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Happy Valentine's: An Evening of Conscious Love Sounds by Singers Kenya Eugene and Francillia

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Artists Francillia and Kenya Eugene (left to right) By. KIWAUN CUMBERBATCH

Local artists Kenya Eugene and Francillia filled the audience at Serenity's Nest, a facility owned by former Senator Positive Nelson on Salt River Road, with the sounds of conscious love during a Saturday night event that served as a mental break from the current times dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The affair was hosted by Beautiful Dreamers Behavioral and Educational Center, and with love as the theme, it fitted well with the Valentine's Day weekend.

Music artists Ras Attitude and Mada Nile were in attendance as well, along with approximately 200 other people who were socially distanced by reserved seating and standing room areas under a

clear starry night sky. Food vendors served vegan meals like fried cauliflower and rasta popcorn, along with traditional Crucian foods such as johnny cake and sprat, a selection of seafood patés, and benyé. Serenity's Nest's specialty, "Serenity Slip" drink—a mixture of sorrel, Hennessy, and Black Cherry Crucian Rum—was featured at the bar. Other vendors sold jewelry, locally made natural soaps, and gynecological health products for young girls and women.

The night's performances began around 8:00 p.m. after opening remarks by Beautiful Dreamers Director Dr. Vincentia Paul-Constantin, Beautiful Dreamers Behavioral and Mental Health Therapist Khnuma Simmonds, and Department of Health Director of the Division of Behavioral Health, Alcoholism and Drug Dependency Services, Bernita Bicette. Each mental health professional asked a series of questions to help the audience self-assess their own mental health.

Francillia opened the musical selections with two original songs: 'Gimme Your Lovin' and 'Lovin in the Summertime'. Her sultry voice conveyed the message of self-love and the importance of mental awareness, especially during this times when many are away from their families. She hoped to express through her music that, "This too shall pass during this time of uncertainty," she expressed in an interview with the Consortium. Seemingly invigorated by her performance, the audience begged for one more song, and the artist sang 'Waiting in Vain' by Bob Marley.

In anticipation of Kenya Eugene's performance, music producer and artist Threi Ayem recounted the first time he heard [Love Again](#) featuring Pressure Busspipe on radio a month ago. Anxious to know who that female vocalist was, he searched the internet and found the song and artist.

Kenya Eugene sang a selection of original songs, most of which will be on her "Color Me Reggae" album, hopefully to be released by summer, Ms. Eugene said. The message she wanted to connect the audience with is to "love yourself enough to take care of yourself, including your physical and mental health." She added, "We always hear 'health is wealth', but what about 'mental health is wealth?'" she expressed.



Beautiful Dreamers staff and Terrance 'Positive' Nelson offer closing remarks after an evening of love sounds at Serenity's Nest. (Photo by Kiwaun Cumberbatch)

[Ms. Eugene's performance](#) moved couples to groove together in the audience. Her original songs spoke of learning to love without restrictions (Promise Me), moving on with a spirit of love (Always Love You), following your heart (Fall in Love), letting your inner light shine (Inner Light), and reliance on or faith in Jah's love (Nevah Evah). She sang a song inspired by the [Fireburn](#) queens that encouraged listeners to kill any discomfort in their lives with truth. The closing song performed was a cover of 'The Greatest Love of All' by the late Whitney Houston.

After the well-executed and moving performances by Ms. Eugene and Francillia, Mada Nile was inspired to say, "It's always my honor and pleasure to support my sistren's performances."

"We are here to put a spotlight on mental health just this evening," said Ms. Constantin. The motivation behind this event was to provide the community a positive time-out moment to reflect on their own mental wellness while enjoying music centered on love. Especially for those who may never engage in traditional therapy, the hope is that the theme of love in the music would give them a recharge and allow them to cope with overwhelming emotions, Ms. Constantin shared during an interview with VIC.

Ms. Simmonds reminded the attendees of how the month of love connects to domestic violence or intimate partner violence. She shared that this type of violence isn't just physical but can also manifest itself in speech and other forms. She continued, "Love is not just all the warm and fuzzy feelings, but it is also some of the challenging feelings." Ms. Simmonds said she looks forward to offering movement therapy in addition to the therapy services she now provides on St. Croix virtually through Beautiful Dreamers.

"What are we doing to take care of ourselves? What are we doing to take care of our community? We are only as strong as our community," were the remarks of Ms. Bicette to focus attendees on their own behavioral health and the services offered by the V.I. Dept. of Health. "We do well to ask ourselves these questions and answer them ourselves as well."

Beautiful Dreamers is a non-profit organization of licensed, mental health professionals who specialize in the treatment of behavioral and educational issues in children, adolescents, and adults.