

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Central High School Students Experience Borinquen Culture During Puerto Rico Trip

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About 12 students in St. Croix Central High School (CHS) Foreign Language classes got the chance to travel to Puerto Rico and pay tribute to the Hispanic culture of their neighbors to their northwest, the Department of Education announced recently.

The students who are learning either the Spanish or French language at the high school were in Puerto Rico from April 16 -20, 2018 with their maestros on a cultural and educational trip. They visited several places of interest such as the Capitol (San Juan), El Morro, a citadel in Old San Juan, El Yunque National Forest, La Bio Bay, El Faro in Fajardo, the City of Ponce including the Serralles Castle, as well as other places.

Maestros or teachers accompanying them were CHS Foreign Language Chairperson Eli A. Torres, Dr. Annette García, Monifa Steele and Esthan Said. “The Hon. Anibal Meléndez Rivera, Mayor of Fajardo was the host for our students,” said Torres. “And he indeed went all out showcasing Puerto Rican culture and hospitality to the students. They participated in cultural workshops of the typical La Bomba dance and learn how to wrap a turban around the head as a symbol of African pride.” These workshops were offered in Loiza, a traditional town with strong Africa influences.

The students followed through by visiting and receiving guidance from their interactions at the Inter-American University of Fajardo and the IBC Technical College. “This experience was enriching for the students because they learned about the culture of a Spanish-speaking country and its political system. They also engaged in a cultural exchange with students of the School of Fine Arts of the Municipality of Fajardo,” Torres said. “During this time (the students) got a practical opportunity to speak Spanish which is the goal of the Foreign Language Department at Central High. We surely enjoyed every moment of the beautiful island of Puerto Rico. We thank all the sponsors for making this trip happen.”

Local sponsors of CHS foreign language students’ escapade to Puerto Rico were the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands, the Virgin Islands Lottery and the Department of Sport, Parks and Recreation. Among the many supporters in Puerto Rico were the Mayor of Fajardo, the Hon. Anibal Melendez, and Sra. Torres arranged for the management of the Burger King Company to offer free coupons to students for burgers, drinks and other meals.