

The Virgin Islands Consortium

With Block Party, AARP Celebrates And Highlights Its Many Accomplishments In Community

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ST. CROIX -- The Christiansted Market was barricaded on Saturday afternoon and into the night for a block party from an unlikely organizer: American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

With a new state director at the helm, the nascent initiative, which will be held in St. Thomas next year, is to "help raise awareness of the many good and very important things that AARP does in the Virgin Islands," said State Director Troy deChabert-Schuster.

Yesterday's event, which started at 4:00 p.m., included produce from local farmers, local food from various vendors, moko jumbies and a finale from Xpress Band.

The event was held at the market for an important reason: AARP had recently painted the facility -- one of the many initiatives performed by the nonprofit in the community -- and, according to Mr. deChabert-Schuster, it's past time that the territory's residents become more aware of the group's benevolent acts.

"Every year AARP performs a day of service nationally in every state on or around September 11. So last weekend, on the 10th and 11th, we painted the market -- all the beams and the tables -- and today we're celebrating that day of service by having this block party," Mr. deChabert-Schuster said. "It is also to raise awareness of AARP in the Virgin Islands, and all the good things that we do with our community outreach projects, and also advocacy in the Legislature and federally."

The block party was organized in conjunction with AmeriCorps, with said group's employees helping to paint the facility on September 10. The Department of Tourism, as well as Public Works, which controls the market, sponsored the event.

Said to be the first annual, the block party will move to St. Thomas next year, Mr. deChabert-Schuster said, as AARP aims to bolster its presence on the second largest of U.S. the Virgin Islands.