

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Lockhart Elementary Students Rededicate Garden In Memory Of Schoolmate

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ST. THOMAS -- Lockhart Elementary students enrolled in the school's EarlyAct Club, a student-run organization sponsored by the Rotary Club of St. Thomas II, held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on December 3 to rededicate a portion of the school's tea garden to the memory of 12-year-old schoolmate La'Quina Hennis, who passed away in 2007, according to a press release the Department of Education issued on Friday.

Attending the ceremony was Bahamas-based Felix N. Stubbs, Rotary's District Governor who oversees clubs in 10 countries and 16 islands, including the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Prior to the ribbon cutting, the group of 20 students facilitated a meeting in the school's library to welcome Mr. Stubbs and his team members, which included his wife, Carla Card-Stubbs. There, students recited the Club's guiding principles, which are identified as the Four-Way Test: Is it the TRUTH? Is it FAIR to all concerned? Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS? Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned? To that, Lockhart students added a question of their own: Is it FUN?

During brief remarks, Mr. Stubbs applauded the students for their skill at conducting the meeting using parliamentary procedure. "To watch you conduct a meeting, I have to say how impressed I am. When I come to sessions like this and I see young people like yourselves running a meeting so well, it gives me faith that our future is going to be in good hands," he said. Mrs. Card-Stubbs also applauded the students for their presentation and encouraged them to submit entries to the region's song-writing competition about the Four-Way Test. Entries are due on December 18.

According to school librarian Merle Vanterpool, the EarlyAct Club—now in its third year at Lockhart—encourages students to adopt the virtue of "service above self," which is to say, "You put others above you," Mrs. Vanterpool explained. "Hopefully, this will cut down on negative behavior in our society and build their self-esteem." The group meets twice each month and meetings are conducted by student officers.

Of the memorial garden, which produces a variety of teas and herbs, Mrs. Vanterpool noted that students have been assigned specific tasks to help with its upkeep. A plaque bearing a photo of La'Quina is erected in the garden and a bench will also be placed there.