

The Virgin Islands Consortium

An Outpouring Of Love In Grove Place As Hundreds Turn Out For Serieux Family Candlelight Vigil And March

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ST. CROIX -- It was described by Territorial Police Chief Winsbut McFarland as the worst crime to ever occur on St. Croix. It was even worse than the [Fountain Valley Massacre](#), he said, because it involved the murdering of children.

Yet, as the territory tries to recover from the [triple homicide of Lyana Serieux and her two sons](#), Jordan and Jeremiah Sereieux, ages 10 and 5 respectively, residents of the big island sought to defeat evil with good, hatred with love, and division with unity, as hundreds gathered at the D. Hamilton Jackson Park in Grove Place on Thursday evening

in support of the Serieux family.

It was one of the biggest candlelight vigils on the island, with residents from all walks of life taking time out of their schedules to attend. Among them were Chief McFarland, Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, Sen. Sammuel Sanes, V.I.T.E.M.A. Director Mona Barnes, St. Croix Rescue's David Goodrich, and others. The event was organized by Ms. Serieux's cousin, Nadra Taylor Lloyd, along with [Dynel Lang](#), a popular figure in the St. Croix community and host of the Dynel Amore Show, and Shermaine Springer, whose community activism grew urgent following the death of her 18-year-old son, who was gunned down at the Altona Lagoon during a party just over a year ago while attempting to help his friend.

As Pastor Jermaine Mulley opened the gathering with a word of prayer, many of the attendees began assembling closer, while some stood and others sat on the outskirts of the field. Everyone's gaze, however, was focused on the park's bandstand.

Emotions ran high as the mother of Ms. Serieux made her way to the stage area, embraced by friends and strangers alike, all sharing condolences, if nothing else, for the unthinkable crime that wiped out three of her progeny from the earth in one weekend. First, the mother was holding up okay, but once near the bandstand, where she was joined by other family members, her strength waned.

By the time Tia, a well-known local artist, started singing "I Look To You" by Whitney Houston, Ms. Serieux's mother started crying plaintively, unable to bear the loss. Ms. Springer, who admitted that she was still grieving her son's death, consoled Ms. Serieux's mom for sometime, but gave in to tears herself.

[View the original embedded media](#)

Ras Batch, a venerable reggae artists on St. Croix, called for unity when he sang "Live As One", some of whose lyrics include, "St. Croix stop fighting amongst ourselves."

Chief McFarland spoke briefly but his words ricocheted through the hearts of attendees, as he remorsefully spoke of the innocent children.

"As a community when do we say enough is enough?" Chief McFarland questioned. "Is enough enough when it comes to your doorstep, or is enough enough when they start to victimize our young women? Is enough enough when they start to kill innocent children within our community? When do we really decide that enough is enough? Well, I'll tell you when: anytime you start to victimize the children in our community, enough has to be enough," Chief McFarland said.

Because the park is large, the scattered crowd might have given the impression that while the turnout was okay, it was not as strong as it could have been. But as attendees gathered at the bottom of the park in preparation for the march, a better picture began to form. Hundreds chanted "silence is violence" as they marched north to circle back to the park, pleading to those with information about the crime to come forward. Others chanted "justice for Serieux" as they demanded the apprehension of whomever may have perpetrated the vicious act. The march and vigil represented a clarion call to those in authority, reminding them that the community would not rest or relent until justice is served.

Upon returning to the park, a wide circle was formed, each person holding a lit candle in memory of the victims. It was a powerful show of unity against violence, and represented St. Croix's compassion for the Serieux family. More songs were sung, more words of encouragement uttered by faith leaders; more tears shed, and more love shared during that time. Ms. Serieux's sister, in indescribable pain, nonetheless took up a mic and managed to sing "Take Me To The King" by Tamela Mann, whose chorus goes, "Take me to the king, I don't have much to bring, my heart is torn to pieces, here's my offering."

Near the end of the event, the family corralled in the small bandstand, as Anthony Benjamin, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, prayed. He called on God to compel those responsible to turn themselves in. He also prayed for strength for the family, he too having lost a an elder of his congregation, who was collecting almonds for his wife at the very park of Thursday's gathering, when he was [beaten unconscious and later died](#). Mr. Benjamin said the elder's wife, now a widow, was still grieving her husband's death.

"Our father, we know that you are keenly aware of what this family is struggling with right now. Nothing we can say, nothing we can do, will in any way eliminate what they are feeling. We've come to show them that while we can't stop it, we will support them in it," prayed Mr. Benjamin.

Ms. Serieux's mother, who throughout the event remained quiet when she was not crying, was to give brief remarks in closing. But the pain of losing a daughter and two minor grandsons in one weekend through a vicious and malicious crime would not allow her to say much. "Thank you everybody for coming," she managed.

Feature Image: Lyana Serieux's mother, center, embraces a family member on Thursday evening at the D. Hamilton Jackson Park in Grove Place. (Credit: Reemy-Reemz Photography)