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Hundreds Gather for 39th Annual Women Race: A Display of Unity in Motion

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A collage of participants at the 39th Annual Women Race in Frederiksted, St. Croix on June 4, 2023. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

Sunday saw people of all ages, from children to senior citizens, gather together for the 39th Annual Women's Coalition of St. Croix Women Race. Over 200 participants joined in-person while an additional 30 virtual racers took part on Friday and Saturday.

The crowd was drawn to the Frederiksted Pier for the highly anticipated 2-mile event, which serves as the nonprofit's biggest fundraiser. The atmosphere bristled with unity, empowerment, and a shared goal to support women affected by violence. Each year, the event expands, remaining a shining beacon of hope and a testament to the resilience of survivors and advocates.

Last year's champion, Bridget Klein, proved her running prowess once more, securing a victory with an impressive time of 12:31, surpassing her previous record by 2 seconds. Klein expressed her dedication to the event, emphasizing the importance of staying active and supporting the women's coalition.

"Running is everything, it is life," she said. "Being outside, being in nature and staying active are all parts that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. When you come to events like this it is two-fold. You are showing them that you are going to get out there and be willing to put your best foot forward even if you think it is a day you might not think is perfect, but especially it brings all women and abilities together while supporting the cause."

Keith A. Smith Sr., a devoted supporter of the event, underscored the significance of the Women Race, a cause close to his heart as his family members have previously competed. Smith pointed out the importance of backing the women's coalition and the young women competing.

"My daughters and wife have competed in this event several times and our athletes at the St. Croix Track Club continue to compete in it to support women," he said.

This year, Viya served as the premiere sponsor for the Women Race. The company displayed its support by presenting a \$10,000 check to the Women's Coalition. Jennifer Matarangas-King, Viya's vice president of public relations and governmental affairs, spoke of the company's commitment to community engagement and the life-changing work done by the Women's Coalition. "The work that they do is lifesaving, life changing and at VIYA, we are involved and engaged with our community," she said.

Debra Benjamin, communications coordinator for WCSC, was elated about the success of the event and the positivity she witnessed. She appreciated the global reach achieved through the hybrid format of the event and expressed gratitude to all sponsors who helped make the event possible.

The winners from the general race were Bridget Klein (1st place with a time of 12:31), Clarissa Cooper (2nd place with a time of 17:12), and Jeniqua Week (3rd place with a time of 17:18).

The event was made possible by the generous support of various sponsors:

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