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Breaking News from Florida's International Volunteer Agency



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EL SALVADOR PRISON HONES INMATE COMPUTER SKILLS
MEXICO SHARPENS SIGN LANGUAGE
LIBRARIES BENEFIT YOUTH IN DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
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HAITI TOURISM SUMMIT CONVENED

JAMAICA BOOSTS COTTON YIELD

Sea Island cotton is one of the most valuable and costly cotton varieties. It is known for its silky feel and luster. The Jamaica Agricultural Development Foundation (JADF) seeks a ten per cent increase in quality and yield of the crop. In response to JADF's goal, FAVACA enlisted volunteer Dr. Ermson Nyakatawa of the Department of Plant and Soil Science, Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, who believes the goal can be reached through improved integrated pest management, post harvest handling and general production practices. During a June 17-30, 2006 consultation, Dr. Nyakatawa developed a code of best practices for soil types, nutrient levels, planting and weed control. He consulted with producers and environmental research stations and conducted workshops for farmers and industry interest groups including representatives of USAID, Partners of the Americas' Farmer to Farmer Program (whose funding supported this mission), Jamaica Ministry of Agriculture, and the Jamaica Export Association.

EL SALVADOR PRISON HONES INMATE COMPUTER SKILLS

Prison inmates struggle to overcome poor job skills, lack of education, and socio-economic barriers. Confraternidad Carcelaria of El Salvador (CONCARES) provides training to develop work skills and prepare inmates for their return to society. FAVACA's recent contribution in its continuing partnership with CONCARES focuses on repair and maintenance of computers. First-time Tallahassee volunteer Dennis Dale Barfield traveled to San Salvador June 10-17, 2006 and trained ten inmates to diagnose operating problems and repair and maintain computer equipment. Barfield is owner of Parts & Services Inc. of Tallahassee.

MEXICO SHARPENS SIGN LANGUAGE

The Instituto Pedagógico para Problemas del Lenguaje (Pedagogical Institute of Language Problems) hosted volunteer Pamela Crawford, Jacksonville, May 31-June 10, 2006 in Mexico City. The Institute provides education and services for preschool and elementary children with hearing, language and learning disabilities. Crawford is a Speech-Hearing-Language pathologist and certified Teacher of the Deaf, at the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind in St. Augustine. She also conducted workshops and discussions on "Language Development and the Preschool Deaf Child" for 90 participants at the Institute's Second Annual National Conference.

LIBRARIES BENEFIT YOUTH IN DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

As a follow-up to a FAVACA October 2005 mission, Fundacion Sur Futuro conducted advanced training in library cataloging and classification May 28-June 3, 2006. Dr. Maria Chavez-Hernandez returned to work with 14 staff of the literacy centers; libraries used mainly by youth and children. The training focused on library records systems and reference services; identification of selected web sites for reference services; collaboration among library staff in the region; and Internet service connections. Dr. Chavez-Hernandez is on the faculty of the School of Information Studies at Florida State University, Tallahassee, and also serves as the school's internship program coordinator.

GRENADA, CARRIACOU SEEK SOLAR ANSWERS

Power outages following natural disasters remain a major concern for citizens in the storm-ravaged Caribbean. Solar power alternatives are made to order for the sun-drenched islands. The Carriacou Integrated Community Empowerment Resource Organization (CICERO) and the YWF-Kido Foundation Inc. hosted FAVACA's 2002 Volunteer of the Year William Young, in three solar workshops, May 28-June 2, 2006. Fifty three participants in Grenada and neighboring Carriacou attended the workshops for decision makers, managers, disaster relief organizations, and affected communities. Established in 2004, CICERO's mission is to heighten preparedness among Carriacou's 6,000 inhabitants. Young is a senior research engineer with the Florida Solar Energy Center (FSEC), University of Central Florida, Cocoa Beach.

ST. KITTS AND NEVIS ADDRESS HIV/AIDS AMONG TEENS

Andrea Nisbett, health educator with the St. Kitts and Nevis Ministry of Health Information Unit, requested FAVACA assistance on behalf of the Nevis HIV/AIDS Committee to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS and STD prevention strategies. Two return FAVACA volunteers from the Hippodrome State Theater in Gainesville, Jennifer Tyler and Christine Sellers, created a theatrical production based on the theme of World AIDS Day to engage youth in addressing these important issues facing the country. The production, May 27-June 4, 2006, involved 145 youth and adults and featured HIV/AIDS

and STD prevention strategies, protective factors against diseases, healthy relationships, decision-making, self-esteem, and suppression of peer pressure. Sellers and Tyler are Hippodrome's director and associate director of education, respectively.

HAITI TOURISM SUMMIT CONVENED

FAVACA and partner MWM & Associates staged a multi-sector Haiti dialogue June 23-25, 2006 in Miami Beach. The role of the Haitian Diaspora in touristic activities in Haiti, and barriers to tourism were explored. The "Second Annual Haiti Tourism & Economic Development Summit" attracted more than 300 participants and focused on rebuilding and developing the tourism industry of Haiti. Haiti President René Préval and US Ambassador to Haiti Janet Sanderson addressed the standing-room-only crowd. FAVACA was represented by Haitian-American Board Treasurer Dr. Rudolph Moise.

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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.