

The start of something new: My experience in the CAFY Program at USM

Being part of the first ever CAFY program at the University of St. Martin feels like being part of history in the making. This program also extends to students in Saba and Statia, where students can join the classes online and be just as much invested in conversations and debates as we are when we are in class. It's exciting to know that we're the first group of students to experience this new opportunity.

A program that allows us to have a normal college experience in the day with different courses, CAFY gives us the space to determine not only what we want to study in, but what career we would like to pursue and who we want to be in the future. The CAFY program is truly one of a kind, and it's giving us a head start on our future while still allowing us to enjoy the journey. And that's exactly what it does – it opens doors.

The program has two semesters. In the first semester, we take subjects like sociology, English, Dutch, history, FDS, and student success. These classes help us understand more about ourselves, our society, and our place in the world. The second semester is even more exciting because it focuses on careers and helps us figure out what we want to do in the future. It's a great balance between learning academically and preparing for real life. One thing I really like about this program is the environment.

My class is full of energy and fun and ambition; the age range is from 16 to 21 and everyone brings something different to the table. We laugh together, share ideas, and encour-



age each other to do our best. Even though we have fun, we still get our work done. It's a space where we all feel comfortable being ourselves, and that's what makes it so special. It's not just a class; it's like a small family. Our teachers make a big difference too.

The directors of the program – Ms. Marva Sam and Ms. Stacey James – have done an amazing job creating something that truly works for young people like us. They've given us the chance to grow, to learn, and to be-

lieve that we can reach higher. Some of the teachers that work with us are Ms. Marcelina Henry, Ms. Canterbury, and Ms. Charlseia Joseph. They're supportive, kind, and always make learning fun and easy to understand.

It's nice to have teachers who not only teach, but also care about how we're doing as students and as individuals. This program means a lot to me because it gives hope for the future of St. Martin. By investing in young people, the CAFY program is building a stronger and more educated generation. It's helping us prepare to take on leadership roles, start careers, and give back to our island.

Programs like this can change lives

and not just for the students in them, but for the entire community. If more young people join and take it seriously, it could really shape the future of education and job opportunities in St. Martin and be a real change. Being a part of the CAFY program has already taught me so much, not just about school subjects but also about discipline, teamwork, and believing in myself.

I'm proud to be in this program, and I'm excited to see where it takes me and my classmates. We're not just learning for today; we're preparing for tomorrow. The CAFE program is more than just an education; it's a stepping stone toward a brighter future for us and for St. Martin.



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