

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Kindergarten Campers Showcase New Skills At Closing Program

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ST. THOMAS -- Starting school can be scary and exciting at the same time for children entering kindergarten, but the Virgin Islands Department of Education's Kinder Camp program, under the direction of St. Thomas-St. John District Elementary Programs Coordinator Kalamis Maduro, seeks to help students transition smoothly into Kindergarten with a cross-curriculum approach to student achievement, D.O.E. announced Monday.

This summer's Kinder Camp participants showcased their newly developed skills, including American Sign Language, for their families during the camp's closing program on August 7 at Lockhart Elementary School. Campers sang songs, learned about

prepositions, the alphabet, colors and more throughout the program as they danced and entertained the crowd.

According to Maduro, the purpose of the camp is to bridge the transition gap for students who have very little or no academic or social exposure into the daily activities of the school day. Students explored mathematics, literacy, and social skills concepts through development of communication skills and hands-on activities.

However, campers' adventures weren't confined to the classroom, Maduro explained. Participants enjoyed weekly field trips to Coral World, Roy Lester Schneider Hospital, Charlotte Amalie Post Office, the Legislature, Fort Christian, and were also exposed to experiences created by the Department of Tourism and WTJX, D.O.E. said.

"Immersive experiences were a key part of engaging with all learning styles, such as visual, auditory and kinesthetic," Maduro said.

Kinder Camp was established by Maduro's predecessor, April Monroe Phillips, and is designed as thematic units to encourage children to have conversations and learn from their environment while incorporating Common Core communication standards. In 2017, the camp was expanded to assist students currently in Kindergarten in need of additional academic support.

Kinder Camp applications become available in May and parents are encouraged to apply by visiting the Curriculum Center. Program participants are selected through a lottery system.