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St. Vincent and the Grenadines Ambassador and University of New Orleans discuss Early Childhood Education partnership

(New Orleans, La.) La Celia A. Prince, St. Vincent and the Grenadines Ambassador to the United States recently met with University of New Orleans Chancellor Timothy Ryan and officials of UNO's College of Education and Human Development to discuss development of a partnership with St. Vincent and the Grenadines to support Early Childhood Education.



Ambassador Prince is greeted by pre-kindergarten students during her site visit at Medard Nelson-University of New Orleans Charter School.

On May 1, 2009, Ambassador Prince also visited Medard Nelson-UNO Charter School, where she observed a pre-kindergarten classroom. “This site visit has allowed me to see elements that we may incorporate into our Early Childhood Education system, making it more interactive; making it one that allows for the individual child to develop their natural propensities, rather than having everybody fit a particular model. These are things I can share with our principals back at home for their further consideration into the implementation of their own policies,” said Ambassador Prince.



Ambassador La Celia A. Prince and UNO Chancellor Timothy Ryan

“It really heartened me to be able to see a class of about 15 children as they engaged in role playing as a police officer, as a theater performer; while somebody else can sit in a corner and read quietly,” said Ambassador Prince following her visit with Nelson's pre-kindergarten class. Ambassador Prince observed that this potential partnership with the University of New Orleans can greatly assist in St. Vincent and the Grenadines' thrust towards implementation of universal access to early childhood education, as well as enhance her country's capacity-building needs.

This shared vision of a possible collaborative partnership in Early Childhood Education is the result of dialogue between Dean James Meza, Jr. and ambassadors of Haiti, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Grenada. The first in a series of ongoing meetings took place last October during the World Cultural Economic Forum 2008 in New Orleans, hosted by the Office of the Louisiana Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu.

The proposed educational collaborative espouses mutual goals of providing high quality education, promoting healthy families and communities, and protecting the best interests of children. The participants in these programs will become reflective practitioners prepared to design, implement and sustain high quality preschool programs that emulate the following core values:

- Teachers facilitate the development of the whole child.
- All children can and do learn in diverse ways.
- Teachers support and collaborate with families of young children.
- Effective learning activities for preschoolers are multidisciplinary in nature and reflective of the cultural and community context in which the children live.

Ambassador Prince, who first served at her Embassy as the Deputy Chief of Mission, was elevated by her Government to the post of Ambassador in April of last year. She presented her credentials to the United States Government in May 2008. She is the youngest foreign Ambassador, serving as her country's chief envoy to the United States and the Organisation of American States.

The University of New Orleans (UNO), the urban research University of the State of Louisiana, provides essential support for the educational, economic, cultural and social well-being of the culturally rich and diverse New Orleans metropolitan area. It opened its doors in 1958 as part of the Louisiana State University System "to bring public-supported higher education to Louisiana's largest urban community." Today, UNO offers 43 undergraduate degree programs, 37 masters, and 11 doctoral programs. The 340-acre main campus sits on the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain, offering easy access to all parts of the metro area. For more information, visit <http://www.uno.edu>.

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