

The Virgin Islands Consortium

At Central High School 2016 Graduation, 211 Students Receive Diploma

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Ernice Gilbert **June 16, 2016**



ST. CROIX -- It's graduation season in the U.S. Virgin Islands, as learning institutions both private and public celebrate the achievements of their students. On Wednesday, the St. Croix Central High School graduated 211 students, as family and friends filled the high school's gym, displaying their pride with deafening roars as their children received diplomas, the official badge of successful high school completion.

Dubbed the "impeccable, trendsetting" class of 2016, the students were enamored with kind words from the event's speakers, and motivated them to stand out in the community as leaders.

"You will soar like an eagle wherever you go. As you leave this arena today, with the diploma in your hand, please remember this is your ticket to your future. Don't lose it, don't forget it, don't ignore it," said C.H.S. Principal Janasee Sinclair.

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Senate President Neville James told students that their diplomas were more valuable than any salary that could be earned. Mr. James was followed by Governor Kenneth Mapp, who took his entire time encouraging the graduates to serve in government.

"I am in search of corrections officers, I need police officers, I need teachers, I am looking for social workers, I need carpenters, masons, pipe-fitters, contractors, heavy equipment operators, laborers, paraprofessionals, nursing assistants, nurses -- I am saying to you that today in the Virgin Islands, and on the island of St. Croix, we have vacancies funded, and looking for candidates for these positions."

Class Valedictorian [Hazel A. Acosta](#), said to students that they had matured in many ways, and encouraged them to look back on their accomplishments with a sense of pride, having overcome multiple difficulties and making it to the point of graduation.

Salutatorian McCathie Eugene reminisced on "sleepless nights" in the pursuit of graduation. "Perhaps you could recall those people who told you that you could not make it, and tried to make it their life's mission to ensure that you didn't.

"Whatever your story is, it doesn't matter today. Those instances were merely memories that served to propel you to this point today," Ms. Eugene said.

C.H.S. Guidance Counselor Karen Chancellor, along with Ms. Sinclair and a statement from Department of Education Commissioner Sharon McCollum, who is currently on medical leave, praised the 2016 class for its many accomplishments.

Students have received over \$8 million in scholarship monies; out of the 211 graduates, 62 will attend college, 30 will attend vocational school and 20 will head straight to workforce. A strong showing of 65 received vocational training, and 6 successfully completed U.V.I.'s dual enrollment, among other accomplishments, according to numbers revealed in Ms. McCollum's statement.

The ceremony's keynote speaker, Nikoia Fredericksen, a St. Croix native holding the position of assistant director at Lincoln University, urged students to be persistent in their endeavors, and said that while it was okay to fail sometimes, they should turn failure into a propellant that shifts them into destiny.

"Lastly," Ms. Fredericksen said, "take time to appreciate your small successes along the way. You may not be where you want to be, but I guarantee that you are where you need to be. Celebrate the moments like today and bask in your achievement."

Feature Image: Class of 2016 graduate Maquida Reynolds (Ernice Gilbert, VIC).