

American University Assists Marshall Islanders

Peacebuilding and Development Institute brings high school students to Washington

Washington, D.C. (June 8, 2006) – With the help of American University’s Peacebuilding and Development Institute, the Republic of the Marshall Islands Ambassador Banny de Brum and others, four students from a high school in Hawaii came to Washington last month to ask Congress for assistance. The United States removed the students’ families from their homes on the Marshall Islands for nuclear testing in the 1940’s and 50’s.

The visiting students’ schedules were organized by American University, which set up meetings with Hawaii Representatives Ed Case and Neil Abercrombie, and with staff members of Senator Daniel Inouye’s office. While in Washington the students also met AU professor and nuclear history expert Peter Kuznick, attended an AU summer course and educated its students of their story, and visited DC’s Wilson High School to educate their peers in Washington.

Zen Hunter-Ishikawa, coordinator of the International Peace and Conflict Resolution program in American University’s School of International Service, is working on establishing a formal relationship between AU, the College of the Marshall Islands and the students’ high school, Ka’u High. Plans include AU students traveling to the Republic of the Marshall Islands to conduct a service project as early as the summer of 2007.

Marshall Islands atolls Bikini and Enewetak, located about halfway between Hawaii and Australia, were used by the United States for nuclear testing from 1945 to 1958. Residents were relocated, and the U.S. government set up a fund to pay reparations to Marshallese citizens for damages and help them with expenses incurred from living abroad. Lawsuits and payments for hundreds of millions of dollars are still unresolved. The Marshall Islands gained its independence from the United States in 1986.

Housed in American University’s School of International Service, the International Peace & Conflict Resolution program (www.aupeace.org) is committed to improving international relations and to enhancing peace and friendship worldwide. Located in Washington, DC, the university is a leader in global education, enrolling a diverse student body from throughout the U.S. and nearly 150 countries and providing opportunities for academic excellence, public service, and internships in the nation’s capital and around the world.

For more information or to arrange an interview with Mr. Hunter-Ishikawa, contact Clark Gregor, AU Media Relations, at (202)885-5935 or gregor@american.edu.

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