



Tommy Goes to School

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U.S. Virgin Islands Hotel & Tourism Association



Hi friends,

We're in the middle of the school year. Grades are high, you're respectful of your teachers and classmates, and you're enjoying the year, right? This issue of Tommy Goes to School is filled with wonderful information on the tourism industry, interesting people and fun things. Enjoy!

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Spotlight Tourism Position—Villa Consultant

The exciting thing about traveling to the U.S. Virgin Islands are all the choices available for places to stay. There are hotels, small inns, campgrounds, and villas. What is a villa? It's usually a large, private house with multiple bedrooms, private pools, exquisite ocean views, fabulous kitchens, and other extra amenities. Some also sit on their own beach. Our exciting position this month is that of Villa Consultant. But this is not the job for you if you don't absolutely love helping people. Guests staying in villas have a lot of questions and require the assistance of the consultant to help them find the right location to fit their needs. Things to take into consideration when recommending specific villas include number of guests, ages, is there a special event attached to the vacation, and how active or laid-back they want the experience to be. Villas don't have restaurants or housekeeping service. However, caterers and maid service are all available for hire. According to McLaughlin-Anderson villa consultant Bonnie Todman "excellent verbal and written communication skills, enthusiasm, good computer skills and extensive knowledge of the destination are important qualities needed to succeed in this profession." She should know. Todman was recently named one of the world's top 50 Rental Specialists by Travel & Leisure Magazine.

Beekeeping in the USVI

It's the new buzz for the USVI Department of Agriculture—the resurgence of apiculture or beekeeping. Recently, Agriculture partnered with the Department of Tourism, UVI Cooperative Extension and the UVI Small Business Development Center to launch the Virgin Fresh Beekeeping Project. Designed to increase interest in beekeeping, encourage entrepreneurship, and stimulate growth of this local industry, the agencies have launched a 12-week training program. Locally produced honey is considered fresher, more flavorful and nutritious because of the tropical fruit trees the bees get their nectar from. In addition to the honey, colonies produce specialty products such as beeswax and bee pollen. St. Croix beekeeper Roniel Allembert (pictured on the left) has been working for years as an apiculturalist and is one of the instructors in the program. "The work is hard but rewarding," said Allembert. Participants in the class are taught about safety around hives and the role of the queen bees. Additionally, they learn about equipment, hive assembly maintenance, extracting the honey and how to start a new hive. "The Department of Agriculture commends the efforts of all our project partners who continue to make this effort a success," said Commissioner Louis Petersen. A new training program will be held in April or May depending on the location—St. Croix, St. Thomas, or St. John. To find out more about participating in the class contact Daniel Stanley or Errol Chichester at the Department of Agriculture on St. Croix (778-0997) or Carlos Robles at UVI CES on St. Thomas/St. John (693-1083).



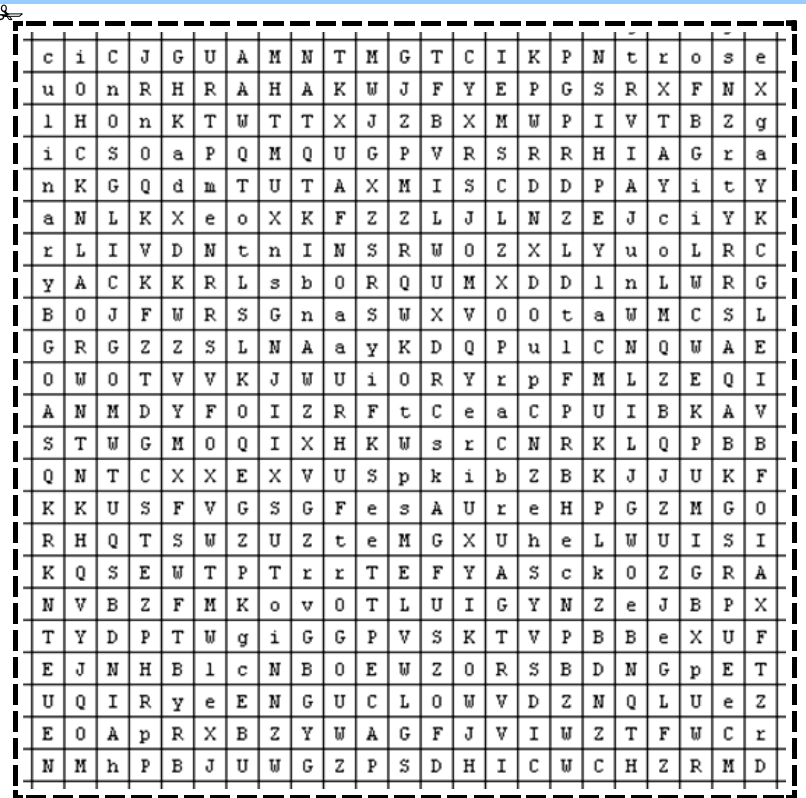
Student Profile-Afiya Fayola Augustus



“Cooking is what makes me happy and I want to be in a career that gives me that kind of feeling.” These are the words that Afiya Fayola Augustus, a junior at the St. Croix Educational Complex, lives by. The gifts of an Easy Bake Oven, cash register and a shopping cart helped to launch

her love for the culinary arts. Her parents also played an important role in her decision to be a chef by, from an early age, allowing her to watch and learn. The program at the Complex, under the leadership of Anton Doos, requires all students to complete 400 hours of on-the-job training. Afiya is currently on-the-job at the Buccaneer Hotel on St. Croix. “Afiya is very enthusiastic, great in the kitchen and has worked a couple of stations by herself,” said chef Jim Heckert. Tommy asked Afiya what advice she would offer to students interested in the culinary arts. “Education is the key to success and the sky is the limit. This industry is growing with new ideas, techniques and flare and it’s an exciting field to be a part of.” Outside of the classroom, Afiya is President of the VI chapter of Skills USA, a non-profit organization serving students enrolled in high school career and technical training programs. She’s also enrolled in college prep English and math classes at the University of the Virgin Islands. We see great things ahead for Afiya Fayola Augustus. Go get ‘em girl!

Word Search Game



CLUES

1. Government department
2. Apiculturalist
3. Annual festival
4. One of St. Croix’s towns
5. Beach on St. John with a campground and amphitheater
6. Another word for cooking
7. The last name of the Governor of the USVI
8. They manage 2/3 of St. John
9. Ancient rock carvings believed to be made by Taino Indians. Can be seen on Reef Bay Trail on St. John
10. An alternate name for a hotel
11. A private home available for rent

What Would Tommy Recommend?

There are so many locally-inspired things for visitors to do or attend when they are on vacation in the U. S. Virgin Islands. Some examples include: playing mas in a carnival parade, attending a local play, traveling back in time on a historical tour or visiting a local market.

In your own words: What would Tommy suggest as the best way to experience the history, flavors and people of the Virgin Islands? Each student can submit one original essay, poem or picture that best depicts the VI experience. **Contest rules:** Student entries will be judged on originality, clarity and creativity.

The winning entry will receive a \$250 Savings Bond and recognition at the Tommy Star Awards, held annually in November, including the inclusion of their entry in the commemorative booklet.

Deadline for entry: June 1, 2009. The winner will be announced in September 2009. Entries can be sent by mail to: USVI Hotel & Tourism Association, 4002 Raphune Hill, Ste. 304, St. Thomas, VI 00802; or by email to nicole@virgin-islands-hotels.com.