

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Inner Changes For Boys And Girls Council, One Of The Best Kept Secrets On St. Croix

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ST. CROIX -- A young mother doing her best to raise her daughters searches for help from community programs that should be available, but finds none. She was a first-time mom with little knowledge on parenting and schooling.

The years passed on and the daughters grew older, one of whom at the time was in her teenage years, when new attitudes manifest, and guidance on how to deal with the changes in behaviors were limited.

"I did not know how to handle those situations, so I started to reach out to the community, do my research, call Women's Coalition -- call all about and there was nowhere at that

time, ten years ago, doing anything like this. So I said I'm going to become part of the solution."

Those were the words of Melanie Titre, the founder of Inner Changes for Girls and Boys Council, Inc., a nonprofit youth organization offering a variety of programs, among them classes from kindergarten to 12th grade. Inner Changes is located at 140 B Estate St. George in the Espior Business Center.

At the time, Mrs. Titre was attending DeVry University, and during her last year in college, she focused her thesis on institutions similar to Inner Changes, which was initially for girls only.

She approached her dean, explained her intentions, and the college funded Mrs. Titre's entire program for the first year while she was at the University, which is where she said the nonprofit, called at the time "Inner Changes for Girls", was started.

"They were the ones who helped me get my nonprofit status," she said.

The school was for girls only initially because "I wanted to see girls really move ahead in education, really know their self-value, know about self esteem and about mannerism and just know about how to be a young lady," Mrs. Titre said.

After graduation, Mrs. Titre brought the program back home, where she was asked by many to extend it to boys as well.

Today, the school is a thriving learning institution currently with 60 students, eight teachers along with support staff, and an environment Mrs. Titre said offers a unique, exclusive learning experience that has produced lasting, positive results from former students and testimonials of praise from parents.

Inner Changes also has a vibrant after-school program that accepts public, private, parochial and home schooled students.

"Let's say you are a child who does not need assistance because you're already doing good in school, we challenge you," Mrs. Titre said. "We stretch your knowledge, help you with reading and math, keep you up to date on your reading and math skills; keep you engaged and keep you in a safe environment where you have structured after-school activities."

Aside from its after-school and regular school programs, Inner Changes also offers an online schooling program that is growing in popularity, coming with a number of convenient options not available in the public school system, Ms. Titre said. The students taking online classes attend school at Inner Changes as regular students from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Parents can stay from home and see all their children's assignments along with their performance -- a benefit that has been embraced by parents, who get to see in real time how the children are performing, while understanding where students may need help.

"The students have their teachers who guide and monitor them as they work through their different assignments," Mrs. Titre said. "It's everything like regular school, it just brings more flexibility."

As for what type of child is accepted, Inner Changes, Mrs. Titre said, does not discriminate. "We help everyone. So it's not like if someone has a behavioral issue, or they have a learning disability -- all these different labels; we don't do labels. We help everybody from the honor roll students to the failing students," she said. The school's curriculum is described as "blended learning that teaches students how to develop their success growth mindset."

"When students develop a growth mindset they gain confidence in their ability to learn. They take on challenges and work harder, learn more, get smarter, get better grades leading to higher success achievement in school," according to Inner Changes' *modus operandi*, a particular way or method of doing something that is well established.

Importantly, all the school's online programs are nationally accredited.

"Online and afterschool is important because educational school is not a one size fits all process," said Inner Changes Campus Director and Vice Principal Dr. George Franklin. "Everyone think and learn individually and good learning requires everyone is taught according to their ability and need. This is what Inner Changes does best."

"As program manager, I work hand in hand with Mrs. Titre supervising the staff, maintaining the building, and implementing rules and regulations for staff and students," said Patricia Smith. "In my three years with Inner Changes, I have seen growth on a whole and online schooling is so beneficial to our students because each student is capable of learning on his/her own pace. As we know, each individual has their own learning style."

"I've been working as a facilitator for Inner Changes for approximately 2 years," said Ehsan Said. "Working with children of all ages helped me to realize, more than ever, education is essential for the success of our future. With my bachelor degree in computer science and masters in management of information technology, I'm able to bring new ideas into the classrooms."

Inner Changes is now accepting registration. Prices range between \$300 and \$385 monthly per student. From 1st to 6th grade, the price is \$300 per student; \$350 for 7th and 8th grade, and \$385 for high school students. ***Reference this story and get a \$50 discount.***

Telephone numbers for more information are: 340-277-3152, or 340-719-1725. Email inquiries to innerchanges.vi52@yahoo.com, or visit the website at innerchanges.org.

Feature Image: Melanie Titre, who's sitting, joins Inner Changes educators for a professional staff picture.