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Breaking News from Florida's International Volunteer Agency



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GOVERNOR BOOSTS FAVACA TO OAS

The United States hosted the 35th General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) June 5-7, 2005, at the Broward Convention Center in Fort Lauderdale, the first time in 34 years. Attendees included the new OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza, presidents, prime ministers, and foreign ministers from around the region, President George W. Bush, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and other prominent US government officials.

Governor Jeb Bush took the opportunity at the General Assembly's Inaugural Ceremony to highlight FAVACA's mission for the past 23 years improving social and economic conditions in the Caribbean and Central America. He additionally saluted AmericasRelief Team and the Haiti Advisory Group. At the Florida State luncheon, the Governor also praised the Haiti Advisory Group's recommendations to improve the economic and political situation in Haiti.

LEVI STRAUSS EXPANDS HAITI WORK

FAVACA will be initiating projects in economic development and HIV/AIDS under a Levi Strauss Foundation (LSF) grant targeted at improving quality of life and creating lasting social change. Since early 2003, Levi Strauss & Company has maintained a manufacturing relationship with Ouanaminthe, Haiti, an impoverished town of 80,000 near the Haiti-Dominican Republic border. At LSF's request FAVACA conducted an economic and healthcare needs assessment there in April 2005 and received a \$60,000, 18-month grant extension to design a strategic plan for a LSF grants program in that community. FAVACA will recruit and field approximately ten volunteer experts to supplement technical expertise needed to carry out the grant program.

HURRICANE RELIEF GRANT PROGRAM WEIGHS IN

FAVACA's Caribbean Technical Assistance, Training and Recovery Grants Program is reporting impressive progress in providing grants, technical assistance, and logistics support to countries ravaged by last year's hurricanes, and to prepare for this season. The program operates in the Bahamas, Cayman Islands, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The program is funded in part by entertainer Jimmy Buffett's Singing for Change Foundation, Outback Steakhouse and Carrabba's Italian Grill. Technical assistance has included post-trauma counseling in Grenada, emergency responders training in the Bahamas, and the participation of five Caribbean emergency officials in the Florida Governor's April 2005 Hurricane Conference in Tampa, Florida. Six recovery grants totaling \$56,757 have been made to community organizations in the Dominican Republic, Grenada and Jamaica.

GRENADA CULTURAL HERITAGE EXPLORED

Valerie and Cecil Scoon traveled to Grenada June 7-13, 2005 on an advance mission to lay the groundwork for a documentary film on the social and cultural factors surrounding Grenada's Maurice Bishop era and the 1983 US intervention. Valerie, a Florida State University Filmmaker in Residence, will return in July to record oral history using St. Georges University School of Arts and Science students as production assistants. She will also conduct a university seminar on documentary filmmaking and a community screening of the ABC Television film "Oprah Winfrey Presents: Their Eyes Were Watching God" on which she served as associate producer.

TRINIDAD CONTROLS THRIPS

Trade in fresh fruit and vegetables constitutes a hefty four per cent of Gross Domestic Product in Trinidad and Tobago. Thrips, small sucking insects that thrive on plant juices, pose a threat to exports, especially the lucrative hot pepper trade with the United States. FAVACA consultant Joseph E. Funderburk, professor of entomology, University of Florida, provided thrip control workshops for fifteen government officers June 5-12,

2005. The training was hosted by IICA, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture and the Ministry of Agriculture.

BEQUIA ROTARY HOSTS FIRST-AID TRAINING

Bequia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, is a small island whose emergency incidents dramatically increase during the busy tourist season. Recognizing this, the Bequia Rotary Club hosted first-time FAVACA Tallahassee volunteers, Tonnie Rollins and Scott Barry for First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) for children and adults, as well as Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training for 50 participants in Port Elizabeth, June 18 - 25, 2005. Rollins is a 14-year veteran of Tallahassee's Fire Department and Barry is a 12-year veteran paramedic with Leon County. This volunteer mission was made possible in part by Jimmy Buffett's Singing For Change Foundation, Outback Steakhouse, and Carrabba's Italian Grill.

BARBADOS TACKLES DRUGS

The Barbados Committee for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Dependency, hosted Tallahassee first-time FAVACA volunteers Teknaya Watson and Charles Osiris, June 11-19, 2005. They conducted training on health and safety at the work place; substance abuse education; interventions for anger management, truancy, and self-esteem among youths; counseling and intervention techniques for substance abuse counselors in outreach programs. Dr. Watson is a clinical psychologist with the Jefferson Correctional Institution in Monticello. Dr. Osiris is an independent consultant in organizational development and educational leadership.

HONDURAN PARK IMPROVES SERVICES

Jorge Yanes is director of the Cuevas de Talgua National Archaeological Park near Catacamas, Honduras. Caves in the park are believed to house the oldest cemetery in Honduras. Yanes hosted training by Florida State Parks' Peter Scalco, Tallahassee, June 5-11, 2005 for the park staff and nine local guides. Scalco taught emergency exit strategies, creating pathways that are conductive and sensitive to the ecosystem, and management strategies that facilitate public awareness and participation.

MEXICO CITY SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF RECEIVES TRAINING

The Instituto Pedagógico para Problemas del Lenguaje (IPPLIAP) provides education and other support services to children with hearing, language, and learning disabilities. The 38-year-old-institution recently started a preschool and elementary school program for deaf children. FAVACA veteran volunteer Ms. Stevie Fenton, Tallahassee, participated in a national conference, gave a plenary session to nearly 200 attendees, and

engaged in a weeklong workshop on intervention with young deaf children and their transition from elementary school to high school, May 25-June 4, 2005. Fenton is coordinator for Disability Services and Advocate for North Florida Community College in Madison, Florida.

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

Tallahassee Office

**1310 N. Paul Russell Road
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
850 410 3100**

favaca@favaca.org

Miami Office

**1330 S.W. 22nd Street, Suite 207
Miami, Florida 33145
305 377 5500**

favaca@favaca.org

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

www.favaca.org



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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