



Virgin Gorda Feliza Fenty Studies Sustainable Best Practices

Feliza Fenty traveled this summer to another island to research best practices for sustainable development. A recent graduate of Texas Christian University, Ms. Fenty was selected as the youth delegate from the Virgin Gorda to attend the 7th annual Youth Leadership Summit for Sustainable Development. Other island youth represented Hawaii, Nantucket, Vieques, Puerto Rico and Martha's Vineyard. Ms. Fenty is a founding member and project coordinator of the Virgin Gorda Youth Leadership Initiative whose mission is to inspire and assist young people to develop their full potential, broaden their horizons, strengthen their character and develop their leadership abilities so they can positively contribute to a better future for Virgin Gorda. VGYLI is a project of the Stone Soup Leadership Institute. Feliza hosted the VGYLI video, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_xY-AfX6Pk

This year's Youth Summit focused on the components of Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Business, Cultural Sustainability and Sustainable Islands with guest speakers like Johnny Cupcakes, Ben Kelley, Building Shelter, Sidney Morris, The Farm Institute, Noli Taylor, Island Grown Schools and the grandson of the great Latino hero, Cesar Chavez. Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership graduates made presentations on their year-round programs including Job Shadow Day, Business Internship, College Preparation and Cultural Health. Ms. Fenty and the other island youth delegates from made presentations on sustainable development initiatives from their islands. Josue Cruz presented the Vieques Youth Leadership Institute's 2020 Report on Sustainable Development. He also served as Director for this year's Youth Leadership Summit. At the Youth Leadership Summit, youth delegates spent the first two days visiting innovative green projects on Martha's Vineyard including 41 farms, school gardens, energy efficient low-income housing like Eliakim's Way and Island Co-Housing, shellfish hatchery, Island Alpaca Farm, and Eco-Tourism adventures on kayaks, sailing and fishing with Wampanoag fisherman Captain Buddy Vanderhoop. The Sustainable Vineyard Map team led by Emma HallBilsback made a presentation on their progress and plans. In November they will present it to the Town of Tisbury Selectmen, to contribute to this town's Green Communities Plan. In November, the Stone Soup Leadership Institute will present it to business and world leaders at the APEC (Asian Pacific Economic Council) in Hawaii. As a public relations and business major at TCU, Ms. Fenty helped facilitate the business group during the afternoon professional work sessions. Young people explored their career options and their college choices. In 2009 Ms. Fenty was a presenter at the Institute's 5th Annual Youth Summit on Sustainable Development which was held at the Bitter End Yacht Club in Virgin Gorda. She served on the VGYLI youth delegation to the Caribbean Media Exchange Conference on Sustainable Tourism in St. Lucia and San Juan, PR. She met leaders from the Caribbean and U.S. leaders in the tourist industry, government and media about managing the delicate balance of increasing tourism while preserving the unique Caribbean culture and environment. After watching the environmental documentary, *The Inconvenient Truth* in 2008, Feliza surveyed 80 people in the BVI on their perceptions of their environment. She conducted a research report and discovered that many BVI students and residents had never heard of the movie and were unaware of climate change. "While the truth is inconvenient, we must each do our part," she said. Feliza presented her report at the CMEx Conference on Sustainable Tourism in San Juan. "With a focus in sustainable building, sustainable economics, cultural sustainability, and sustainable agriculture, this year's Vineyard Youth Summit will continue to tackle the most difficult problems our world community faces," Senator John Kerry. My good friend and long-time colleague Ted Kennedy once said, "I have seen throughout my life how we as a people can rise to a challenge, embrace change and renew our destiny." www.vgyli.org and www.soup4worldinstitute.com