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Students Learn About NASA, STEM Literacy During Bryan-Hosted Virtual Visit

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The Shuttle Independence sits atop the Shuttle Carrier Aircraft with JSC and Rocket Park in the background at Space Center Houston USA. By. GETTY IMAGES

Governor Albert Bryan last week invited NASA and U.S. Virgin Islands students from the public, private and parochial schools and hosted a virtual event with Education Commissioner Raquel Berry-Benjamin and NASA's Stefanie Sass and Kaila Davis.

According to Gov't House, hundreds of students visited with NASA virtually to learn about NASA's mission and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) literacy.

Steve Bullock, NASA's USVI Solar System Ambassador, offered a presentation about Space Exploration and NASA's Missions. Greg Robinson, Deputy Associate Administrator for Programs

in the NASA Science Mission Directorate and James Webb Program Director gave the kids a bird's eye view of the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), a large infrared telescope that will be launched from French Guiana on Christmas Eve.

“It is encouraging to see hundreds of kids interested in NASA and space. The purpose of the interaction with NASA was to demonstrate STEM and to help students see themselves at NASA, as astronauts, in STEM roles, and learning the skills needed for the jobs of the future,” Governor Bryan said. He also thanked Teri Helenese, the USVI Director in Washington D.C., for bringing NASA to the Virgin Islands and inspiring the next generation of explorers.

According to the release, the new observatory has been designed to look deeper into the Universe than its predecessor and, as a consequence, detect events occurring further back in time, more than 13.5 billion years ago. Scientists also expect to use its more advanced capabilities to study the atmospheres of distant planets in the hope that signs of life might be detected.

NASA Interns Stephanie Bullock, from the Virgin Islands, Robyn G. Reichle, and Jamarius J. Reid, discussed their profiles and roles at the space agency, and familiarized the students with NASA operations.

For their part, the students were surprised and excited to find out, “Wow, we have somebody from the VI at NASA!” and they applauded Ms. Bullock.

Ms. Reichle explained to the students that at NASA, beyond STEM, there are opportunities in law, human resources, finance, creative, and other disciplines, and Mr. Reid provided the kids with a roadmap on how to set a career at NASA. The students will always remember their first NASA experience and the initial in a two-part series.

Next year, NASA will send astronauts to the Virgin Islands, for an in-person space and launch event with all school-aged students in the territory, the release stated.

The JWST is being jointly developed by NASA, the European Space Agency and the Canadian Space Agency. It is planned to succeed the Hubble Space Telescope as NASA's flagship astrophysics mission.