



# THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **ST. THOMAS-ST. JOHN DISTRICT ACE PROGRAM GRADUATES 41,**

### **GED Proud GRADUATES 4**

*Students praised for perseverance and determination*

ST. THOMAS, USVI -- In celebration of second chances, determination and sacrifice, 41 Adult Continuing Education (ACE) Program students and four GED Proud students received their high school diplomas and GED certificates, respectively, in a joint ceremony on Sunday, June 9 at the Charlotte Amalie High School Ruth E. Thomas Auditorium.

Students were praised for persevering through individual challenges--a testament to their determination and fortitude, according to outgoing principal, Desha Powell, who bid the class farewell to take on her new role as deputy superintendent in the St. Thomas-St. John District.

Class salutatorian, Jean Liberny showcased his multi-lingual capabilities during his remarks by extending thanks in English, Spanish, and his native tongue, French-creole (Patois), to ACE Program teachers and support staff.

“We thank you for your love and support throughout the years we were enrolled in this program,” he said. “We express our joy and gratitude to the ACE family who has always been there for us.”

Liberny then took a more serious tone as he impressed upon his classmates the importance of them using their education to become more active members of the community.

“We must now put into practice all that we have learned, we must take our places at universities and trade schools, and we must lend a helping hand and assist where necessary,” he said. “To whom much is given, much is required.”

Class valedictorian, Julia Lapomarede echoed similar sentiments as she reflected on the unique challenges her class faced following the 2017 hurricanes.

“There were many reasons to give up, but we pushed through with hard work and determination,” she said. “For most of us, it has been three to four years of sacrifices, but it was truly worth it.”

Lapomarede called for her classmates, especially the men, to step forward and be examples of integrity and good character for younger Virgin Islanders. She concluded her remarks with a quote from civil rights icon, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically,” she said. “Intelligence plus character, that is the goal of education.”

The Adult Continuing Education Program provides the opportunity for adult learners to earn credits toward their high school diploma. Registration for enrollment takes place September – October at the Charlotte Amalie High School campus from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

For more information on enrollment in the ACE Program, call (340)774-0780 ext 4526 after 5:00 p.m.

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