

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Central High Student Is One Of 50 Nationwide To Win 'Make The Break' Winter Holiday Contest

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ST. CROIX -- St. Croix Central High School sophomore Kiara Ortiz won the Achieve 3000 “Make the Break” Winter Holiday Contest —a competition that calls for students to complete independent study lessons in content areas during the winter holiday break, the Department of Education said Friday.

Achieve 3000 Project Manager Julie Eckard presented Kiara with a certificate and gift on Wednesday during a small ceremony held in chemistry teacher Dr. Laura Mujica’s classroom.

Kiara was motivated to participate in the contest to not only receive extra credit but to improve her skills, D.O.E. said.

“I began the contest because I was inspired to do better. I wanted to be better, because why not?” she said. “At first I thought it was boring. I didn’t feel like doing it. Then I started doing it. And from that moment I was like wow this is interesting so I continued.”

The Achieve 3000 Winter Holiday Contest challenged students to complete 5 lessons between December 22, 2018, through January 6, 2019, with an activity score of 75 percent or above, D.O.E. said. If a student completed 10 lessons or more with an activity score of 75 percent and above, it doubled the chance to win the contest.



Charles Pollo Goodings owner of local clothing brand Apollo Legion with Kiara Ortiz, Achieve 3000 Contest winner.

Students were able to complete lessons in any subject of their choice. Kiara Ortiz completed hers in chemistry, according to the release.

“Congratulations, we are so proud of you because over the holidays you went on your own and chose to work on your literacy. So because of that, you are the winner for the territory,” said Achieve 3000 Project Manager Julie Eckard.

She added, “It’s terrific that you won the contest, but even more than that your Lexile level has already gone up 110 points, which is amazing. You should be really proud of yourself. And we hope you continue to with Achieve 3000 and work on the program.”

CHS Principal Carlos McGregor, Assistant Principal Dinah Browne, Acting Deputy Superintendent Dr. Carla Bastian and St. Croix District Director of Data and Assessments Dr. Saul Santiago were present for the ceremony along with Kiara’s mother and grandmother.

Ms. Bastian gave congratulatory remarks on Kiara’s accomplishment.

“On behalf of the Office of the Insular Superintendent, I want to wish you congratulations on your success. We hope that you continue to strive for academic excellence,” she said. “I also want you to motivate others to join the activity and make sure that Achieve 3000 becomes a priority for them also.”

In addition to congratulating Kiara, Mr. Santiago acknowledged Mr. McGregor’s efforts in implementing the program.

“I want to congratulate Mr. McGregor for the efforts in pushing the program, beyond just ELA (English Language Arts) courses; in other words pushing it to other subject areas,” Mr. Santiago acknowledged.

Mr. McGregor closed the ceremony with a few words of his own. “Thank you to Julie for again coming into the school and reaching out to our teachers and making this program happen. We see the results, our students are doing better in literacy especially on the state testing,” he said. “I also want to thank Assistant Principal Browne, who supervises the ELA program and of course Dr. Mujica for encouraging our students to log on and pushing them to excel. Congratulations Kiara.”

Chemistry teacher, Dr. Mujica mentioned that Kiara’s interest encouraged other students to participate in the Achieve 3000 program.

“Besides the contest, she systematically met the achievements every single week, which encouraged other students to do the same. She set an example for them,” Mujica said.

Kiara received a certificate from Achieve 3000 and a Singsation Solo Deluxe 5-in-1 Karaoke System and merchandise from local clothing brand Apollo Legion. She is one of over 50 winners from across the United States.

Feature Image: Achieve 3000 Project Manager Julie Eckard presents Kiara Ortiz with certificate and gift. (Credit: Dept. of Education)

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