

# Communi-clik

Breaking News from Florida's International Volunteer Agency



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## **SPECIAL NEEDS CENTER RECEIVES TRAINING IN EQUINE ASSISTED THERAPY**

Special needs children in Nicaragua have limited access to therapies or activities with the exception of Los Mimados, a horse therapy center located in the heart of Managua that treats more than 300 children per week. The children ages 2-18 receive free physical therapy treatment both in the traditional sense and also by touching, riding, and enjoying horses. The staff has over three years of experience creating individualized therapy programs for children with Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, burn victims, and more. In order to make sure that they were providing the best care possible they requested an expert professional horse therapist to help them update their techniques, technology, and safety standards. First time volunteers, Dr. Giselle Faubel and Dr. Jane Burrow of [Equus for Humanity](#), responded to the need for training. Dr. Faubel of Weston, Florida is a State of Florida licensed Clinical Psychologist, as well as a School Psychologist and a Mental Health Counselor. She is a NARHA certified Equestrian Instructor and Equine Facilitated Mental Health Professional. Dr. Burrows of Miami Beach Florida is a certified Hippotherapy Specialist and physical therapist. She currently works with special needs populations at Equus for Humanity Foundation. They traveled from April 19-22 to provide hands on training for the 8 member staff of Los Mimados and additional training for 15 teachers from the special needs school affiliated with the center. Their interactive training allowed the parents of the children to learn about the benefits of the therapy and gave the staff new ideas for treatment. Dr. Faubel and Dr. Burrow advised the staff and teachers in the latest safety precautions for therapy using horses allowing the children to ride and enjoy the outdoors and gain self esteem and other valuable life skills.



## **AGRIBUSINESS TECHNIQUES TO INCREASE PROFITS IN GRENADA**

Farmers in Grenada operate with scant knowledge of production costs or profitability. At times they repeat crops without knowing the impact on their bottom line, or if their cash, time, and efforts could generate greater profits with other products. Reginald Andall, representative from the [Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute \(CARDI\)](#) and Randolph Shears, Director of Extension for the [Grenada Ministry of Agriculture](#) contacted FAVACA to request an expert to help build the capacity of local producers and extension officers in business management and profitability assessment for small farmers. Michael McGuire, Vice-President for Joint Ventures, traveled to Grenada April 15-26, 2010 to provide training using simple agricultural extension spreadsheets to develop budgets for crop and livestock activities. Participants learned how to calculate and input variable costs, as well as procedures for calculating

and allocating fixed costs. Produce buyers from a supermarket, restaurant, and the government marketing board were invited to afternoon sessions to discuss their expectations for product type, timing, quality, and pricing. Resulting from the sessions, a survey and map of the different types of market outlets and customers available to farmers in Grenada was produced for the participants. The major markets (supermarkets, hotels, restaurants, market vendors, the governmental marketing board, processors, and direct sales) were assessed in terms of when each outlet type provides advantageous access to the marketplace for the producer. The concepts of efficiency and differentiation were overlaid on the map to highlight the links between production and marketing strategies, and to identify options for effective farm business strategies. As a result of the training, each interested farmer chose an extension officer to start the process of record-keeping based on the extension materials provided in class. At the end of the year, the farmer will be able to review their expenses and sales and generate an income statement for their farm business, allowing farmers to see which activity provides the most returns for the time and funds invested.

## COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES IMPROVED IN HAITI



Haiti was the subject of intense, international media interest in the days and weeks following the earthquake, and the Haitian Ministry of Culture and Communications fielded the vast majority of those inquiries, conducting as many as 40 interviews a day. Since that time, media focus on Haiti has slowed considerably. International media coverage now consists of periodic update stories, which are generally negative regarding the competence of the Haitian government, the level of recovery that has been made and the upcoming threat of rainy season. Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassegue, Haitian Minister of Haitian Culture and Communications, requested the assistance of FAVACA to provide a volunteer to teach her staff how to craft a strategic communication plan

to improve the Ministry's effectiveness in sharing information internally with the people of Haiti and externally with the international media. FAVACA in collaboration with the [US Embassy in Haiti](#) was able to enlist Michelle Ubben, partner and chief operating officer of [Ron Sachs Communications](#), one of the top independent public relations firms in Florida and one of the top 100 in the U.S., to volunteer her expertise in working with the Minister and her staff to craft a strategic communication plan. Ubben traveled to Haiti April 25-29, 2010. Despite remarkable challenges, including the need to operate the Ministry out of a series of tents on the perimeter of a tent community, the Ministry possesses a number of assets in their continued effort to inform Haitians and the international community on the progress being made toward recovery. Working with a small but motivated staff, Ubben was able to develop a more empowered, proactive communication strategy, which will help to reshape perceptions of the Haitian government's effectiveness in the recovery effort. Ubben suggested the Ministry share more success stories of progress made by both the government and nongovernmental organizations. Upon her return, Ubben composed a detailed strategic communications strategy elaborated with Ministry staff.

## LONG-TERM BENEFITS OF DEMAND DRIVEN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In conjunction with the communications strategy training for the Ministry of Haitian Culture and Communications conducted by volunteer Michelle Ubben of Ron Sachs Communications, FAVACA and the Public Affairs Office of the US Embassy provided additional volunteer support to coach 30 Ministry staff on creating Public Service Announcements. Film producer Sabrina Reisinger de Angulo and students Patrick Gines and Hali Gardella of [Florida State University's \(FSU\) College of Motion Picture Arts](#) traveled to Haiti April 25-May 1. The Film School enjoys a high level of prestige and recognition that is unparalleled among its peers and has been recognized by members of the industry with honors and awards since its creation. In addition to training the Ministry staff, the volunteers documented the technical assistance Ubben provided the Ministry staff and they investigated international



development programs and the types of assistance that create long-term positive outcomes for Haiti. The team interviewed past FAVACA partners to better understand the benefits of long-term dedication to demand-driven technical assistance, which FAVACA has employed for nearly thirty years. Partners interviewed during their visit included the Minister of Tourism, the Minister of Culture and Communications, the head of the Bureau of Civil Protection, Village of Vision in Lamardelle and the Haitian Hotel Association. Upon their return to Tallahassee, the volunteers created a short documentary, which they will share with FAVACA and other motion picture institutions throughout the nation.

### **FAVACA CONGRATULATES KAY CRANLEY ON TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY**



Kay Cranley, FAVACA’s Fiscal and Administrative Manager, has served the organization tirelessly for ten years. Based out of FAVACA’s Tallahassee office, she is the organization’s much beloved, behind-the-scenes miracle worker. She oversees the organization’s financial accounting, human resources and budget reports. Thanks to her dedication and attention to detail, FAVACA has carried out over 2,500 successful volunteer projects in 32 countries training 50,000 individuals positively impacting the region by increasing employment opportunities and revenue, protecting populations and natural resources, enhancing productivity and self-sufficiency, and improving international relations through lasting people to people connections. Congratulations Kay!

**FAVACA - The Florida Association for Volunteer Action in the Caribbean and the Americas**

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Promoting social and economic development in the Caribbean and the Americas through volunteer service.

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A graphic logo on the right side of the banner. It features a stylized globe with latitude and longitude lines. Behind the globe are several pencils of different colors (red, blue, green, yellow) with their erasers pointing towards the top. The pencils are arranged in a fan-like pattern, with the globe in the center.