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Breaking News from Florida's International Volunteer Agency



March 2009

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FAVACA Brings Nicaragua Exchange Program to South Florida

Thirty Nicaraguan participants are in South Florida this week for a professional exchange program supported in part by the United States Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.



The goal of the program is to empower young Nicaraguan entrepreneurs through creative thinking and improved business skills to help increase the revenue and productivity of their companies, be better able to better address residents' needs in their communities, and to create linkages with Florida Businesses especially amongst the Nicaraguan Diaspora in Florida. The professional exchange program is designed to capitalize on the emerging

tourism sector by educating young entrepreneurs engaged in the industry and other tourism-related businesses and organizations to build their business skills that lead to stronger and more efficient enterprises. The participants will learn about tourism promotion and small business development in a 10 day series of seminars, study tours, and site visits.

Nicaragua is a member of the [Central America Trade Agreement \(CAFTA\)](#) and is Miami's 24th largest trading partner. Professional Exchanges, such as these, serve to strengthen the ties between the two and promote self-reliance among entrepreneurs in neighboring Central American counties.

FAVACA is collaborating with:

- [Nicaraguan American Chamber of Commerce](#),
- [Enterprise Florida](#), Ivan Barrios
- [ExpoNica](#), Eduardo Arroyo
- [Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce](#)
- Greg Madson of [CR Surf](#)
- [The Miccosukee Indian Tribe of Florida](#)
- [Visit Florida](#)
- [The Beacon Council](#)
- [The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce](#),
- [Cacao Grill](#),
- [Shake-a-Leg](#)
- Volunteers Joanie Quintanilla and Gabriel Parra and many from our network of FAVACA friends.

On March 13th, the first of two exchange groups (consisting of approximately fifteen individuals per group) arrived in Miami to participate in the 10 day study tour and site visit. The second group of Nicaraguan professionals arrived on March 20 to allow both groups to attend the following day's Nicaraguan Social Networking event. The event took place from 7-9pm at the Doral Country Club. For more information regarding the Nicaraguan professional exchange program contact favaca@favaca.org.

Exchange between Florida and Jamaica on Gang Reduction

FAVACA in coordination with the [United States Agency for International Development's Community Empowerment and Transformation \(COMET\)](#) project facilitated key meetings for Samuel Blake, Director of the Organized Crime and Defense Bureau from [the Ministry of National Security of Jamaica](#), to support the preparation of a comprehensive gang reduction strategy for Jamaica.



Accompanied by Mr. Bertrand Laurent, Chief of Party for USAID's COMET project, Mr. Blake first met with Mr. Emery Gainey from the [Office Florida Attorney General](#) in Tallahassee. Attorney General Bill McCollum recently spearheaded a multi-agency gang reduction strategy throughout Florida to combat increasing gang-related crimes. Mr. Blake also met with Michelle Arciaga of the [National Youth Gang Center](#) and Ken Tucker and Jennifer Cook Pritt from the [Florida Department of Law Enforcement](#).



Pictured left to right: Sunrise Police Chief John Brooks, Broward County Sheriff Al Lamberti, Samuel Blake of the Ministry of National Security of Jamaica, Florida Attorney General Bill McCollum, Director Robert Parker of Miami-Dade Police Department, and Emery Gainey from the Attorney General's office

In Miami, Mr. Blake discussed gang intervention, prevention and suppression methods with Frank Ledee, Assistant State Attorney/Gang Prosecution Unit, and Major Larry Gomer of the Special Investigations Unit of the [North Miami Beach Police Department](#). He also briefed the Consul General of Jamaica Sandra Grant-Griffiths and the Consul General of Haiti Ralph Latortue on Jamaica's efforts to address gang-related violence and the impact felt throughout the Caribbean, especially the sub-region of Jamaica, Haiti, Dominican Republic and the Bahamas.

On Thursday Feb 12th, Mr. Blake participated in [Florida Attorney General's Region 7 Gang Reduction Task Force](#) meeting in Sunrise, which brought together top law enforcement officials from Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Monroe Counties. Mr. Blake was able to meet with Florida Attorney General Bill McCollum and establish valuable contacts with several South Florida law enforcement communities.

Guyana Receives At-Risk Youth Development Training

FAVACA and [Partners of the Americas](#) team up to help at-risk youth in Guyana. For several years Partners of the Americas has been implementing a program called [Educare](#) which provides educational and work development programs for at-risk youth. Educare identified a need for youth counselors to improve counseling skills. FAVACA called upon the services of a veteran volunteer, Mary Ann Jones, a counselor with practices in West Palm Beach, Florida and San Francisco has years of experience working with adolescents. Jones traveled to Georgetown, Guyana for two weeks in February 2009 providing



three 2-day workshops for Mercy Wings Training Centre, Glory Lights and [Bernice Mansell](#) all of which work with young men in need of help with self-esteem, tolerance issues, violence (domestic and peer to peer) and discipline. Jones met with 20 youth at each facility and was extremely successful in reaching out to these young men. Jones also met with many of the trainers from these facilities and provided them with new methods in dealing with problems that arise in one-on-one and group counseling as well as new skills to address issues of relationships, drugs, violence and other related topics. With the new skills learned, the

trainers will now be able to travel to local communities and work the teachers and other professionals working with at-risk youth.

FAVACA Fundraiser at SET Night Club A Success

In collaboration with the [Caribbean Consular Corps](#), and the [Opium Night Club-SET](#) FAVACA held a fundraiser; *“Carnival for the Development of the Caribbean”* geared towards increasing the number of volunteers to the region. On Saturday, February 27th, over 100 people came out to SET night club to be a part of strengthening a united Caribbean and launching off the Carnival season with complimentary cocktails, [DJ John Cash](#), and an exciting program. This event represented an unprecedented collaborative effort for Floridians to reach out to their Caribbean neighbors. Thank you to all those who came out to party with a conscience and joined the movement of FAVACA supporters who empower experts to empower others. Additionally, FAVACA would like to send a special thanks our sponsors and friends: **Set and the Opium Group**, [The Royal Palm Hotel](#), Stone and Marble Depot, [Casa Casuarina](#), [Franck Provost](#), [Equinox Fitness](#), [The Red Door Spa](#), Tattoo Lounge, [www.me-photo.net](#), [Tapas y Tintos](#), [944 Magazine](#), Raffa, [The Caribbean Consular Corps](#), Consumers Debt and Credit Consultants, Mr. and Mrs. Rose-Avila, [David’s Café](#), [Press-Pro.com](#), and Grupo Foclorico Quillami.



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