

The Virgin Islands Consortium

J.F.L. Inducts 20 Students Into Candy Striper Program

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ST. CROIX -- The Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center inducted 20 new student volunteers into its Candy Striper program, which the hospital says provides positive, energetic students between the ages of 14-18, and who are interested in healthcare, the opportunity to learn, help others, build friendships and give back. Above, Natifah Sealey, center, being inducted into the Candy Striper program.

Students go through a rigorous interview process before being selected, and on Thursday evening, at the hospital's Bennie & Martha Benjamin Conference Center, they were admonished to take their selection seriously.

The ceremony's keynote speaker, Ann Doute, a St. Croix Native who, after receiving her education on the mainland, returned here to work in leadership roles before retiring, drew from her years of experience, giving grim details of circumstances faced by nurses of years gone, who did not have the tools that are readily available to modern caregivers. Taking care of their grandmother was



Candy Striper kadia Joseph, being

embraced by her father, Derek Joseph at J.F.L.'s 2016 Candy Striper ceremony.

"I tell you this story to inform you that in nursing, you've got to be passionate. You've got to be understanding and caring. It's not an eight-to-five job, it's a 24-7 job," Ms. Doute said.

As the students received the inductee aprons, they were joined by parents and family members, provoking applause from the audience throughout the event. Before it concluded, Justa Encarnacion, chief nursing officer at J.F.L., asked the students to think of one word that could describe their reason for participating in the program, a majority of whom chose to volunteer in the nursing field.

"My grandmother," one inductee said. Compassion, giving back, dreams, hope and determination were among some of the other responses given.

According to information provided by J.F.L., the hospital sees the Candy Striper program as an opportunity for youth to volunteer, and also as an important recruiting tool. J.F.L. says researchers have confirmed that many medical professionals in various disciplines and other support staff, started their medical careers as Candy Stripers.

[J.F.L.'s Candy Striper Induction Ceremony](#)

Correction: March 18, 2016

A previous version of this story incorrectly stated that J.F.L. inducted 19 students into its Candy Striper program. However, the correct number is 20, which is reflected in the updated version.

