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Midre Cummings to Young Virgin Islanders: 'Work Hard Toward Your Goals Until Your Name Replaces Mine'

Community Center / **Published On February 22, 2022 01:57 AM /**

Linda Straker **February 22, 2022**

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Scenes from the grand opening event of the Midre Cummings Park in Frederiksted on Sun. Feb. 20, 2022. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

The namesake of the Midre Almeric Cummings Recreational and Youth Facility has thrown out a challenge to youth in the territory: he wants them to focus on developing themselves so much that the name of the park will be renamed after one of them one day.

“If these kids have something to push for, they will do it. I might not be here to see it but some of us will see what is happening, and I challenge you, kids, to work as hard as you can to take my name down,” Mr. Cummings said at the ceremonial opening of the park Sunday. The playground

was rebuilt from the ground up in two weeks by a broad coalition of community members, with funding raised organically, through private donations and government support.

“Coming from me to you, it will be a pleasure for you to have my title,” said Mr. Cummings who disclosed that when he was approached to have the park named after him, he was initially not inclined but eventually agreed. “I was not a fan of it because it meant that I would have to come in here and do one of these speeches,” he said in his remarks.

The former professional baseball outfielder, who played in Major League Baseball for the Pittsburgh Pirates, Philadelphia Phillies, Boston Red Sox, Minnesota Twins, Arizona Diamondbacks, Tampa Bay Devil Rays, and Baltimore Orioles had worked on the park as a volunteer for two days without others realizing.

Senate Vice President Novelle Francis said the Park will be a place for recreation for young people in the territory. “Recreation is so important for our children, it not only builds a healthy body and a healthy brain, but it encourages problem-solving and inspired creativity. It also helps to manage stress and support better mental health which so many young people struggle with recently during the covid-19 pandemic,” he said.

Mr. Francis explained that it was with these considerations in mind that the Senate did not hesitate to support the executive branch of government and the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation when the project was proposed and presented.

“What I saw here in November, as I watched this park come together literally from the ground up, surpassed our expectations. Today we stand in a park that was envisioned and built by the people of this community,” he said.

“Everyone came together regardless of gender, profession, religion, race, community affiliations or all of the things that sometimes divide us,” he added.

"This partnership came together because of the hard work of members of the nonprofit organization Children First St. Croix, and Our of Frederiksted, but most importantly from each and every person who volunteer in whichever way they could," the senator said.

D.S.P.R. Commissioner Calvert White said the project caused him to work closely with the government agencies. “It took a lot of different agencies. What you see is the finished product but it took the work and the commitment from a lot of different agencies, so I want to thank all of you who were a part of making this happen,” he said.

Governor Albert Bryan praised those who worked to ensure that the park became a reality. “To the people who contributed and built this thing, you have set a world record and it gives me a humbling, humbling feeling because I thought that Carnival and Festival Village were the only things we could have built in a week,” he said. “Well now we have a playground to prove that working together in this community can get anything done because it's this is our house.”