



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Public Relations

1834 Kongens Gade, Charlotte Amalie * St. Thomas * U.S. Virgin Islands 00802-6746
Telephone: 340.774.0100 Ext. 8136 Fax: 340.774.1168
340.773.1095 Ext. 7064 Fax: 340.773.4624

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Contact: Keva D. Muller
Director of Public Relations
(340) 774-0100, Ext. 8136 | (340) 643-4784
Keva.muller@vide.vi
www.vide.vi
www.facebook.com/usvi.vide

Chantel Acosta
Public Information Officer
chantel.acosta@vide.vi

CENTRAL HIGH'S THIRD ANNUAL LIT FEST SHOWCASE STUDENTS' LITERACY SKILLS IN UNIQUE WAYS

ST. CROIX, USVI—Literacy was on full display at St. Croix Central High School's Third Annual Literary Arts Festival held in the school's cafeteria on December 14.

Students showcased their understanding of literacy in the forms of poetry, play reenactments, film adaptations, and an open mic segment. The cafeteria was also adorned with poster boards showcasing literary projects students completed during the semester.

Joseph Bess, Central High English teacher and Language Arts Department chairperson, welcomed students, faculty and staff to the festival.

“Here at Central we don't buy into that reputation that we lose or our students do not do their work,” he said. “In this room right now, you have some of the smartest, hardworking people on the island. I continue to be impressed by you as a teacher, and I hope you all continue to be inspired to do good work from now until college.”

The festival began with a variety of poem recitations. Student Franchel Rodriguez gave a rousing performance of the lyrical poem, “Waking on a Deserted Path.”

English teacher Reed Hapke presented a film adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Students reenacted scenes from the popular play using comedy and modern music, much to the enjoyment of the audience.

During the open mic segment, Nashilee Martinez recited an original poem titled, "Nature," which prompted Bess to recite an original poem of his own titled, "Lineage Confuse." Both poems were well received by the audience, as one talked about the beauty of nature and the other, family dynamics.

St. Croix District Language Arts Coordinator Dr. Carla Bastian offered remarks.

"It's been my pleasure to visit the Central High School Literary Arts Festival, as it has been in the past, it has continues to be one of the best literary festivals in the District," she said. "I am excited to see the students just as passionate as I was, when I was in school. It is something I would like to see grow throughout the District."