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Breaking News from Florida's International Volunteer Agency



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THIRTEEN NICARAGUANS INTERN IN SOUTH FLORIDA**

FAVACA COLLABORATES ON THE 33rd ANNUAL CCAA CONFERENCE

FAVACA will be collaborating with the [Caribbean Central American Action \(CCAA\)](#) during their [33rd Annual Miami Conference on the Caribbean and Central America](#), taking place from November 30 – December 2, 2009, at the Inter-Continental Hotel in Miami, Florida. FAVACA encourages all members and friends of FAVACA to attend.

The Miami Conference brings together the leading regional and international stakeholders that are making a difference to the economic development of the Caribbean and Central America. This year the region continues to struggle with the fallout from the global financial crisis, and industries that have been the foundation for economic development are facing unprecedented challenges. At the same time, political and social developments are putting pressure on democratic advances in the hemisphere. These issues, among others, promise to make this Conference one of the most important opportunities this year for dialogue on the Caribbean and Central America.



CREATING A BUZZ ABOUT BEEKEEPING IN DOMINICA

Beekeeping in the Caribbean has suffered great setbacks in the past several decades due to the introduction of Africanized bees, the Vero mite, and habitat loss due to man-made and natural disasters. One island that has been relatively protected from many of the setbacks in beekeeping is Dominica, however; due to the lack of training in key aspects of the profession, many beekeepers are unable to increase the number, quality, and health of hives. In order to help beekeepers obtain the necessary skills to maintain and increase beekeeping on the island, Pure Blossom Hives contacted FAVACA to

provide experts in beekeeping to teach about queen rearing, royal jelly extraction, and pollen collecting. Veteran FAVACA volunteers from the [Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Plant and Apiary Inspection](#), Doug Corbin, Pensacola, and David Westervelt, Umatilla, traveled to Roseau, Dominica July 4-26, 2009. The volunteers provided training on a variety of aspects important in keeping a healthy hive, how to increase the bee population through queen rearing, and how to collect pollen which could lead to new commercial enterprises. Field visits and lectures were conducted across the country from Portsmouth



and [Colihauat](#) in the North to Marigot and Riviere Cyrique in the East to Roseau in the South including the communities of Londonderry Farms, Stork Farm, and Roseau Central. Participants included members of the [Dominican Organic Agriculture Movement](#) and staff from the [Ministry of Agriculture](#). The volunteers taught beekeeping to women and youth at the [Dominica State College](#) and several participants from the [Carib Indians](#). The FAVACA volunteers also held a workshop for the beekeepers on how they could produce hive woodenware from local woods; they worked alongside Home Industries, a local

hardware store, in the manufacturing of woodenware, hive bodies, supers, frames, lids, bottom boards, aluminum lid covers, queen cell molding tools and pollen traps. Previously, bee hives and tools were imported to the island but this workshop established a valuable source of bee woodenware in Dominica manufactured by local labor and resources. The last result from the training entails the participants working with educational institutions across the island to create both a primary school program for beginning beekeeping and to create a college level course for experienced beekeepers based on the Florida Bee College and Florida Master Beekeeping program.

SUPPORTING THE DOMINICAN ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MOVEMENT

[Dominica](#), the Nature Isle, is home to some of the Caribbean's most pristine tropical rainforests and is quickly becoming an ecotourism haven. Ecotourism enterprises are marketing the island's naturalness to draw in tourist by offering nature hikes through lush tropical rainforests, swimming in freshwater lagoons created by majestic waterfalls, whales watching, and sampling an array of natural organic foods. Through these activities and more, Dominica is quickly becoming the Caribbean's destination for nature lovers. The [Dominican Organic Agriculture Movement \(DOAM\)](#), a nonprofit organization created to facilitate and promote a responsible organic industry in Dominica, is partnering with FAVACA and North Carolina based Earthwise Company to expand the reach of organic agriculture on the island. Through funds made available by the [Jimmy Buffett Singing for Change Foundation](#), FAVACA and the Earthwise Company provided DOAM a grant to expand organic farming on Dominica. The project will focus on building the grassroots infrastructure to support a fundamental change in their economy by developing a local organic food system for the island. Local, regional, and



international market opportunities exist for products from Dominica, and the project will establish clear supply and demand channels. However, this project goes way beyond market opportunities; the project is an attempt to build food security from the ground up, by establishing a new model for self sufficiency in the Caribbean and beyond. The Earthwise Company and FAVACA will provide technical support and trainings on not just organics but also capacity building for DOAM and other agriculture industries.

THIRTEEN NICARAGUANS INTERN IN SOUTH FLORIDA

July 10 – August 5, 2009 FAVACA sponsored thirteen Nicaraguan entrepreneurs including 2 first-time travelers South Florida to participate in a month-long business internship program. This follows the March 2009 professional exchange program that brought twenty-nine Nicaraguan entrepreneurs supported US Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The goal of the program is to empower young Nicaraguan entrepreneurs through creative thinking and improved business skills. Assistance focuses on help to increase the revenue and productivity of their companies, be better able to address residents' needs in their communities, and to create linkages with Florida businesses especially amongst the Nicaraguan diaspora.



The July-August internship program was designed to provide the participants with first-hand experience and knowledge on how to run a small business in a tourism related market. Starting July 8th in Managua



FAVACA arranged for the participants to meet with top officials with the Nicaraguan Ministry of Tourism (www.visitnicargua.com) and (www.intur.gob.ni) to brief them about their businesses and to learn about the Ministry's strategic tourism plan for the country. Upon arriving in Miami, the participants were introduced to the business leaders throughout South Florida who agreed to host the Nicaraguan interns from July 10 - August 2, 2009. As part of the program, interns benefited from series of seminars and workshops provided by the Miami [Small Business Development Center](#).

Special thanks and recognition is due to all the business leaders and Nicaragua internship participants including (Intern Participant - [Florida Business](#)): Glenn Cuthert ([Sustain-a-Village](#)), Paulina Downs Lam ([Cacao Grill](#)), Fany Ramirez ([Miami River Inn](#)), Martha Beer and Karim Zeledon ([Funky Urban Inc.](#)), Rafael Picado ([Schnebly's Winery/Fresh King](#)), Ana Lucia Cunningham ([Everglades Hotel](#)), Isabel Pavon ([El Novillo](#)), Maria Elena ([Mayda Cisneros](#)), Jerry Lopez ([Gen TV](#)), Gustavo Medina (Daddy's Leather), Susana Nelson ([Eggwhites Catering](#)), and Meibol Watson ([South Beach Riviera](#)).

As a direct result of the exchange program:

- Eleven entrepreneurs designed and established their own websites.
- Four expanded their businesses and have new locales to sell their goods.
- Four are involved in showcasing their businesses at the Nicaraguan Consulate in Miami.
- Nicaraguan participants purchased goods from Florida vendors for their businesses.
- Gustavo Medina negotiated and won a leather contract for his business.
- Ana Lucia Cunningham will begin to host alternative spring break volunteers at her hotel.
- Maria Isabel Pavon will be expanding her catering services with the potential to build an event center in Managua.
- All participants have been networking together and sharing information to better their business.



The last phase of the professional exchange program culminates in December 2009/January 2010 with a leadership conference in Nicaragua planned to bring participants and the various stakeholders together once more to explore lessons learned and cement Florida/Nicaragua connections.

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