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Dept. of Tourism Goes All Out For Frontline Workers With Dancers, Deejay, Moko Jumbies and More During Tourism Week

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A group picture featuring entertainers along with JFL employees on Friday, May 21, 2021. By. ERNICE GILBERT FOR VI CONSORTIUM

ST. CROIX — It was a sight to behold at the Juan F. Luis Hospital on Friday. The medical facility, which employs over 500 frontline workers, was given special treatment by the Dept. of Tourism, which brought together entertainment, Sorbetiere VI — an outfit serving a variety of ice cream flavors from its mobile van — DJ Swain, and a group of dancers from [Kaiso Entertainment](#), all in an effort to show appreciation to the people always on the frontlines.

A table near the hospital's entrance on which Tourism-marked masks for protection against Covid-19 were placed, along with other items such as bags, pens and some bite-sized sweets, was positioned near Sorbetiere VI, which served ice cream for employees who had formed a line. DJ Swain shuffled the best of Caribbean music, Moko Jumbies performed their signature routines and were joined by some employees during the fun-filled affair. Later, dancers from Kaiso Entertainment brought additional flare to the event.

The effort was part of the V.I. Dept. of Tourism's planned activities for Tourism Week, which this year focused on showing appreciation to workers on the frontlines. Employees of the medical field have been thrust to the forefront as the world continues to battle the Covid-19 pandemic.



JFL employees form a line to be treated with ice cream from Sorbetiere VI, and to receive gift bags from the Dept. of Tourism. (Ernice Gilbert, VI Consortium)

A selfsame event took place in St. Thomas at the Schneider Regional Medical Center, said Shamari Haynes, a D.O.T. employee and assistant director of the Division of Festivals. Beyond Tourism Week, individuals or organizations who have groups coming into the territory can request gift bags from the department, he said.

"It's a wonderful feeling to come out and make sure that we showcase our frontline workers because it's very important to us. We want to make sure that we give back to them just as they have given to us," said Kisa Harris, senior information officer at D.O.T.

Tourism Assistant Commissioner Elizabeth Watley was among the Tourism employees serving the frontline workers.



Entertainers, including Moko Jumbies and Kaiso Entertainment dancers, pose for a picture during Dept. of Tourism's JFL appreciation event on Friday, May 21, 2021. (Ernice Gilbert, VI Consortium)

The event — sanctioned by D.O.T. Commissioner Joseph Boschulte — was organized by Deputy Tourism Commissioner Neelia Ross with assistance from Frances Williams-Augustine, director of visitor experience at the department.

Chivonne Thomas, JFL chief legal counsel and acting public information officer, expressed gratitude to the Dept. of Tourism. "Our healthcare workers from the beginning of the pandemic, they've been the ones that are on the frontlines really responding to actual Covid patients that needed critical care. For the Dept. of Tourism to show gratitude in this way it is incredible," she said.

Ms. Thomas spoke briefly on the herculean effort that was needed — and achieved — from the entire JFL team to get through the pandemic, which is still ongoing. She said along with everyone putting their best foot forward, "For a lot of us, I'll start with prayer," she said, a solemn nod to the compounded demand placed on a hospital that was already strained for resources before Covid-19.

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