



**Breaking News** from Florida's International Volunteer Agency



**The FAVACA staff wish you all a Happy Holiday  
and a joyous New Year.**

**El personal de FAVACA les desea muy Felices Fiestas  
y un Próspero Año Nuevo.**

**Manm FAVACA swete ou gen yon Bon Nwèl  
epi yon bon Nouvèl Anè.**

November/December 2007

**FAVACA'S 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION A GREAT SUCCESS**

**HAITI HOSTS SECOND G3 CONFERENCE ON GANGS, GUNS & GOVERNANCE**

**SAME PLACE, NEW FACE: FAVACA LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE**

**FOCUS ON FLORIDA: FAVACA JOINS MY SAFE FLORIDA HOME PROGRAM**

**HIGHLIGHT YOUR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES, SEND FAVACA YOUR STORY**

**FAVACA'S 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION A GREAT SUCCESS**



On November 16th over 250 of FAVACA's friends and supporters converged upon the stunning [Norwegian Pearl](#) to celebrate 25 years of volunteer service and honor the founder and former Governor, Senator Bob Graham. The Senator was joined by family and enjoyed an afternoon full of memories and visions of the future as honored speakers shared their appreciation for [Florida's International Volunteer Corps](#) and the invaluable service it provides to the State of Florida and regional neighbors. Guests were treated to a four-course meal and enjoyed a special video presentation commemorating the past 25 years. The event's highlight was the presentation of

FAVACA's first "Lifetime Achievement Award" to Senator Graham and his heartfelt acceptance speech that received a standing ovation.

In appreciation for his commitment to the region, FAVACA commissioned a one-of-a-kind commemorative print of world renowned artist, [Xavier Cortada's work, "Mangroves \(at Sunset\)"](#). Mr. Cortada also presented Senator Graham with an original work from his Antarctic series as a token of thanks for Senator Graham's dedication to the environment. Senator Graham recognized early on that Florida is a Caribbean state and the importance of fostering healthy partnerships with countries in the region. To this end he created FAVACA in 1982 and the rest has been history.



### **HAITI HOSTS SECOND G3 CONFERENCE ON GANGS, GUNS & GOVERNANCE**

While those polled in Port-au Prince recently believe there has been a sharp decrease in organized violence over the past six months, the threat posed to the region as a whole by increasingly structured gangs that often partner with their regional counterparts is undeniable. On October 24-27, 2007 the Interuniversity Institute for Research (INUR) held a research seminar on armed gang violence and urban transformation in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The seminar focused on the idea that youth gang violence is not an issue that is limited to Haiti, but rather it also affects other countries throughout the Caribbean and Latin America. Affected by gang violence, and leaders in the region on the issue, Jamaica and Guatemala have been formulating research based intervention strategies and public discussions that ultimately inform citizens on public policies and civil society's involvement.

Haiti and other countries hope to adapt similar strategies to help eliminate youth gang violence. Participants in this seminar were collected from Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, El Salvador, Brazil, and the United States. [FAVACA](#) supported two volunteers to participate and add their expertise to this conference. First time volunteer Laura Kallus from Miami, Florida is the Executive Director of the PanZou Project Inc. an organization which provides gang prevention and intervention services to gang involved and/or high risk youths and their families especially for Haitian Americans. Also a first time volunteer, Dr. Mikaila Brown, anthropologist and consultant for AOW Consultants Inc. added her expertise on development related projects such as researching best practices and helped explain methods that are currently being used in the field. Brown has done extensive research on the Jamaican diaspora repatriation and the socio-economic status and the effects on the development of self-perception and nationalism. Carolyn Rose-Avila, President of FAVACA, also attended this event.



## SAME PLACE, NEW FACE: FAVACA LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE



FAVACA is pleased to announce the launching of its new website. By going to [www.favaca.org](http://www.favaca.org) visitors will be able to read up on all of the latest news, projects and FAVACA events. For those new to FAVACA, reading up on its history and past success stories will better acquaint them; and all visitors are encouraged to get involved by [registering with FAVACA](#) and partaking in forum discussions, even start their own blog! The website is a result of countless hours of collaboration from local web designing firm, [Axis Trend](#), and will provide

interested volunteers, partners, and supporters an opportunity to come together and join FAVACA's growing online community. Through the newly designed home of FAVACA on the net, friends of the International Volunteer Corps will keep abreast on developments and show the continued support that has helped make FAVACA a recognized name throughout the region.

## FOCUS ON FLORIDA: FAVACA JOINS MY SAFE FLORIDA HOME PROGRAM

In an effort to maintain the strong community relationships FAVACA enjoys in South Florida, and in line with its long standing commitment to storm mitigation, FAVACA has joined ranks with the [My Safe Florida Home Program](#). The program, intended to fortify Florida homes against the devastating power of hurricanes, is made possible through funding provided by the [State of Florida](#), and is managed by the [Florida Department of Financial Services](#). [Volunteer Florida Foundation](#) is the administrator of the [My Safe Florida Home Nonprofit Program](#) which places its focus primarily on low-moderate income homes, and is the arm of the program where FAVACA will be doing work. From now through September of 2008, FAVACA has pledged to assist 1000 homes in making them hurricane ready by installing hurricane shutters at little or no cost to qualified homeowners. Living in Florida we know all too well the consequences of not preparing in time and FAVACA hopes to do its part in working towards a safer Florida. For more information on the program and to find out if you qualify, please call 305.470.5070.



## HIGHLIGHT YOUR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES, SEND FAVACA YOUR STORY

One of the numerous benefits from joining the Corps and volunteering is the relationships that spawn as a result of cross cultural training. These experiences are what connects the volunteer to his mission and sets FAVACA's technical assistance apart from many others. FAVACA would like to capture these stories and compile them in an invaluable collection that would stand as a testament to the over two thousand dedicated men and women of Florida and beyond that have so selflessly devoted themselves to impart priceless training to their neighbors over the years. Specifically FAVACA would like to hear about how volunteering has impacted your life and could cover any of the following broad topics; your stories may be published in a forthcoming inspirational book on international volunteering:

- Changing views: life-altering or perspective-changing experience
- Challenges & triumphs: overcoming a personal, organizational or team obstacle.

- Cross-cultural understanding
- Humorous Happenings
- One the line: Risking your life to deliver aid or service
- Strengthening family bonds through volunteering
- Finding you goals and meaning in life
- Forging friendships
- Unusual encounters (e.g. meeting a long-lost friend)
- Meeting you future spouse
- New career prospects
- Benefits of volunteering

Please send your questions, comments, and stories [favaca@favaca.org](mailto:favaca@favaca.org) with the subject line “Volunteer Stories”.

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

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