



MINI-NEWSLETTER

SPECIAL NUMBER – OCTOBER, 2009

DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY

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Friends of Dialogue on Diversity

Welcome to mid-October's special number of *Dialogue on Diversity's* Mini-Newsletter. This edition again draws attention to the soon to be presented Colloquium, with reception to follow, on the roots and remedies for Domestic Violence, part of the observance of the month set aside for remembrance and strategy against its prevalence. It also brings a preliminary report of the very successful initial venture of Dialogue on Diversity onto the Puerto Rican scene with its conference on Entrepreneurship and Health care: *Wealth, Health, and Entrepreneurship*, held October 1st, 2009 at the collaborating Universidad del Este in Carolina, Puerto Rico, part of the larger San Juan metro area.

MINI-NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 12, 2009

REMINDER FOR THE OCTOBER 23RD COLLOQUIUM AND RECEPTION *REMEMBRANCE AND REMEDY*

AN EVENT IN OBSERVANCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

The notice and invitation for Dialogue on Diversity's evening colloquium on Friday, October 23, has just gone out. The program, bringing together a panel of expert speakers from a variety of non-profit social service groups in the Washington metropolitan region, covers distinct facets of the much lamented, little discussed, and sparsely remedied scourge of domestic life, a concern stretching from the reaches of the Third World to the heights of society in the First. In the pithy formulation of the late Arthur Miller, Attention Must be Paid.

Our volunteers, as always, are in the forefront in this presentation, setting up, greeting and registering our attending guests, and tidying up at the conclusion. We are eager to enlist a few volunteers for the October 23^d program. If you are willing to be part of the occasion, please call at 703-631-0650 or e-mail at dialog.div@prodigy.net

Please schedule this worthy and interesting program on your calendar for the evening of Friday next week, October 23, in downtown Washington. An up-dated Flyer with agenda is attached to this Newsletter.

Universidad del Este en la Isla del Encanto

This special mid-October newsletter also reports on the program presented a week ago in the San Juan, Puerto Rico metro area, a day-long symposium on aspects of the theme Entrepreneurship in a Healthy Society. The resourceful faculty and staff of the excellent Universidad del Este, Dialogue on Diversity's host and co-presenter, were on the front line in recruiting our roster of top speakers, displaying their peak achievements. The lineup of panelists was a stellar array of the powerful women who have come to cut a striking figure in the character of Puerto Rican social and economic life. The preliminary post-conference press release is set out here.

PRESS ADVISORY
October 7, 2009

DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY PARTNERS WITH UNIVERSIDAD DEL ESTE IN CONFERENCE TARGETING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS OF PUERTO RICO

October 1st saw a gathering of small business experts, on topics ranging from banking to health insurance to entrepreneurship incubators, assembled for a productive, idea-filled day-long symposium in the striking tropical modern setting of the Universidad del Este (University of the East) in Carolina (the eastern urban anchor of the 1.5 million San Juan metro area). Through this October's conference Dialogue on Diversity, a nonprofit educational organization based in Washington, has extended its programs of entrepreneurship education to a Puerto Rico site in a collaboration with the very progressive Universidad del Este. The University, whose very efficient executive staff organized the program at the Puerto Rico end, is part of the larger Ana G. Mendez University System (SUAGM, its Spanish language acronym).

The conference opened with a greeting by Ma. Cristina Caballero, as President of Dialogue on Diversity, joined with a brief commentary on the significance of women's entrepreneurship for both Puerto Rican and the U.S. mainland societies. A welcome message and commentary by the long-time University Chancellor Alberto Maldonado-Ruiz followed. The Chancellor's wide-ranging remarks emphasized the many-faceted work of the University in its essential concerns for the economic vitality of Puerto Rican society, and in particular for the women entrepreneurs, both those now operating and those only potentially in the field – a segment of Puerto Rico's array of economic resources that promises to power the Island's recovery and its future successes.

Conference MC was Prof. Maritza Espina, Dean of the University's School of Business Administration and Associate Professor on its faculty. Prof. Espina, an expert in mathematical statistics and operations research, holding a doctorate from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, has undertaken to decipher the many puzzles of Puerto Rico's daunting economic challenges and along the way has made the Universidad del Este a much heeded voice in the direction of policy toward restoring the growth curve in the Island's business and commerce.

The roster of very distinguished speakers included Lizzie Rosso, appointed in January, 2009 by the newly inaugurated Puerto Rico federal administration as President of the Economic Development Bank of Puerto Rico, an entity tasked with lending directly to business enterprises and granting guaranties for suitable loans originated by the Island's highly articulated network of commercial banks. The bank under Ms. Rosso's direction is sharpening efficiency in a number of directions, most notably through cutting waiting times for loan approval; it is at once

concentrating its lending and guaranty powers to speed the Puerto Rico economy on the route to rejuvenation and recovery, as it charts its way out of the “lost decade” of the 2000s, in which growth has been almost totally stagnant.

Socorro Rivas-Rodriguez, the highly successful CEO guiding the massive health insurance division of the Triple-S insurance combine for the last decade, offered a cogent factual account on the extent of insurance coverage on the Island and the state of health care delivery to the population – all against the backdrop of a shrewd management’s well-aimed efforts within the company to drive its own operations to a high degree of efficiency and service.

Lunchtime speaker Eneida Torres de Durand, writer and business owner, now heading her own communications firm Ideas for Organizational and Management Development, brought an attentive audience to an fresh appreciation of the role of management , almost as an intuitive presence, a real and central, if often elusive, input in production. A drive to craftsmanship in entrepreneurial achievement, a veritable ethic of work.

Another key element in the life of the small enterprises of Puerto Rico, very much as in the mainland States, is the special marketing problems of small firms, often those owned by women and persons of ethnic minorities. Here the Minority Supplier Development Councils existing in cities through the U.S. have their very active counterpart in Puerto Rico, under the direction of the very resourceful Jacqueline Marie Matos, President of the MSDC chapter. While within the Puerto Rican market itself Latino enterprise owners clearly are far from a minority, they necessarily find themselves selling in a much broader market, one supplied by producers both small and large throughout the rest of the globe -- as to which they are indeed a minority. Ms. Matos skillfully mentors, certifies, and matches these small enterprises with the needs of the large purchasers, in both public and private sectors, which are the all important mainstays of the Council’s power – and that of the small enterprise stratum of the economy.

As the Conference’s lead sponsor, the pharmaceutical industry giant Pfizer, Inc., with a history of successful operation in Puerto Rico, was represented in the program by its head Washington public policy executive, Melissa Bishop-Murphy, traveling to Puerto Rico to appear as main midday session speaker for conference attendees. Her discussion, targeted to attending women entrepreneurs, highlighted the role such firms as Pfizer have played in the Island economy in the wake of the industrialization policies of the 1950s, when much of the rural, agricultural population were drawn to San Juan and other cities – an era when, encouraged by U.S. tax policies, leading firms from the pharmaceutical and other industries came in large numbers to Puerto Rico, whose status as an important manufacturing hub and the dominant economic engine of the Caribbean was reinforced by the industrial influx.

Among other speakers were Yolanda Huertas, serving in a long train of academic and professional roles, among them of the Puerto Rico Health Department, in a career focused on enhancing the skills and performance of Puerto Rico’s nursing profession. Prof. Nancy Vega, former Director of the PR Health Department’s Health Services Administration, now holds forth in her own consulting service and is part of the faculty of Medicine in the University of Puerto Rico at its Rio Piedras site. Eva Vázquez, head of Guayacán, discussed this organization’s many-faceted campaign to sharpen the skills and build a healthy ethos of motivation among Puerto Rico’s entrepreneurs, an undertaking finding its very interesting capstone in the EnterpriZe competition recognizing the high achievers for each year. Vanessa Mejia of the Instituto Empresarial para la Mujer, in a detailed narrative led her audience through the system by which that organization, through a regimen of seminars, targeted to both established and initial entrepreneurs, affords women business owners guided dialogue, with peers and expert counselors as well, in the techniques of small enterprise design and management.

In a special seminar on actual business techniques, accounts of entrepreneurial success came from Maria Arteaga, franchisee operator of a home care service for the elderly, Home Instead, in which successful operation is achieved through a business model adapted by concerned staff to the very special characteristics of a culture and the special circumstances of individual families. Melba Figueroa has driven the success of her construction materials firm over a period of nearly two decades, ministering with skill to the burgeoning growth of housing and business edifices in the Island metropolis. Ileana Durán-Santini offered her own example of a well-targeted consulting

practice furnishing concentrated expertise to a variety of firms and institutions on their accounting and regulatory functions.

The concluding seminar offered instructive commentaries by a pair of experts in special forms of enhancements for small enterprise. Ma. Elena Rivera of FIDECOOP reviewed the operations of that organization. Ms. Rivera has racked up a dozen years' experience with her FIDE client enterprises, credentialed with university training in business management, marketing, and, interestingly, pre-school education! Zamia Baerga, the vivacious Director of the INOVA Incubation Center, in a series of vignettes on her institute's nurturing of aspiring but often meagerly skill-endowed entrepreneurs, outlined the carefully calibrated incubation process of recruiting, mentoring, and monitoring the often fragile enterprises in their early and tentative stages, has had a meaningful hand in fashioning the business infrastructure of the Island economy.

The program closed with brief words from Antonio Monroig, Washington D.C. attorney who, as in many other matters, has worked closely, as advisor and representative of the University System, in organizing the October 1st conference. Mr. Monroig has been a diligent and indispensable co-worker with both the University and Dialogue on Diversity is marshaling the needed resources and successfully putting the conference together.

Conference presentations were delivered for the most part in the Spanish language. Simultaneous translation in English was available for mainland visitors of weak Spanish fluency, as was a Spanish translation of the English-language presentations.

The University, concerned to address its educational efforts to the entrepreneurs of the Island, and specifically the women among the business owning class, is projecting a series of such conferences, of which this October's was the prototype, joining forces with Dialogue on Diversity in the design of agendas and enlisting top-flight speakers' lineups.



Jacqueline Marie Matos



Prof. Maritza Espina



Melba Figueroa



Eva Vázquez

Maria



Vanessa Mejía, Lizzie Rosso



Elena Rivera

