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JUANITA GARDINE CELEBRATES HISPANIC HERITAGE WITH SONG AND DANCE

ST. CROIX, USVI - As Hispanic Heritage Month comes to a close, the Juanita Gardine Elementary School celebrated with a schoolwide assembly themed, "One Endless Voice to Enhance Our Tradition" on Friday, October 12 in the school's auditorium.

Students put on an exceptional show for parents, faculty and staff with singing, dancing, poem recitals and a short skit, all with the intent of celebrating Hispanic culture and heritage, which is particularly vibrant on St. Croix.

"We are going to have a wonderful Hispanic Heritage program," said Principal Barbara McGregor. "You all look beautiful and colorful. The committee did an exceptional job making sure we are going to have a great celebration."

Students had the option of wearing their school uniform, regular clothing or clothing that represented the Spanish-speaking country that was assigned to their grade level.

Class presentations included the days of the week song by Kindergarteners; second graders recited the poem, "Betty Bose"; first grader students gave a special rendition of the song, "Vamos a Contar/We Are Going to Count"; and fourth-grade classes presented the skit, "Una Familia/We Are All One Family."

Third, fifth and sixth grade students performed a dance number, with each grade level dancing to a different genre of Spanish music.

Fifth grade teacher Akela Richards served as mistress of ceremony and kept the audience entertained between presentations. As part of her hosting duties, she invited students on stage to share a word they know both in Spanish and English.

Assistant Principal Anna Gordon offered warm remarks before students returned to class.

“We have students from many different islands, many different regions, many different backgrounds, but guess what, we are all under one umbrella at the Juanita Gardine Elementary School and we are one family,” she said.

“The Hispanic Heritage Committee members would like to extend sincere gratitude to all the teachers, staff members, students and parents who participated in the VIPR/Hispanic Heritage month event,” said Balbariella Lopez, sixth grade teacher and Hispanic Heritage Committee chairperson. “Without you, this program would not have been possible.”

Following the assembly, teachers and students prepared for the act of the school’s celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month with the “Taste of the Latin Culture Expo,” held in the school’s gymnasium. Each class provided native dishes and drinks from a Spanish-speaking country that was assigned to each grade level.

National Hispanic Heritage Month is observed September 15 to October 15 in the United States and other countries to honor the contributions of Hispanics and to celebrate their culture.

For more information, contact the Office of Public Relations at (340) 774-0100 x 8136.

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