

FAVACA COMMUNIQUÉ

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Nicaraguan Entrepreneurs Intern in South Florida



July 10 – August 5, 2009 FAVACA sponsored thirteen Nicaraguan entrepreneurs' travel to South Florida, including two first-time travelers, to participate in a business internship program designed to provide first-hand experience and knowledge on how to run a small business in a tourism related market. This follows the March 2009 Professional Exchange Program that brought twenty-nine Nicaraguan entrepreneurs supported by the 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 among the Nicaraguan diaspora.



The program began July 8th in Managua where FAVACA arranged for the participants to meet with top officials with the Nicaragua Ministry of Tourism (www.visitnicaragua.com) and (www.intur.gov.ni) to brief officials about their businesses and to learn about the Ministry's strategic tourism plan for the country. Upon arriving in Miami, the participants were linked to business leaders throughout South Florida and benefited from 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 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.



Communiqué is published periodically by the Florida Association for Volunteer Action in the Caribbean and the Americas. FAVACA is a private, not-for-profit corporation formed by Florida Governor Bob Graham with public and private leaders. FAVACA conducts training and provides technical assistance in education, health, agriculture, business, disaster mitigation, the environment and capacity building. For further information on FAVACA and how to get involved, please contact us at favaca@favaca.org or visit us at www.favaca.org.