

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Ancelma Elliot, CHS Guidance Counselor, is First Recipient in USVI of General Colin L. Powell Service Award

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CHS Guidance Counselor Ancelma Elliot, center, receives Gen. Colin L. Powell Service Award from Our Community Salutes-Virgin Islands on June 24. Elliot is pictured with Beresford Edwards (L) of Our Community Salutes-Virgin Islands and CHS Principal Yves By. THE V.I. DEPT. OF EDUCATION

Ancelma Elliot, St. Croix Central High School guidance counselor, was awarded the General Colin L. Powell Service Award on June 24, making her the territory's first recipient of the prestigious national award that recognizes students and professionals committed to military service, the V.I. Dept. of Education has announced.

Mrs. Elliot was nominated for the award by V.I. National Guard Staff Sergeant Rayanna Rawlins because of Elliot's tireless efforts in exposing students to alternative career paths through the military, D.O.E. said.

"I nominated Mrs. Elliot because we work directly with her and she makes our jobs one hundred percent easier when we have to come into [Central High] and talk to students," SSG Rawlins said. "She is always there willing to go above and beyond to help the students."

According to the release, the presentation of the award was made by members of the local chapter of Our Community Salutes (OCS), including chairperson and community leader, Beresford Edwards, Hollis McIntosh, and Major Wanda Williams.

Mr. Edwards praised Elliot for her commitment to students.

"On behalf of Our Community Salutes-Virgin Islands, it gives me great pleasure to present the General Colin L. Powell Service Award to Mrs. Ancelma Elliott, the first in the Territory to receive this honor," he said. "Thank you for your service and commitment by providing guidance, counseling, and mentoring to your students. Congratulations."

St. Croix District Superintendent Carlos McGregor and Central High School Principal Yves Abraham were also on hand to congratulate Elliot.

"What a great day to be a Carib," Mr. McGregor said. "I congratulate Mrs. Elliot for being recognized. Some people go above and beyond, Mrs. Elliot goes way above and beyond for students. That is why she is so loved."

"On behalf of the St. Croix Central High School faculty and staff, I would like to say a special congratulations to Mrs. Elliot, who is well deserving of this honor," Mrs. Abraham said. "For the past two years [with COVID-19], Mrs. Elliot has been a champion for her students—dedicated and committed—and makes a difference in the lives of Central High School students."

In brief remarks, Mrs. Elliot expressed her passion for her work and highlighted the importance of exposing students to varied careers.

"It is an honor receiving this distinction today for doing something that I dearly and truly love," she said. "The students of St. Croix Central High School and the entire St. Croix District are near and dear to me, and it gives me pride to see them succeed. The overall end goal is to ensure that our students are successful by any means necessary. Providing them the option of the military is an important part of that. Everyone is not bound for college, and we have to accept that they have options."

Our Community Salutes, a nonprofit (501-c-3) organization, was founded in 2009 by Dr. Kenneth Heartman, an educator and veteran, to recognize and honor graduating high school seniors who plan to enlist into the military immediately after high school graduation. Today, OCS ceremonies are being conducted in over 25 states and 70 locations throughout the country. The USVI's OCS chapter was established in February 2021 and in May held its first ceremony to recognize 2021 graduates enlisting into the military.

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