

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Campers At Juanita Gardine Visit Bohlke International Airways As Part Of STEAM Education Summer Enrichment Camp

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Sixty students enrolled in Juanita Gardine Elementary School's Summer Enrichment Camp visited the Bohlke International Airways hangar on July 12 to learn about the company, and the various tech and engineering careers it offers, the Department of Education announced Wednesday.

The tour was led by Bethsaida "Betsy" Santos, Bohlke Airways customer service supervisor, who helped facilitate the field trip with Gardine Principal Barbara McGregor.

“As part of the summer program, we are trying to explore careers and activities in STEM,” McGregor said. “Sometimes, the technology side of it is a little hard and the engineering side, so this just ties in really well for the engineering and technology.”

The tour began at Bohlke's main office, where Santos highlighted some of the job functions of the Customer Service Department, D.O.T. said.

“Every time military aircrafts come in, we greet them by providing them with a complimentary vehicle, coolers with soft drinks and goody bags,” she told students. “We do reservations for them, car rentals, information on internal systems for payments, and we also talk to the towers from time to time, when we’re actually picking up a pilot there and we need to communicate to carry him back.”

Bohlke flies to the United States, the Caribbean, South America and Canada. The airline will soon begin charter flights to Europe, according to Bohlke Captain Reynold Modeste.

“We’re global here at Bohlke,” he said. “We are the ones who fuel every, single aircraft that comes into the island, whether it’s medical, private, a regular commercial flight, military or chartered.”

Captain Modeste went on to explain the additional role Bohlke plays in the operation of aircrafts.

“We also provide maintenance for the aircrafts,” he said. “So, if any of those airlines need work, we supply the mechanics for the aircrafts. We’re the only entity out here that is a Fixed Based Operator, which is like gas station, in a sense. They get [everything they need] at one place.”

Outside the office at the main hanger, students learned about the day-to-day job duties of various employees, the different airplanes and mechanical devices used to refuel and operate them, and air ambulances.

At the Maintenance Department, Reginald Laroche, quality assurance inspector and William Bales, apprentice mechanic guided the students on tours of two aircrafts and also gave the campers a close-up view of the aircrafts the two men were currently working on.

According to D.O.E., near the end of the two-hour tour, V.I Port of Authority Fire Department Crew Chief Mavin McLene gave a presentation on the fire truck and its parts, fire suits, fire safety and prevention, and what happens if there is a fire at the airport. A firetruck was on the scene for students to enjoy hands-on exploration. Each student had the opportunity to hold the fire hose while Fireman Lionel Williams, Jr. assisted them.

The campers each received a gift bag and light refreshments at the close of their educational field trip to Bohlke.