

# Communi-clik

Breaking News from Florida's International Volunteer Agency



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## **NICARAGUANS RECEIVE DISASTER RESPONSE TRAINING**

The Volunteer Firefighters of Managua ([Benemerito Cuerpo de Bomberos](#)) of Managua was established in 1936. These volunteers have years of experience in disaster response but have minimal formal training. In light of the earthquakes around the region, the firefighters sought formal training in first response to supplement their experience in disaster response and wanted an opportunity to learn about new technologies and training techniques. More than 50 firefighters from stations around Nicaragua participated in the training and will be sharing their knowledge with their squads in the upcoming weeks. Michael Lopez of [Miami-Dade Fire Rescue](#) and Norman "Eddy" Contreras of [Coral Gables Fire Rescue](#) provided interactive training from March 5-12, 2010. Their generous donations of their time, training materials, and equipment has better prepared the city of Managua and surrounding areas to respond to a variety of disasters. The volunteers taught basic first aid, trauma response, back boarding, mass casualty, and scene assessment and procedure. The participants were certified in CPR and received training in using the Jaws of Life, which was donated by the Orlando Fire Department.



## **ENGINEERS HELPING TO REOPEN UNIVERSITY IN HAITI**

The State University of Haiti [[Université d'Etat d'Haïti](#)] (UEH) traces its origins to the 1820s with the establishment of the law school and the medical school. Since that time, the university has added a variety of other departments and institutions in Port-au-Prince and across the country. The January 12 earthquake damaged or destroyed much of the university's infrastructure forcibly closing the school and



leaving students without an option for continuing their education. Seeing the need to create a sense of normalcy for students across the country, Jean-Vernet Henry, Director of UEH, contacted FAVACA to help reopen sections of the campus by having structural engineers assess some of the damaged buildings and to create plans and blueprints for a whole new campus. FAVACA, in collaboration with [Florida International University's Department of Civil Engineering](#), [Miami-Dade Public Schools](#) and the Multicultural Educational Center provided first time volunteers Marie-Elsie

Dowell, a Miami civil engineer and Vice-President of [Parsons Brinckerhoff](#); Ronald Colas, a civil engineer from Pembroke Pines and the Principal and General Manager of [Burns & McDonnell](#)'s Florida Office; and Terrence Lee, a structural engineer with [Terrence Lee Consulting](#) Structural Engineers in Santa Rosa, California, and a specialist with seismic strengthening and analyst, traveled to Port-au-Prince March 25-28, 2010. The team of engineers assessed and evaluated the existing buildings for structural damages. The engineers also evaluated a portion of land owned by UEH to house a new campus and temporary structures to allow for some departments to reopen. A comprehensive plan to create state of the art and environmentally friendly campus completed by April 12, 2010 and was submitted to funding agencies.

#### **POST HARVEST TRAINING FOR CACAO FARMERS**

The cacao farmers in Masatepe were lured into the cash crop of cacao several years ago with aspirations to reach the growing market for organic chocolate lovers. They began planting and have overcome many obstacles but they lacked the technology and skills to bring their small farms to a more profitable level. Despite attempts to solicit training from local entities they had never been able to receive the training they needed in post harvest technology or agri-business. Masatepe is traditionally not a region that cacao is grown and local organizations had ignored their plea for years. The Association Institute of Development and Management of Basin Hydraulics [Asociacion Instituto de Desarrollo y Manejo de las Cuencas Hidricas] (IDEMACH) began working with cacao farmers in environmental protection two years ago, but they have worked with the rural poor throughout Masatepe to sustainably manage their resources and rebuild the environment for the past four years. When the farmers in San Jose de Masatepe requested training in cacao post harvest techniques IDEMACH lacked the technical experience in cacao and immediately began looking for support from FAVACA in order to facilitate the requested training. Trent Blare from Gainesville, Florida volunteered with local farmers and IDEMACH from March 9-18, 2010. Blare visited farms and farmers throughout the region, providing on-farm advice and suggestions and trained more than 130 cacao farmers through a series of agro-business conferences held while he was there. IDEMACH Executive Director, Francisco Porras, collaborated with other organizations and farming groups throughout the region to ensure maximum impact.



## **GREENHOUSE MANAGEMENT INCREASES CROP VARIETY IN ST. VINCENT**

The growing season for vegetable production in the Caribbean is generally quite limited with some varieties being grown in the colder months. The short growing season forces hotels and restaurants to purchase vegetables from outside of St. Vincent and farmers are forced to lower their prices for vegetables to remain competitive with imports. To allow farmers the ability to grow vegetables out of season and to increase local farmer sales, greenhouses and shade houses would need to be constructed since these facilities allow farmers to grow vegetables year round. However, the use of greenhouses in St. Vincent is rather limited and most farmers and



Ministry of Agriculture officials do not possess the technical expertise to start up and maintain greenhouses. Dr. Greg Robbins of the [Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute \(CARDI\)](#) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines requested the expertise of a greenhouse manager from FAVACA to train participants on starting up and maintaining greenhouses, specifically focusing on greenhouses in a tropical climate. First time volunteer Mark Rehder, the executive director of [Farms for Families](#) in Livingston, Montana, trained Ministry of Agriculture field specialists, CARDI extension agents and local farmers on a variety of aspects of greenhouse management from March 17-29, 2010. Topics covered: the variety of structures available to farmers, the different type of covering on the market, land preparation and planting, tropical varieties, irrigation, mulching, and pest management. As a result of the training provided by Rehder, CARDI's field station will act as a demonstration and training center for farmers to come and learn aspects of greenhouse management.

## **FAVACA HONORS VOLUNTEERS AT RECEPTION**

FAVACA would like to thank all the supporters who attended the Volunteer of the Year reception April 14, 2010 at [Florida State University's Turnbull Conference Center](#). FAVACA honored Dr. Mary Ann Jones and Lory Servil for their incredible dedication, care and commitment toward the betterment of life in the Caribbean. Their time and efforts are truly appreciated by FAVACA and all those they have served. This past year Jones worked in Guyana with youth counselors on improving their counseling skills as well as with young men in need of help with issues of self-esteem, tolerance, and violence. She also dealt with gender violence concerns in Antigua and St. Kitts. Servil worked tirelessly to provide post-trauma counseling immediately after the earthquake in Haiti and she returned to Haiti in March to continue to help children cope. Servile also assisted victims of the 2008 hurricanes and floods in Haiti.


## **FAVACA VETERAN VOLUNTEERS HOSTED FUNDRAISER TO REBUILD HAITI**

Terrie Temkin, Gail Meltzer, and Robyn Perlman of [CoreStrategies for Nonprofits](#) hosted a fundraiser to share with their colleagues and friends the impact of FAVACA's development model. The gathering hosted about 30 people interested in volunteering, sharing contacts and opportunities, and donating to FAVACA. FAVACA would like to sincerely thank the CoreStrategies team and all of the guests for their contributions. Rebuilding Haiti will take a long time and would like to thank our supporters for helping Haiti and their commitment to demand-driven projects.

If you know any community organizations like Rotary clubs, churches, and community foundations interested in learning more about FAVACA and how they can directly support a project in Haiti, please

contact us at [favaca@favaca.org](mailto:favaca@favaca.org). Since the devastating earthquake, FAVACA has sent post traumatic stress therapists, structural engineers, and other experts to provide local partners with sustainable solutions. Help us share our unique approach with your friends and colleagues. To date, more than 2,500 volunteer consultancies have directly impacted 50,000 individuals in 32 nations and territories. If every FAVACA supporter donated \$50, we would be able to double the number of volunteers we send each year. Please visit our website at [www.favaca.org](http://www.favaca.org) to donate.

**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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