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**Breaking News** from Florida's International Volunteer Agency

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**JUNE 2007**

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## **HAITIAN WOMEN'S GROUP ANNUAL ART EXPOSE A MASTERPIECE**

Femmes en Democratie, Women in Democracy, a prominent women's advocacy group in Haiti, held their 4<sup>th</sup> annual art expose May 4-6, 2007 at the Karibe Convention Center in Petion-Ville, Haiti. The goal of the recurring fair is to help the Femmes en Democratie women's group increase the exposure of their crafts and artwork to American and international markets. Art wholesalers and retail buyers as well as several media outlets took part in this event. FAVACA helped to support 11 volunteers from the State of Florida and New York to attend this three day expose. They included art wholesalers, journalists, and representatives from other non-profits and groups specializing in assisting artisans in underdeveloped regions to market and sell their work at a fair price. FAVACA's



dedicated volunteers were also able to provide training to sixty (60) women vendors who had their wares displayed for sale. All of the volunteers were able to talk with the vendors to provide information on what American markets are looking for from Caribbean artists. Consultations focused on product improvement, wholesale pricing, e-commerce, and a variety of other resources to help improve their exposure to international markets. Approximately 7,000 people attended the expose. This project was made possible in large part by the Florida – Haiti Initiative and [USAID](#).



## SOUTH FLORIDA WOMEN BRING BIG IDEAS TO CAYMAN SMALL BUSINESS



While international investment and the banking sector in the Cayman Islands are well documented, the need to provide a reliable resource for the 81% of the total number of businesses which have less than 25 employees is clear. With such an exuberant amount of small businesses, the economy of the nation is dependant on their survival. The [Cayman Islands Investment Bureau \(CIIB\)](#) is a government agency that serves to improve the awareness and interest in small business development and entrepreneurship in the

Cayman Islands. They conduct public forums, workshops and seminars geared toward entrepreneurs and small business owners, as well as one on one training and consultations. Director Dr. Dax Basdeo recognized several areas that needed improvement, and called upon FAVACA for assistance. First time volunteer [Marian Morgan](#), a life and business coach from Miami Beach, joined three time volunteer and Director of the [Small Business Development Center](#) at [Florida Atlantic University](#), Nancy Young from Boca Raton, in traveling to Grand Cayman May 3-5, 2007. The duo trained over 100 small business owners and staff on a wide range of topics geared to improve their chances of success, including: staff training and retention; marketing; client relationships and more. They also trained the staff of the CIIB in effective methods and techniques in one on one business training and consultations.

## FAVACA SUPPORTS INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES AT GOVERNOR'S HURRICANE CONFERENCE

The devastation that hurricanes cause in the region each year is undeniable. In an effort to further the knowledge and expertise of emergency planners and workers from around the region, the State of Florida organized the [21<sup>st</sup> Annual Governor's Hurricane Conference](#) May 14-18 at the Broward County Convention Center (Ft. Lauderdale). The theme for this year was "Building on Past Successes...Preparing for Future Challenges". FAVACA again was proud to sponsor

key officials from national defense and disaster neighboring nations who conference. The week-excellent opportunity for technical assistance on a including Incident Building High Response Teams, and for Special Needs Hurricane Decision addition, the participants with counterparts from the

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*-Antonio Joyette, FAVACA Volunteer*

governments, civil organizations from 10 attended the long event provided an receiving training and wide variety of subjects Management Team, Performance Disaster Emergency Planning Populations and Making Scenarios. In were able to network Caribbean and Central

America, professionals from Florida counties and state agencies as well as guests from other

states and 18 foreign countries. FAVACA International Program Coordinator, Mauricio Suarez, served as the delegates' guide, liaison, and translator to the conference officials. On the evening of May 15th, Mr. Suarez was accompanied by FAVACA President, Carolyn Rose-Avila and Director of Program Development, Rebecca Reichert in officially welcoming the delegates in an intimate banquet held at the [Renaissance Hotel](#). During the banquet specific needs of the delegates' organizations were discussed and future partnerships were explored. Countries represented were: Jamaica, Grenada, Cayman Islands, St. Vincent, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Haiti. The Conference was a huge success and the participants benefited from the various programs and trainings. In the words of Mr. Antonio Joyette, Meteorological Officer at the E. T. Joshua Airport in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, "The experience that I have gained will certainly not only enrich me as an individual, but will also be invaluable to my organization and my country by extension".

### **ORGANIC FARMING TRAINING IN HAITI YIELDS POSITIVE RESULTS**

Fifteen hundred meters above sea level lies the beautiful mountain community of Le Montcel. It is a breathtaking and extremely hospitable community that strives to be self sufficient. Philip Villedrouin, owner and manager of the [Ranch Le Montcel](#) hotel, has asked FAVACA for assistance in locating a volunteer to help train his staff and the community in organic farming. James Gibbons of Fort Pierce, Florida is an owner and producer of Gibbons Farm Organics which operates the largest greenhouse in Florida. Gibbons Farm Organics has worked with [USDA](#), [SARE](#), [University of Georgia](#), and [Florida A&M University](#) on multiple organic trails and research.



Gibbons was able to provide the community of Le Montcel with new and innovative methods to produce organically grown vegetables and fruits. The hands-on field training allowed the community to understand the necessary water and fertilizer requirements to produce the amount of food they require for sustenance while at the same time training them in new methods and plants that will produce a natural insecticide without hurting the garden or making it non-organic. One feature of the training that was considered invaluable to the community was learning how to plan their gardens for year-round plantings without having to have the fields rest or use up the valuable nitrogen that is often depleted after one harvest. The new method of farming will allow farmers to continually produce throughout the year and now have money available for such things as education for their children, health care for their family, and other necessities that were previously lacking in the area. This project was made possible in large part by the [USAID](#).

### **TOXICOLOGY CONFERENCE IN JAMAICA AIMS TO TAKE THE BURN OUT OF POISON**

With household bleach still being the number one source of poisoning among Jamaicans, especially among children, educating the caretakers and general public on the do's and don'ts in handling potential toxicants and caring for patients is a top priority. The [Caribbean Poison Information Network \(CARPIN\)](#) is a multi agency initiative that was created in May 2005 to



heighten awareness of poisons within households throughout the Caribbean. In an attempt to achieve this, CARPIN held its second annual Scientific Conference on poison control. Mrs. Yvonne Reid, the CARPIN Project Manager, looked to FAVACA for assistance in identifying and securing experts to speak on the four major issues: Air and Water Pollution; Food Poisonings; Occupational Hazards; and Food Poisonings. FAVACA was fortunate to identify an experienced expert team comprised of first-time volunteers Amy Hicks, Jeanie Dodge, and Gerred Pogge, all from the [Department of Environmental Health and Safety at Florida State University](#). The team was also joined by another first-time volunteer and the Chief of the [Bureau of Water Programs](#) at the [Florida Department of Health](#), Mr. Bart Bibler. From May 26 - 30, 2007, the qualified team conducted several lecture and training sessions that reached well over 100 participants and shined light on the identification and management of toxins found in nature, the household, and the workplace. Through this conference, CARPIN provided a valuable opportunity for national and regional collaboration among a wide cross section of professionals, individuals and organizations.

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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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