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Local Authors Preserve Virgin Islands Christmas Traditions Through New Publication

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The cherished customs and memories of Christmases past are being brought to life through a new heritage activity and colouring book by local authors Gabrielle Skelton-Bardo and Bernadine Walters-Louis.

The publication, titled Virgin Islands Christmas Traditions: A Heritage Activity and Coloring Book, was officially launched on October 17 at the East End Public Library and aims to preserve the Territory's Christmas customs while introducing younger generations to the traditions that shaped the celebrations of their parents and grandparents.

During a recent Meet the Authors interview with the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, the authors discussed the inspiration behind the publication, the importance of cultural preservation and the experiences readers can expect to discover within its pages.

The book explores traditional Christmas preparations, including household cleaning, decorating, preparing local foods and the use of natural materials such as inkberry trees and century plants as Christmas trees.

It also features Granny Delphine's Christmas Story, an interactive colouring story that allows readers to engage with Virgin Islands heritage through reading and creative activities.

Co-author Mrs. Bernadine Walters-Louis explained that the publication was inspired by a desire to document the Christmas experiences of earlier generations and ensure that those memories are not forgotten.

“Our traditions and heritage and so on will not preserve itself. We have to do it,” Mrs. Walters-Louis stated.

She reflected on childhood memories of travelling from Virgin Gorda to Tortola to shop for Christmas preparations, noting that the book captures experiences that younger generations may not otherwise encounter.

Co-author Gabrielle Skelton-Bardo shared that her love for colouring and memories of spending time with her mother helped inspire the publication's interactive format.

She explained that the book was designed not only for children but also for adults and persons interested in learning more about the Virgin Islands' cultural heritage.

“If you're not from here and you want to know more about us, this book is for you. If you want to be a part of us and learn more about our traditions, this is for you,” Ms. Skelton-Bardo stated.

The authors also highlighted the importance of documenting how Christmas traditions have evolved, from the use of locally sourced decorations and traditional household preparations to the celebrations enjoyed today.

In addition to its stories and colouring activities, the publication includes a bibliography to help readers identify sources of information about the Territory's Christmas heritage.

The authors hope the book will encourage families to share their own memories, strengthen connections between generations and inspire greater appreciation for the customs that form part of the Virgin Islands' cultural identity.

Virgin Islands Christmas Traditions: A Heritage Activity and Coloring Book is available for purchase online through Lulu.com. The authors are also exploring opportunities to make additional copies available locally.

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Gallery

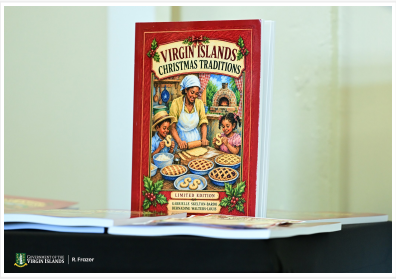












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