

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Reef Fest 2016 To Focus On Marine Debris Education And Prevention

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ST. THOMAS -- The Center for Marine and Environmental Studies (CMES) at the University of the Virgin Islands is inviting the community to celebrate the ocean environment at Reef Fest 2016, a press release UVI issued Tuesday has made known.

The eighth annual Reef Fest will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Nov. 12, '16 at Coral World Ocean Park on this island.

This year's theme is "Marine Debris Education and Prevention," which will highlight the various ways in which we can reduce our overall impact on the environment. This event is free for everyone, and there will be fun prize giveaways.

“Reef Fest is one of the most important environmental events held each year,” said Howard Forbes, Jr., Virgin Islands Marine Advisory Service (VIMAS) coordinator on St. Thomas. “This event will raise awareness about marine debris, which is man-made trash that enters our oceans intentionally or unintentionally.” Forbes continued, “Our goal is to highlight the ways in which individuals at home can reduce their waste stream by following the three R’s: reduce, reuse and recycle.”

Reef Fest will feature science presentations, marine life exhibits, environmental booths, raffle prize giveaways, live music and much more. Virgin Islands youth will present “Reef Raps” for the annual competition. A cash prize will be awarded to the first place winner. There will also be interactive marine educational games and presentations by various faculty members on marine biology and zoology. According to Jarvon Stout, a VIMAS assistant, several exhibits will show people how to repurpose single-use plastic bottles and turn trash into art.

“At Reef Fest, adults can acquire information about the various natural resources here in the Virgin Islands, and how they can preserve those resources by minimizing their personal waste,” said Valerie Peters, marketing director for Coral World. “Meanwhile, children can enjoy fun educational opportunities. We will also have awesome giveaways such as hotel stays, kayak trips and other prizes.”

“Any type of garbage that enters the ocean is a significant problem,” said Forbes. “That’s why our main objective with Reef Fest is to bring attention to the issue of marine debris and prevention, and to offer people practical solutions about how they can help to improve the situation.

Reef Fest is a Virgin Islands Marine Advisory Service (VIMAS) and Blue Flag USVI event. For more information, visit the Center for Marine and Environmental Studies or call (340) 693-1672.

Feature Image: From left to right: Twins Levannia and Leandre Finley experience making their own toothpaste with UVI chemistry professor Stan Latesky at a past Reef Fest. (Credit: Aisha Zakiya)

[Watch the original video](#)