 stories written by 37 students enrolled in his writing class during the 2014-15 school year.

Musical and dance performances were presented by Bertha C. Boschulte Jr. High School's Flambo Combo, Gomez Elementary School's pantomime group, Eudora Kean High School's Music Styles, who made their debut at the Expo, and E. Benjamin Oliver Elementary School's award-winning Steel Owls. There was also a parade led by Charlotte Amalie High School's JROTC Color Guard, along with the Ulla Muller Elementary Boy's Read Club and Girl's Power Club. Additionally, approximately 15 boxes of books were given away to attendees and a host of door prizes were raffled.