

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Howard University Students Join Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority To Refresh Kids Playground In Frederiksted

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ST. CROIX -- Students visiting the U.S. Virgin Islands from Howard University on Sunday afternoon joined members of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Mu Gamma Omega Chapter, for a cleanup and refreshing -- complete with paint jobs -- of the Midre Cummings Park in Frederiksted, a popular west end playground for children.

The project was part of the sorority's national initiative to refurbish 1,908 playgrounds, said the local chapter's president, Oran Bowry, a well-known figure in the Virgin Islands and senior vice president and division manager of the Virgin Islands Region of Banco Popular. The number of playgrounds chosen also signifies the year Alpha Kappa Alpha was established, and the event was made all the more special because the sorority,

founded in 1908, got its start at Howard University.

For several hours members of the Mu Gamma Omega Chapter, sporting their signature pink and joined by the 23 Howard University students, worked to not only cleanup the children's playground. but also repaint portions of it, including seats. Among the colors, not only because it's the branded color of the sorority, but the job.



Alpha Kappa Alpha, Mu Gamma Omega Chapter Local

President Oran Bowry paints a playground seat.

"We're very honored to have working alongside with us the alternate spring break team for Howard University that are here for a week of community service," Ms. Bowry said.

Kevin Washington, a professor at Howard University, said the university had dispatched over 700 students around the world as part of the alternative spring break initiative -- including St. Martin and Anguilla -- "engaging in the process of restoration and the idea that we are one community," Mr. Washington said. "Rather than simply talking about spring break where they go and find a beach to party, they decided that they wanted to go and find a place to go work," he said. Mr. Washington described the trip as enjoyable, and said they've been treated like family. "It is understanding the idea that you get back what you put out in the universe, and so that lesson is coming true," he said.

Brandon Green, a graduate student at the Howard School of Divinity, who also serves as advisor to the cadre of students visiting the islands, said they arrived in the territory on Thursday evening and began their community service efforts on Friday and continued through Sunday. "As we look forward to the week, this has been the most relaxing part of the whole week. And so even though we have been working since we got here, it's not going to stop today, it's going to continue until the end of week until we leave on Saturday, March 17."



Sorority members

work to refresh the Midre Cummings Park in Frederiksted.

Students from St. Croix will have an opportunity to participate in Howard University's "Spring Forward" initiative, where they will visit the university's campus and participate in activities there, Mr. Green said. The initiative is planned for the first week of April, he said.

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