

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Senators, Dept. of Agriculture Team Up To Beautify Alfredo Andrews Elementary School

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ST. CROIX -- Senators Alicia Barnes and Novelle Francis completed phase one of beautification and improvement efforts at the Alfredo Andrews Elementary School Monday with the help of the Department of Agriculture's Commissioner Nominee, Positive Nelson, a Monday release has made known.

The Department of Agriculture donated and placed two picnic tables and three truck-loads of mulch around the school grounds early Monday afternoon to reduce the amount of caliche and to act as a dust suppressant. Grass seedlings were also donated by Mo Mulching, LLC, the release said.

Ms. Barnes remarked on the effort: "This is a real relief, especially for those that suffer from allergies and skin irritation. It has been extremely windy for the past two weeks, so we've been really bearing the brunt of the dust. Also, it helps to beautify the school, make it look better and aesthetically appealing. We're just happy that the mulch is here, because we were trying on our own for quite some time to get it done and we were hitting a lot of walls," Principal Andrea Hobson said. "Since Senator Francis and I adopted the school, we thought that we would address some of the low-hanging fruit, such as physical plant issues that were identified by Principal Andrea Hobson.

"One of the things she brought to our attention was the significant amount of caliche dust impacting the students when they come out to play. We partnered with the Department of Agriculture, who donated the mulch to us, and Mo Mulching, LLC who donated grass seedlings. This will begin to at least have some soil erosion and beautification measures in place so that students can enjoy their outdoor green space. I would just like to thank Agriculture Commissioner Nominee Positive T.A. Nelson and Mo Mulching, LLC for the donation of their resources to make this a possibility for our children and to ensure that they are in an environment that is conducive to learning. Special thanks also to the hard-working employees of the Department of Agriculture who assisted with today's efforts."

Mr. Francis said, "I am very thankful today that the Department of Agriculture and Commissioner Nominee Nelson, myself, as well as Senator Barnes have been able to deliver on our promise to assist the Alfredo Andrews School. As you know, we adopted the school, and we want to make every effort to make the learning environment a pleasant one. This was one of the issues that was brought to our attention when we had a discussion in respect to what we can do to assist them, so we are happy to deliver on that promise today."

Former Senator Nelson said he was happy to support his former colleagues in the beautification effort at Alfredo Andrews, noting that it was for the children. "It's all about the children, and my guys out here are happy to make the ground easy to play on. Together we are working to address what we can. I'm glad they adopted the school and the department is happy to be able to help the senators in making the playground better for the children," he said.

Efforts to repave the school's basketball court are also underway, which is the second project on the list so far, according to the release.