

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Junior High School Students On St. Croix Participate In Solar Racing Event Organized By VI Energy Office

Sports / **Published On April 29, 2019 09:30 PM /**

Staff **April 29, 2019**



The Virgin Islands Energy Office (V.I.E.O.) held an educational workshop on solar energy for the St. Croix district junior high school students at the Mon Bijou Youth Center on Friday, March 29, V.I.E.O. has announced. The Junior Solar Sprint (JSS) Workshop introduced students to the renewable energy concept of solar power.

The workshop was the precursor for next year's JSS territorial competition, where students from both St. Croix and St. Thomas-St. John district seventh and eighth graders will have an opportunity to compete in races, with the winning team traveling to the U.S. mainland to compete nationally, according to the release. The JSS is part of a national competition sponsored by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), and the

Society of Automotive Engineers.

Students worked in teams with their peers from other schools and were encouraged to use creativity, engineering concepts, and teamwork to achieve their goal of constructing the fastest race car. They participated in an introductory workshop on how to build a solar race car, led by V.I.E.O. Energy Analyst, Carl Joseph. Afterward, students separated into eight teams with four members and were guided by mentors from various schools and technical staff from the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority, and the Caribbean Green Technology Center at the University of the Virgin Islands.



Virgin Islands
JUNIOR S

After teams competed in several heats, the final race resulted in victory for Team C, which was comprised of Amari Bodley, Church of God (Holiness) and Academy; Michael deChabert, Free Will Baptist Christian School; Semaj Johnson II, St. Mary's Catholic School; Keondre Lewis, John H. Woodson Jr. High School; and their mentor Nulbeltha Martinez of the Elena L. Christian Jr. High School.

For their participation, all schools and students were awarded trophies and certificates, while volunteers received certificates of appreciation.

Hosting the event at the Mon Bijou Youth Center brought the impact of Renewable Energy full circle, according to the release. The Mon Bijou Youth Center is equipped with a 10 kW Solar plus Tesla Powerwall battery backup power system. The system was installed by ProSolar Systems, a local Solar Vendor/Contractor, using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds administered by the VI Housing Finance Authority (VIFHA). For years the Mon Bijou Youth Center has provided a critical resource to the community through afterschool programs, computer access, and summer camps. The center's recent investment in renewable energy ensures the availability of those resources during energy emergencies, and highlights the potential of public/private energy partnerships within the Virgin Islands, V.I.E.O. said.

According to the release, since 1974, the the Energy Office has supported the Virgin Islands Department of Education's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) curriculum by providing avenues to foster students' interest. Activities such as Virgin Islands Energy Education Week (VIEEW), Energy Action Month, KidWind Challenge, and K-12 energy presentations to schools, community organizations, and summer programs, also support such initiatives.

For more information, call the VIEO St. Croix office at (340) 713-8436 or St. Thomas office at (340) 714-8436.