

# SUNY Broome SEED students to attend Clinton Global Initiative

March 4, 2015

Forming food banks. Building greenhouses. Helping orphaned street children.

Those are just some of the projects that SUNY Broome's SEED students hope to undertake in their home countries, which include Haiti, El Salvador and Mexico.

From March 6 through 8, six SEED students – Hyppolite John Roosevelt and Esther Jean-Louis of Haiti, Juan Sebastian Martinez Jaramillo and Juan Felipe Romero Quintanilla of Mexico, and Rosimar Arely Marquez Ayala and Enoc Samuel Madril Reyes of El Salvador – will get a head start on their plans at the Clinton Global Initiative University.

Known as CGI U, the conference at the University of Miami will bring together 1,100 students from across the globe, as well as university representatives, topic experts and celebrities. Their goal is to develop innovative solutions to global challenges in the areas of education, environment and climate change, peace and human rights, poverty alleviation, and public health. President Bill Clinton, who established CGI, and Chelsea Clinton are this year's hosts.

This is the largest contingent of students the college has sent to CGI U, noted SEED program coordinator Claudia Beebe. The first three students attended in 2011, followed by one in 2012.

"I am very proud of this class," she said.

Students in the SEED program – which stands for the Scholarship for Education and Economic Development – are required to put together a community action plan, Jean-Louis noted. Founded and administered by Georgetown University, the SEED program provides academic, technical, leadership and professional training to young people and community leaders in Central America and the Caribbean, who then return to their home countries to apply their new skills.

"Central to the idea is that you are engaged to do something in your country," Jean-Louis explained.

Jean-Louis founded the "Corn Food Bank for Fighting with Famine," while Roosevelt's project is called "Stand Up for the Haitian Street Orphans for a Better Tomorrow." Ayala's initiative is "ABC and One More Knowledge," Reyes' is "Developing Inside Talents" and Jaramillo's is "Economic Alleviation System of Improvement – El Rosalito."

At CGI U, the students will learn from the experts on how best to best implement their plans by speaking with experts in global development, Jaramillo explained.

“I expect to find a lot of advice that’s going to help me improve my project,” Roosevelt said.

“I want to make my community action plan a reality,” Ayala added. “There is a big need in my community to have a place where children can learn something that would be good for them so they won’t participate in violence.”

At the conference, Quintanilla will compete in the challenge competition, which involves only 40 students. His project – “Developing a Greenhouse as a Means to Stop Migration” – aims to build a year-round greenhouse to create stability for a dozen families in Mexico, guaranteeing jobs year-round. A native of rural Mexico, Quintanilla will measure his success by counting the amount of jobs he provides to the people of Encinal de Canoas to prevent them from migrating to the U.S. to find work.

It’s a fundraising competition, and the SUNY Broome community can help Quintanilla [by donating to his project](#). Round 4 will begin at noon Thursday.

Fundraising is a familiar activity for these students; they needed to raise money to attend CGI U in the first place. To that end, the students put on a host of events, including a merengue dance party and a Valentine’s Day dinner.

“It took a lot of friends, time and thinking to put a lot of things together,” Reyes said of their fundraising efforts.

SUNY Broome President Kevin Drumm met with and congratulated the students before they made their trek to Miami. He gave them SUNY Broome hats and pins and wished them the best of luck.

“It’s an honor to be selected,” he said.

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