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Breaking News from Florida's International Volunteer Agency



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FLORIDA BAT MAN TRAINS COSTA RICAN CONSERVATIONISTS

Facing a loss of biodiversity and lack of crucial data on underground fauna, Mr. Gustavo Quesada, president of [Anthros Grotto Assoc.](#) in San Jose, Costa Rica, requested training on managing bats in underground caves. First time volunteer Jeffery Allen Gore, leader of the Terrestrial Mammal Research Program of the [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#), provided training on bat biology, handling bats, use of harp traps and mist nets, and methods for conducting census on roosts at Neilly City on March 22-26. Dr. Gore, a native of Panama City, FL, trained 10 conservationists and contributed to establishing the methodologies and skills necessary for comprehensive studies of bat populations in the caves of southeastern Costa Rica. The skills and tools will allow future studies on other caves around the country and facilitate technical exchanges between cavers and biologists for future generations.



SCABIES CONFRONTED IN HAITIAN PENITENTIARY

Scabies, the parasitic infection of the skin, spreads very easily through prolonged skin to skin contact and through towels, clothes and bedding. This has become a serious problem within the penitentiary system in Haiti as conditions are conducive to spreading. Dr. Elie St-Pierre,



the medical director of the National Penitentiary, requested FAVACA's assistance to eradicate scabies. Dr. John May, director of [Health Through Walls](#), a non-profit, Florida based volunteer organization of doctors and healthcare professionals that specialize in prison healthcare services, traveled to Haiti with Dr. Nirva Derizier, Mr. Jean Fenelon, both with Health Through Walls, and Ms. Jennifer Harris, instructor at the [Barry University School of Nursing](#). From March 30-31 they treated inmates and trained in house staff on how to treat and prevent the infection caused by the parasitic mite *Sarcoptes scabiei*. Funding for this project was made possible by the Florida-Haiti Initiative

BONAIRE YOUTH BROADCASTING TEAM RECEIVES TRAINING

The Bonaire Youth Outreach Foundation, under the leadership of Mr. Dennis Martinus, requested training and technical assistance from FAVACA for community students who were part of a radio broadcasting team on the island of Bonaire, Dutch Antilles. The Foundation focuses on providing youth with meaningful programs and life experiences, role models and resources for developing into skilled and responsible radio journalists. First time volunteers Mr. Joe Ritchie, Knight Chair in Journalism at [Florida A&M University](#), and Dr. Louise Ritchie, a journalism professor and newspaper advisor at Florida A&M University and formerly with the [Detroit Free Press](#), responded to the call for assistance. They traveled to Bonaire March 4-March 11, 2007 and conducted training on the "how tos" of journalism. The week long sessions trained various staff and students on basic broadcasting skills, ethics, research, interviewing skills, story telling and analysis.

FLORIDA NEUROSURGEONS POISED TO IMPACT HYDROCEPHALUS IN HAITI

[Hydrocephalus](#) is a medical condition that affects 1 in every 500 births and occurs when there is an abnormal accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) in the brain. This can result in brain damage or even death. Dr. John Ragheb of [Miami Children's Hospital](#) (MCH), [University of Miami](#) (UM) and [Jackson Memorial Hospital](#) (JMH), led a team of neurosurgeons, anesthesiologists and nurses to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, March 22-25, 2007 to perform surgeries on over a dozen children with hydrocephalus. Two days were dedicated to training local doctors and nurses in the techniques used. The FAVACA medical team worked with Haitian surgeons and pediatricians during the operations and for follow-up medical care. The FAVACA sponsored team members were Ann Mcneil of UM and MCH, Carolyn Domina, the Director of Operating Room at MCH, and Marcia Socorro, an OR tech at MCH. Bernard Mevs Hospital donated the operating room and the Miami hospitals donated much of the medical equipment for the surgeries. The medical mission was conducted in cooperation with Healing Hands for Haiti. Funding for this project was made possible by the Florida – Haiti Initiative.



FAVACA PRESIDENT MEETS WITH HAITIAN PRIME MINISTER

Carolyn Rose-Avila conducted a development mission March 25-29, 2007 in order to meet with Haitian Prime Minister Jacques-Edouard Alexis. The purpose was to discuss the five recommendations made by the Haiti Advisory Group, which FAVACA is to implement under the Florida-Haiti Initiative, which is an initiative that will focus on development programs in Haiti that promote economic growth, security and disaster preparedness. Prime Minister Alexis was very receptive of the work FAVACA has done in Haiti and believes the five components, or areas of focus, recommended for Haiti by the Haiti Advisory Group are extremely important for helping Haiti in the coming years. While in Haiti, Rose-Avila also met with Luis da Costa, Principal Deputy Special Representative for the [United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti](#) (MINUSTAH), Gerard Le Chevallier, Director of Political Affairs and Planning Division, and others to propose a meeting with the [Florida Department of Law Enforcement](#) and other groups in Florida with a vested interest to help alleviate the violence, drugs and gangs. FAVACA met with the Haiti staff of Cooperative Housing Foundation International, the USAID-supported program focusing on jobs creation and workforce development contractor. The two organizations explored common goals and possibilities of partnership in Haiti.



Haitian cinema is popularly appreciated on the island, and Renaissance Film is at the forefront. Its director, Mr. Jac Roc, requested FAVACA's assistance to launch a series of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) aimed at informing the public, especially young people, on critical issues such as drug use and violence that are rampant in Haitian society. On March, 11 2007, thanks to FAVACA's support, Renaissance Film's crew, Mr. Harry Janvier Edouard, Willer Fransisco, Mario Colin and Noram Eneil, produced three PSAs in Haiti: *The Devil's Choice* that depicts the devastating effect of drug use; *The Adolescent Kidnapper* portraying the story of a kid who was accidentally shot and killed as a result of his involvement in a kidnapping; and *Imagine This* focuses on a kid who decided not to sell drugs, saving his life. The three PSA's are regularly aired on Haiti's popular commercial TV stations, on school radio stations, on university's campuses and movie theatres. Funding for this project was made possible by the Florida – Haiti Initiative.

HAITIAN FILM DIRECTOR AND FAVACA ARE PUTTING END TO VIOLENCE & DRUGS

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

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The Florida Association for Volunteer Action in the Caribbean and the Americas (FAVACA) is a non-profit organization established in 1982. FAVACA was founded in the belief that Florida's future is interwoven with that of our Caribbean neighbors. The organization's

mission is the improvement of social and economic conditions in the Caribbean and Central America through volunteer service. FAVACA provides technical assistance and training through a diverse combination of federal, private and State of Florida funding sources. To date, more than 1,200 volunteer missions to 29 nations and territories of the region have been completed. A wide variety of training is offered in health and social issues, agriculture, education, environment, disaster mitigation, women's leadership, capacity building and more.

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