

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix Students Enjoy A Day Of Entertainment At Celebration For Governor's Reading Challenge

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ST. CROIX -- Students who participated in the 8th Annual Governor's Summer Reading Challenge enjoyed a fun-filled afternoon at Governor Mapp's Big Celebration held Saturday, November 19 at the St. Croix Central High School gymnasium.

The highly anticipated event celebrated students in the territory who took the Challenge and read five or more books from June to September. Brothers Ethan and Aidan Morris, hailing from Free Will Baptist School, were the District's Top Readers. The duo read a total of 71 books over the course of the summer and both were awarded a tablet for their accomplishment. Juanita Gardine Elementary School registered the most participants in the 2016 Challenge, with a record 179 readers this year.

St. Croix Calypso Queen Temisha Libert opened the event and serenaded the crowd with beautiful renditions of the Star Spangled Banner and the Virgin Islands March. Representing the Office of the Governor, St. Croix Administrator Stephanie Williams thanked and lauded sponsors, school administrators, parents and most importantly, students for taking on the Challenge with much success.

St. Croix Insular Superintendent Colleen Mae Williams talked about the importance of reading. "Reading is fundamental, reading is exciting, and reading helps our children to improve their vocabulary, not only their reading skills, but their comprehension skills," she said. Ms. Williams further acknowledged that the more students read, the better academically successful they would become.

Virgin Islands 2017 State Teacher of the Year and St. Croix Central High School English teacher, Dinah Browne was also on hand to celebrate the students. She praised parents who encouraged their children to read and motivated those students who may not have met the five-book requirement of the Reading Challenge. "I know the importance of students reading to engage their imagination, open their minds, create new worlds and see new things," Ms. Browne said.

DJ Vladimir Williams entertained the crowd, while students enjoyed a host of activities, including bounce houses, coloring, arts and crafts, face painting, the Bookmobile and a mini golf course. WAPA, WTJX Channel 12, the VI Fire Service, and the VI National Guard participated and provided a host of educational games and activities for students. Disney's Minnie and Mickey Mouse also made appearances. Raffles were drawn periodically and students participated in sack races, musical chairs and line dances. There were free book giveaways, courtesy of Better World Books. Local vendors provided food and treats for students and their families.

The Annual Governor's Summer Reading Challenge challenges students in grades K-6 attending the territory's public, private and parochial schools to read five or more books during the summer months. A part of an initiative of governors across the United States, the Virgin Islands' Challenge uniquely provides students with books written and illustrated by local and Caribbean authors.