

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Community Makes 4th Annual Education Expo A Success

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ST. CROIX -- Parents, guardians and other members of the St. Croix community came out in numbers on Saturday, November 21 at the Sunny Isles Amphitheater to make the 4th Annual V.I. Department of Education Educational Expo here an unforgettable event, a press release DOE issued last Tuesday says.

The Expo was held to showcase the host of services available to students and families here, as well as to showcase the academic and creative talents of the islands' public school students.

“The feedback from the parents and community members was outstanding. Our presenters were informative and they surely engaged the crowds,” said Lorraine Benjamin-Matthew, District Director of the Office of School-Community Relations, whose office along with the Office of Curriculum and Instruction organized the 4th Annual Educational Expo.

About 40 vendors set up shop in and around the amphitheater to provide attendees with information. Parents and guardians visited the displays and asked pertinent questions relative to their child’s education, earning a stamp on a form at each stop. After receiving a minimum of 18 stamps, they were qualified to win one of many prizes to include a Samsung Tablet, driving lessons, jewelry, tools, apparel and gift certificates. During intermissions in ongoing student performances, drawing for the prizes were held by Mistress of Ceremonies Maria Encarnacion, District Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

Entertainment for the four-hour event was provided by groups from schools and other community organizations, such as the St. Croix Educational Complex Marching Band and Dance Squad; St. Croix Central High School JROTC; Lew Muckle Elementary School (LMES) Quadrille Dancers directed by Valrica Bryson; LMES Steel Orchestra directed by Noel and Wendy Wynter; LMES Bomba Dancers, and the Alfredo Andrews Elementary School Alpha Soldiers and Quadrille Dancers, directed by 5th grade teacher Shermaine Williams-Stapleton. The well-known Ebenezer Methodist Steel Orchestra served as the house band captivating participants with a series of pop and religious music during intermissions in on-stage performances. Disc Jockey Swain filled in the gaps and provided the background music for the performing groups.

Presenters included staff from the V.I. Department of Education English Language Acquisition (ELA) office, Elementary Programs, Positive Behavior Intervention Services (PBIS), Special Education Services, Special Nutrition Programs, the State Office of Curriculum and Instruction, Student Services, Territorial Freely Associated State Education Grant (T&FASEG) office, State Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education and District Office of School-Community Relations.

School groups and associations represented were St. Croix Career and Technical Education Center Marketing and Welding Programs; the Juanita Gardine Elementary School, St. Croix Central High School Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) and the PTSA of Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School.

Other government agencies bringing their message and wares to the Expo were the Army National Guard, the Department of Health, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Labor, the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation; University of the Virgin Islands; V.I. Board of Education; V.I. Fire Services; V.I. Police Department, V.I. Water and Power Authority and the Public Broadcasting System of the Virgin Islands, WTJX Channel 12.

Presenters from the greater community were the American Disability Association (ADA), American Red Cross, Banco Popular and Reaching Potentials.

Sponsors of the 4th Annual St. Croix Educational Expo 2015 included Banco Popular; Ocwen Mortgage Servicing, Inc.; the V.I. Army National Guard; Gallows Bay Hardware;

Cruzan Gold; Add A Touch; EZ Driving School; Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company; Plaza Extra East; Ib Designs; Just Right Trucking and Trash removal, LLC; Lynn's Nails, and Style Lift Jewelry.

Lorraine Benjamin-Matthew extends a "hats off" to the Department of Education supporters Velsina Berrios, Makima O'Reilly, Cabrielle Regis, Kenya Mitchell, Alene Springer and Sherimah Stevens who made the Expo a success.

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