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140 Eudora Kean Graduates 'Pushed Through' to a 'Successful View' With 79 Males, 61 Females Including 56 Honor Students

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Graduates of the Ivanna Eudroa Kean High School on Thursday, May 19, 2022. By. REEMY-REEMZ PHOTOGRAPHY/VICONSORTIUM

The 140 Ivanna Eudora Kean High School students who graduated Thursday in an event held at the school's gym, made a grand entrance complete with local Soca music as they celebrated the milestone achievement. Their theme, "Pushing Through to a Successful View" was accentuated by the class's notable accomplishments, with 56 of the graduates being deemed honor students for their consistent high grades throughout the school year.

Yet event with all the jubilation, school officials and local leaders were mindful to remind the graduates of the trials of life. "To the class of 2022, life comes with uncertainties, but it's how you recover and lift yourself up that makes the difference. Sometimes curveballs can be a blessing in disguise, even when it is hard to see," said IEKHS Acting Principal Alicia Leerdam. "So go out there, represent Ivanna Eudora Kean, and conquer the world."

Governor Albert Bryan encouraged students not to forsake the importance of planning. "I want you to do your last homework lesson. I want you to visualize who, what and where you want to be, 25 years from now, when you sit down in the back here and get honored for your class. You plan, you lead, you win," he said.

Education Commissioner Racquel Berry-Benjamin continued using the music of USVI Reggae Artist Pressure Busspipe to convey her message, this time with the song "[No Limits](#)". "Graduates, everything you want to achieve personally, you have the power to achieve it," she said. "Remember, all things are possible."

Class Salutatorian Candace Wade-Franklin told the graduates to be proud of their achievement. "I know the late sleepless nights, early mornings, and mountains of work we had to go through. I've been there. I understand," she said. "Every single graduate in this room, hold your head up proudly. Receiving your high school diploma is the greatest award you can receive today."

Class Valedictorian Brandon J. Williams expressed elation at the graduation milestone, stating, "Guys we made it. It is a surreal moment to be on this stage because it is something we never thought was going to happen... Let us not even talk about online school, because although it had its benefits, it was one of the most exhausting things we really had to deal with."

He also provided solid advice: stay true to who you are; uphold a reputable character; be dedicated. "If it is one thing I want us to focus on as a class, is to work on an unbreakable and an unshakable character," he said.

Keynote Speaker Nisha Jones, a former IEKHS graduate, spoke about her experience after graduation. Ms. Jones said she didn't have anything figured out, however she eventually joined the military and attended college shortly after. Yet even while in college she had an undecided major. Ms. Jones nonetheless excelled in her classes, graduated and moved on to her masters degree.

"It's okay to be a late bloomer," she assured. "I realized it was okay to be unsure, to change my mind, and not have all of life figured out. Go where you are pulled and follow a dream of passion."

Today marks the last of the graduation events this year for the territory's public high schools. The Charlotte Amalie High School will host its ceremony at 10:00 a.m. at the UVI Sports and Fitness Center.