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# Inclement Weather Could Not Stop Enthusiasts From Participating in Event to Promote Up-and-Coming USVI Artists

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A passionate group of music and arts enthusiasts braved the inclement weather on Saturday evening to participate in an event to support young and upcoming artist in the VI, a release issued Monday has made known.

The event— dubbed Mix & Mingle, Arts Program Rollout hosted by ElevateWi Inc.— brought talented young singers, musicians and poets from around the island of St. Thomas to the main stage at Paradise Bistro Bar and Grill.

Despite the weather conditions outside, the vibes inside was just right, skillfully handled by the MC for the evening, the eloquent and gifted Miss Shi Sharai, stated the release. The evening

opened up with a warm welcome and introduction to ElevateWi by the organization's President Omar Ewen, who shared details on how ElevateWi started with his desire to see a thriving arts scene in the Virgin Islands. This was followed by a beautiful rendition of the Black National Anthem, harmoniously delivered by the four main performers of the evening Jahniya Williams, Vinclan Philbert, Maat 'Queen Amina' Osuji and Ky Odlum. The audience then enjoyed a line up of soulful performances by each singer.

The evening also included mind-tickling poetry by young, super-gifted poets Nyda Simmonds and Elijah Salem. There were even surprise guest performances by the very talented music educator Miss Kandis Gumbs and ElevateWi's President Omar Ewen, according to the release.

Special recognition and thanks was shared by ElevateWi's president for the various local businesses that has sponsored/supported the efforts of the organization up to this point.

The evening ended off with a presentation by ElevateWi's Vice President Dr. Muria Nisbett, who shared the mission and vision of the organization and the upcoming programs for 2023. Dr. Nisbett expounded on the issues facing VI youth such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from the recent hurricanes and the Covid19 pandemic. She discussed the current reality being faced by youth in the Virgin Islands where many do not remember or never had a sense of calm, peace or normal. Coping from moment to moment, bracing for the next disruption has become the new normal. She also shared thoughts on the barriers facing our youth in dealing with these issues such as older siblings raising and caring for younger ones, stigma and shame around of asking for help and not enough safe outlets for their grievances and expressions.

The release stated that ElevateWi has gone to work in the community, fostering the holistic development of youth and young adults in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Caribbean by creating spaces for conscious conversations, artistic expression, and community engagement. By promoting an atmosphere of open-mindedness and attention to personal and professional growth, this organization envisions an empowered Caribbean network high in social capital. ElevateWi is where passion meets purpose.

Saturday's event and the kind of preparation that went into executing it, such as mentoring and working with the youth to polish their skills and artistic abilities, is only the beginning of greater things, said ElevateWi's President Omar Ewen, the release further stated.

The organization is a nonprofit and is seeking to raise approximately \$150,000 in order to maintain its programs and projects for the benefit of our youth in the Virgin Islands for the year 2023. Your involvement would be greatly appreciated and positively contribute to empowering young artists and creating a thriving VI arts scene.