

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Rocketry Club Students Encouraged To Work Hard At Induction Ceremony

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ST. CROIX -- [One year and four months ago](#), Elena Christian Junior High School (E.C.J.H.S.) Rocketry Club students, along with their family and friends, gathered at the Church of the Nazarene in Williams Delight, to be honored for their efforts that had led them to multiple rocketry competitions on the mainland U.S., where their work brought them [before a leader among the greatest of men](#), President Barack Obama.

On Sunday at the same location, Rocketry Club students -- members new and old -- were inducted into the program, as Steve Bullock, a science teacher at E.C.J.H.S. and leader of the group, sought to continue building on the work that has delivered multiple successes, with former members excelling in top careers while becoming respectable

members of society.

Seventeen students were inducted into the program yesterday; a requirement for participation in major competitions.

But even more important than receiving the induction certificate, Mr. Bullock told The Consortium that such events were indelible in the molding of future leaders, because they help students see themselves as important, which in turn encourages respectable behavior through adolescence.

The induction ceremony kicked off with praise and worship at the church, followed by remarks from Mr. Bullock, who explained the importance of the program while giving some historical background. His talk was followed by that of Clifford Cuffy, a National Association of Rocketry member, who spoke to students on the importance of hard work, using basketball legend Michael Jordan as an example. Mr. Cuffy used Mr. Jordan's dedication to his craft to inspire students to be dedicated to theirs. "While everyone was asleep and enjoying themselves, he spent time on the court and today is the greatest basketball player that we have ever seen," Mr. Cuffy said.

The keynote, delivered by Willard John -- best known as the former principal of the St. Croix Educational Complex High School, but whose true contribution relative to the Rocketry Club being his expansion of the program from rocketry to rocketry and meteorology during his three-year stint as principal of E.C.J.H.C. -- stuck on the theme of hard work, expounding on Mr. Cuffy's example of Mr. Jordan.

Mr. John said Mr. Jordan practice while a member of the Chicago Bulls would begin at 4:00 p.m. and end at 7:00 p.m. But Mr. Jordan would be on the court from 2:00 p.m., and would remain for two hours more -- until 9:00 p.m., after his colleagues had left. Mr. John said Mr. Jordan wasn't born that way; the basketball phenomenon honed his talent through incessant training, he argued.

"Your success in anything that you do in life depends on two things, how hard you work, and how long you work hard," Mr. John said. He also spoke to the students about accepting that they will make mistakes while trying to become their best, because "it's through your mistakes that you will learn."

"When you fail at something, you need to go back to the drawing board and ask yourself, 'What important lesson can I learn from this failure?'" he said.

Later, Mr. John gave five lessons in life that lead to success. Beginning with obsession, he said the students needed to be somewhat consumed with what they want to achieve in life. "Have it in your mind constantly, during your waking and sleeping hours," he said. Other lessons included persistence, the importance of dreaming and having a plan. "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail," he said, using contractors as an analogy.

"Finally, you've got to have faith," Mr. John said. "When you're in your darkest moments and you want to give up, you've got to have faith that you're going to succeed."

Nearing the end, all 17 students were summoned to the front of the church to be inducted. They stood proudly as their names were called out by Mr. Bullock, who remarked on the importance of each student in the group, highlighting their various skills

that make them ineradicable members of the Rocketry Club.

Mr. Bullock's dream is to see the program replicated throughout schools in the territory, and wondered aloud why steps hadn't been taken for its duplication. "I don't know what would prevent our authorities from recognizing that this builds self-esteem, discipline [and success]," he said, highlighting students who were once part of the club now working in laboratories and other important industries in the field of science.

"I'm willing to do it free in every school on St. Croix; no increase in my remuneration," Mr. Bullock said.

Feature Image: Rocketry Club inductees pose for a picture following an induction ceremony held at the Church of the Narazene in Williams Delight on Sunday. (Credit: Ernice Gilbert, VIC)

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