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'Let's Set it Off Right': CHS Kicks Off High School Graduations With \$2.9 Million in Scholarships, 158 Graduates

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The St. Croix Central High School 2022 Graduating Class. By. REEMY-REEMZ PHOTOGRAPHY/VICONSORTIUM

"Since we are the first high school to set off the graduation [season], let's set it off right" were the words of Yves Abraham, principal of the St. Croix Central High School, who in return received a roar of excitement from the 158 CHS graduates on Tuesday.

The students called themselves the "Momentous, Versatile and Prestigious" Class of 2022, a fitting name for a group of teenagers who were in the tenth grade when the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the world and scrambled their learning experience.

Graduates of the Central High School on St. Croix pose for a picture while heading to the school's Sprung Gymnasium on Tues. May 17, 2022. (Credit: Ernice Gilbert, VIC)

Ericilda Ottley-Herman, acting insular superintendent reminded students of their remarkable achievements. "In four years you've gained more than a high school diploma. You've gained the ability to motivate, to innovate, to be flexible, because when a physical door closes, a virtual one may open," she said.

Dept. of Education Commissioner, Racquel Berry-Benjamin, used the lyrics of a song from international Reggae artist and Virgin Islander, Pressure Busspipe, who also graduated from a public high school, to convey her message. The lyrics of the song, [Light in You](#), says, "There's a light inside of you, shining shining through, let your works be clean and true, bad influence be mindful of."

"My message to graduates this year is a musical tribute," the commissioner said, later adding, "you know Caribs does always set the standard for graduations, and let me say, I am impressed. I expected nothing less."

Having made it through the pandemic, Governor Albert Bryan said the students are equipped to face future challenges. "You know about change and about adversity, you are prepared to take on the world," he said. Mr. Bryan emphasized the uniqueness of home, and told the students that there is no other jurisdiction in the United States where the governor, Senate president, the chief justice, and commissioner of education come to a graduation.

Keynote speaker, Superior Court Judge Harold Willocks encouraged the graduates to be proud of themselves. "When you look in the mirror you can say, regardless of your occupation, you can look at yourself and say I am the best that I can be."

He added, "Regardless of where your journey takes you, think about home. Think about what you can do to come back to the Virgin Islands to improve on it."

Class Valedictorian Jasmine Cox encouraged her fellow graduates to live in the moment. "I want you to take comfort in the moment right here," she said, "where you are surrounded by over a hundred other people who understand you, who relate to you — to know that in this moment you are not alone."

The St. Croix Educational Complex will hold its graduation event today, followed by the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School on Thursday, and Charlotte Amalie on Friday.