

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Current And Former V.I. Queens Send Care Packages To Deployed V.I. Soldiers

Human Interest / **Published On June 12, 2016 12:53 PM /**

Staff **June 12, 2016**



ST. THOMAS -- U.S. Virgin Islands soldiers received tokens of appreciation from local queens for their service, Virgin Islands Pageantry, founded by Taiesa Lashley -- the reigning Miss Black Virgin Islands U.S. Ambassador and U.S. Army veteran, announced Saturday.

According to the release, over the past three weeks, reigning and former queens have been working diligently to prepare care packages for the U.S. Virgin Islands National Guard 786th CS HHC Team, the only unit in the territory currently deployed. Queens were tasked with creating and mailing packages that included but were not limited soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, razor, shaving cream, magazines, deodorant, snacks and a



Taiesa Lashley

The queens took great pride in this project, dubbed Operation Uplift, as most queens decorated their boxes with madras, positive quotes and U.S. Virgin Islands Flag. They also included native Virgin Islands delicacies such as tamarind stew & peppermint candies, plus cool items such as V.I. hats and local Virgin Islands artists' albums, says the release.

For Ms. Lashley, originally from St. Thomas but currently residing in Florida, the desire to give back to her community became a focused mission following her deployment to Afghanistan.

"My deployment to Afghanistan opened my eyes," she told The Consortium this morning. "Meeting with Afghani locals, speaking with them, seeing how they lived made me realize how much I take for granted. I made a personal promise to myself to be good and live good after my experience."

She also pointed out the importance of impacting the territory positively in light of the barrage of negative news that sometimes dominate local media.

"Even though I reside off-island I still want to make a positive difference anyway that I can. With all of the issues that we face in the V.I. community, I think its important to do what we can to help others. There is so much negativity; a serious dose of positivity is much needed. Hopefully my projects inspires others contribute. We can definitely solve a few issues we face if we were focused on doing good," she said.

The following queens participated in Operation Uplift:

- Adorya Baly- Miss British Virgin Islands 2015
- Annakiya Hattchett- Miss Ivanna Eudora Kean 2016
- Audrey Malone- Miss Large & In Charge 2014
- Christinique Elizze- Miss Beautiful Beginnings 2016
- Denise James- Virgin Islands Carnival Queen 1995
- Derisa Greaves- Virgin Islands Carnival Queen 2015

- Isabella Sylvester - Miss Caribbean United States USVI 2016
- Janiesha John – Miss Virgin Islands Universe 2010
- J’Lisa Chesterfield- Miss Miami Broward Carnival Queen 2013
- Karmarsha Potter – Virgin Islands Carnival Queen 2016
- Kadijah Lee- Miss St.John Festival Queen 2013
- Kyrelle Thomas- Miss St.John Festival Queen 2014
- Laday’Jah Belle – Miss Charlotte Amalie High School 2016
- Laila Evelyn- Virgin Islands Carnival Princess 2016
- Marissa Duncan- Miss St.John 2005
- Michi Smith- Miss Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School 2016
- Nisieni Griffith- Miss Addelita Cancryn Junior High School 2016
- Shani Smith- Virgin Islands Carnival Queen 2002
- Shawntay Henry- Miss Caribbean United States 2016
- Shayla Solomon- Miss Virgin Islands 2009
- Sheniqua Robinson- Miss Virgin Islands 2010
- Sheniqua Williams- Miss Governmental Agency 2015
- Taiesa Lashley- Miss Black Virgin Islands US Ambassador 2016
- T’Keyah Trotman- Little Miss Beautiful Beginnings 2016

Jessica Taylor as well as 2016 Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School Royal Court Daija Williams, Roniah Andrews, Chelisia Morton, and Kenisha George also participated.

According to the release, Operation Uplift is a service project created by Ms. Lashley, who was inspired to create the project as she recalled the value of care packages during her deployment.

Virgin Islands Pageantry is an organization dedicated to promoting royal Virgin Islands ambassadors, service and the Virgin Islands. The organization also hopes to inspire and motivate local queens and contestants create a platform to make a difference in the community.

Those interested in participating in future projects can email or call Ms. Lashley at vipgeantry@hotmail.com or call 340-344-4873.

V.I. Pageantry’s next service project, Project We Care VI: The School Edition, will be launched in a couple of weeks, according to the release.