

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Elena Christian Wraps Up Hispanic Heritage Celebration With Blast, Literally

Education / **Published On October 17, 2015 12:20 AM /**

Staff **October 17, 2015**



ST. CROIX -- Students at the Elena Christian Junior High School were privy to a launching of a rocket on the school's grounds Thursday. The entire student body, administrators, faculty and staff gathered at balconies and around the perimeter of the school's ground to witness the liftoff demonstrated by school's Rocketry Club members under the tutelage of ECJH teacher of the year, Steve Bullock.

The information was made known through a press release the Department of Education issued this evening.

The rocket launched that went high into the sky and got lost in the clouds was conducted in accordance with the school's observance of Hispanic Heritage Month, according to ECJH Social Studies Department Chairperson Shanet Alexander. The famed members of the school's Rocketry Club took their rockets to a U.S. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Program at the White House on Monday, March 23, 2015. ECJH Rocketry Club, one of the top 25 Team America Rocketry Club (TARC) in the nation started about 15 years ago by Bullock.

Other highlights of the school's Hispanic Heritage Month celebration on Thursday was an uplifting address by Hispanic V.I. Senator Samuel Sanes. He told the students about the development of the Puerto Rican population on St. Croix and encourage them to continue to extend friendship across the cultures. Students asked pertinent questions like, What senators do? What it's like to be a senator? Retired Educator of Hispanic descent Zoraida Jacobs presented a lecture on Puerto Rican-born Candido Rodriguez Guadeloupe who was popularly known as "Manocan." Manocan Guadeloupe came to St. Croix at the age of 23 and served two consecutive terms in the Virgin Islands Legislature from 1959 to 1962, Jacobs told students. He helped coined the phrase Ar Ma Pa Vie to describe a community group of Hispanics on St. Croix whereas Ar relates to Argentina, Ma to Mayaguez, Pa to Panama and Vie refers to Vieques, according to Jacobs. The group name evolved to Alma Boricua and then to Hispanos Unidos today. Sen. Manocan Guadeloupe helped secure the land for Estate Profit commonly known as "Machuchal", a Hispanic community near the center of St. Croix. A housing community on St. Croix is named in honor of Candido Rodriguez Guadeloupe.

[View the original embedded media](#)

Also, on the scene at the Hispanic Heritage Month celebration at ECJH was a fraction of the members of Hispanos Unidos, namely Diana Wilson, Lucie Rodriguez and Mirza Saldana Lampe. The trio joined by their youngest member 3-year old Gianelis Lugo danced the Fiesta en la Batey to students gathered in the school's cafeteria. (See video clip: ..) Earlier they praised the relationship between the Virgin Islands and Puerto with a long list of historical facts. They also brought Puerto Rican relics for students to relish to include the Jibarro hat, the Maracas, lamparas (oil lamps), mortar and pestles, and musical instruments.

Feature Image: Rocketry club members posing.

Image Credit: Department of Education.