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Breaking News from Florida's International Volunteer Agency



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JIMMY BUFFETT CONFERS MAJOR GIFT

FAVACA has received a \$700,000 contribution from songwriter-performer [Jimmy Buffett](#)'s hurricane relief concert held in Orlando on November 23, 2004 which raised \$3.4 million. The donation to FAVACA generated by the "Surviving the Storm" concert came from [Outback Steakhouse](#) and [Carrabba's Restaurant](#), major sponsors of the event. The funds will support grants and technical assistance to hurricane-ravaged Caribbean states.

FAVACA, MDEINC CELEBRATE PARTNERSHIP

Fort Lauderdale-based [Minority Development & Empowerment, Inc.](#) (MDEINC) has offered health, social and employment prevention, education and early intervention services for Caribbean-Americans, Haitians and other minorities in South Florida since 1996. Last year, more than 10,000 individuals, were served. MDEINC CEO Francois Leconte served on Governor Bush's Haiti Advisory Group and received the 2004 Concern Award from the Health Foundation of South Florida in December 2004. MDEINC Vice President for Business Development Marvin Dejean, and Ms. Guithele Ruiz-Nicolas, VP of Human Resources and Communications have served as FAVACA volunteers from as early as 1997. For more details on MDEINC, see www.mdeinc.org.

ST. LUCIA RECEIVES SPECIAL ED CONSULT

The St. Lucia Ministry of Education's long-term goals include the development and adoption of a national policy on persons with disabilities, teacher training at all levels,

implementation of a program of screening and early identification of students entering the educational system, and establishing a diagnostic and assessment center. St. Lucia Special Needs Education Officer, Cynthia Weekes hosted teacher training to identify children with autism, attention deficit disorder and other learning disabilities Feb. 22 - 26, 2005. Dahra N. Jackson, of the [Mailman Center for Child Development](#), Department of Pediatrics at the University of Miami's School of Medicine served as FAVACA consultant. Ms. Jackson currently performs psycho-educational assessments on children ages 8 to 15 at the Center. In addition to offering techniques and strategies to teachers in St. Lucia, Dahra also conducted a score of individual counseling sessions and assessments of students during her visit.

ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES BEE-KEEPING INDUSTRY BOLSTERED

Bee-keepers Caribbean-wide report that apiculture is a Godsend. In an era where small economies are buffeted by global markets and natural disasters, modest beekeeping operations can make the difference between starving and sustaining. St. Vincent is no different, and steps to keep beekeeping strong are underway, thanks to Goodwin Daniel, St. Vincent & the Grenadines coordinator the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). Daniel sponsored veteran Florida beekeeper, inspector and FAVACA Volunteer of the Year Tomas Mozer in consultations with 18 Vincentian beekeepers February 20-27.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING PRODUCES NEW DIRECTORS

The FAVACA Annual General Meeting was held February 12 in Tallahassee. Members selected the following new leadership: Todd Kocourek - Chair, Bob Milligan - Vice Chair, Mark Schlakman - Secretary, and Fred Seamon - Treasurer. Directors at Large are Gerald Buxbaum, Rudolph Moise and Emilio Gonzalez. Jeff Sharkey is Past Chair.

FAVACA VOICE IN CUBA PROJECT

The [Cuba Transition Project](#) (CTP) at the University of Miami Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies seeks to coordinate an effective, integrated response to anticipated changes in Cuba. CTP collaborators include FAVACA, US Southern Command, Red Cross, and Florida International University, among others. CTP is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

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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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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