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In Territory's First Ever Virtual Graduation, CHS Seniors Celebrate Milestone

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ST. CROIX — Senior students of the St. Croix Central High School celebrated the milestone of achieving their high school diploma on Tuesday. In a first for the territory, the ceremony was held virtually and displayed to the public in a pre-recorded video that included speeches from top students, school and public officials.

A pre-graduation meetup online through the app Zoom, included talks from classmates, and a beautiful video presentation where students spoke about their experiences. In the video, some students spoke of the anticipation of receiving their diploma in the traditional, high-energy setting that has come to mark the momentous occasion, and the deflation that took hold once cancellation of the traditional event was confirmed. The students also mentioned missing their prom event, a big highlight for seniors.

Even so, they were elated to be graduating, albeit in a world filled with uncertainties and diminishing opportunities, thanks to the coronavirus pandemic.

The speakers — School Principal Yves Abraham, Insular Superintendent for the St. Croix District, Carlos McGregor, Board of Education Chair Arah C. Lockhart, Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, Senate President Novelle Francis, Dept. of Education Commissioner Racquel Berry-Benjamin and Governor Albert Bryan — all hailed the 2020 graduates as a unique class that had overcome difficult odds.

"You know what adversity is," said Mr. Bryan, "it's the thing that builds the human spirit."

"You've been through it. You've been through hurricane after hurricane, Irma and Maria and then you conquered the Covid. You are already tried and you are already tested and I know that you're destined for success. Your future is going to be rife with greatness. Congratulations. Go Caribs!" the governor said.

The class's salutatorian is Laurie Cedeno, and class valedictorian Amira Claxton.

Graduation events continue today on D.O.E.'s Facebook page.

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