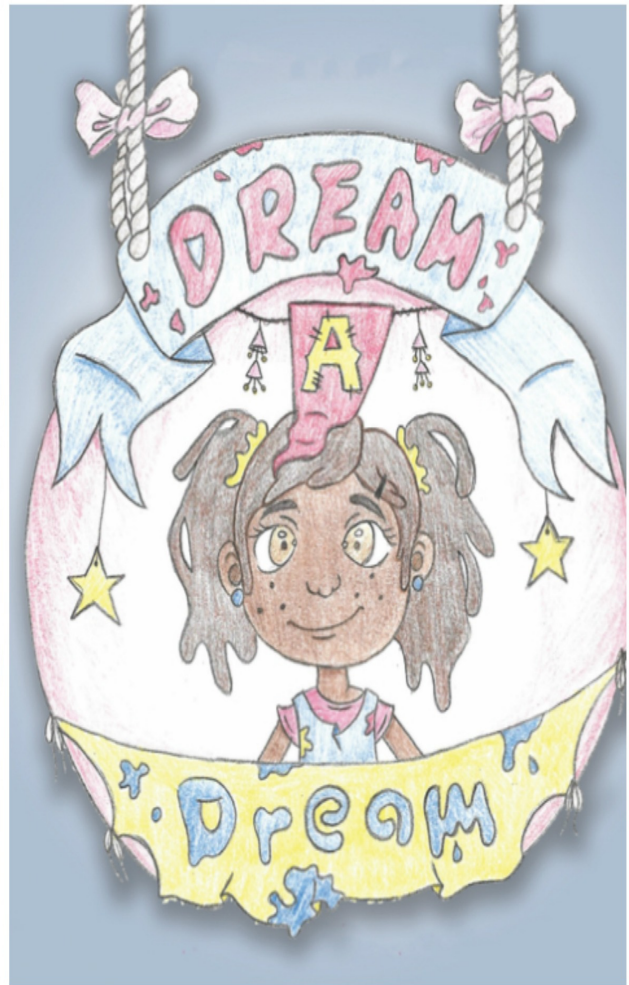


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Project Promise Student Releases Children's Book; Copies Now Available Locally And Online

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ST. CROIX -- Project Promise announced on Tuesday the release of *"Dream A Dream,"* a children's book written by Vianca Medina, one of the program's Caterpillar students. According to the release, the book was written in 2016 and is the story of a shy young girl who has big dreams, but is too shy to pursue them. Writing the book was the brainchild of Medina and her Project Promise mentor, Gladys Gonzalez, who began writing the story as a way to bond, and a project Ms. Gonzalez could use to help Vianca improve her reading and writing. Both being shy in nature, it was easy for the two to agree on the premise of the story.

"I am so excited for Vianca, and very proud of her. The book is really about the two of us, in our own individual ways," Ms. Gonzalez said. "We are both shy, but we are overcoming it. We both have insecurities about our skills and our work, but we are seeing the fruits of our labor."

"We are thrilled to release this book, it is our hopes that it inspires countless children to dare to dream, as we have inspired Vianca," said Resa O'Reilly, Project Promise founder and president.

The story, while not published previously, received early recognition and attention, according to the release. Vianca read her book to a kindergarten class at Lew Muckle Elementary school, and she also read the story to former gubernatorial candidate Soraya Dias Coffelt, who herself is a writer of children's books.

Vianca was honored during her sixth grade promotional ceremony in 2016 for the book and was asked to sign copies for Governor Kenneth Mapp and officials from the V.I. Department of Education, the release said.

"Never in a million years would I have thought that our book which started out as a small Mentor-Mentee project, would get to the magnitude it has reached," Ms. Gonzalez said. "My initial hope was to continue to help Vianca with her reading and to enhance her writing skills. But to be an author at 12 years old, to dedicate and sign copies of her book for government officials, and have her book offered in stores locally and nationwide, is surreal. I am extremely proud of Vianca, and I know she will go far."

The illustrator of *Dream A Dream's* main character Annie, is Iyana Cariño, a young artist, and St. Croix Central High School graduate. Ms. Cariño was a recipient of the "*Stacy Plaskett Art Award*," which is considered to be quite an honor for such a young artist. When asked to draw "Annie," both the author and her mentor were amazed that Cariño had captured exactly the "Annie" they pictured in their minds. Ms. Cariño recently relocated to the mainland in pursuit of her own dreams.

Dream A Dream is now available in print and was published by Project Promise and funded in part by a grant from the Virgin Islands Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. The book release event will be held at the Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts on December 14, 2018, and one hundred fifth and sixth graders will be invited to participate. Copies of the book will be available at Undercover Books, St. George Village Botanical Garden and the Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts. Copies can also be purchased on Amazon.