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Plans to address international social ills earn students Projects for Peace grants

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By [Kathryn Kopchik](#)

LEWISBURG, Pa. — Two Bucknell University student groups each have received a \$10,000 Projects for Peace grant from philanthropist Kathryn W. Davis. The grants will support student projects promoting peace and social justice in the Caribbean and Africa.



Bucknell junior Jose Saavedra Valdivia and senior Stefan Ivanovski submitted one of the winning proposals, "Puerto Rico Se Anima," which will work to raise awareness of social problems, promote social justice and encourage creativity through a unique 2-D animation program for high-school students in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Saavedra, who is majoring in art, is an international student from Chile. Ivanovski, who is majoring in international relations and Spanish, is from Macedonia.

The Puerto Rico Se Anima project will involve 50 participants aged 18 to 25 in workshops, learning how to work in teams, improve their written and oral communication skills, and learning word processing, presentation, spreadsheet and complex animation

software.

The 5-10 minute animations, which will focus on issues that affect the everyday lives of Puerto Ricans such as drug trafficking, homicide, crime, corruption, domestic violence, racism, discrimination, sexism, illegal immigration, emigration, unemployment and poverty, will be presented at an animation festival open to the public. || Related link: [Flamboyant Foundation](#) contributes to project

In addition, Saavedra and Ivanovski intend to create an educational documentary modeled after "Missing Seeds," a Bucknell University student production that received Davis Projects for Peace funding in 2008. The documentary will focus on raising awareness of the most pressing issues affecting Puerto Ricans. The plan is to delegate the responsibility of filming the documentary to one of the eight Puerto Rican volunteers. Saavedra, who is the founder of the organization [Latinoamérica Creativa](#), will edit the documentary by the end of September, with plans to upload it on the website of Latinoamérica Creativa organization and promote it through various social media.

Senior Relebohile Letsie submitted the second winning proposal, "Boloka Ngwao [Preserve Your Culture]" which aims to foster a sense of community and appreciation for cultural heritage, and address peace and social justice issues confronting many youth and young adults in Serowe, Botswana. Letsie is an accounting major from Botswana.



Young Batswana face a greater risk of the social ills associated with urbanization, demonstrated by numerous personal, societal, health and economic challenges witnessed today. Examples of these are increasing HIV/AIDS prevalence, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual promiscuity and lack of ambition.

Letsie's project aims to host six-day leadership camps for young adults aged 16-24 with different

Davis Projects for Peace

Make a difference in the world!

As a proud institutional member of the Davis United World Colleges Program, Bucknell University is pleased to announce the opportunity for students to apply for a \$10,000 award granted for the purpose of launching a grassroots project to be implemented in the summer of 2013. The objective is to encourage and support today's motivated youth to create and tryout their own ideas for building peace.

To be considered for a 2013 Projects for Peace grant, a student or a group of students must submit a written statement which describes the project (who, what, where, how) including expected outcomes and prospects for future impact. This statement should not exceed two pages. A one-page anticipated budget should also be included as a separate page. Proposals will be due by late January 2013. Completed proposals will be reviewed by a campus committee, and selected proposals will be recommended to the Davis Foundation for funding.

Bucknell's Projects for Peace efforts are coordinated by the [Office of International Student Services](#).

Recent Bucknell Projects

- 2007 Bicycles Against Poverty in Uganda
- 2007 Sewing co-op in Guatemala
- 2008 "Missing Seeds" documentary about the plight of banana workers in Nicaragua.
- 2009 El Porvenir water project
- 2010 Water project in Suriname
- 2011 Bicycles Against Poverty program expansion
- 2011 Safer Birthing in Sierra Leone

International Student Services



International Student Services (ISS) meets the unique needs of international students as they adjust to life at Bucknell in order to help them feel more comfortable and confident in becoming

tribal backgrounds in Botswana, loosely premised on the centuries-old Setswana tradition of cultural initiation retreats called *bogwera/bojale* where 'elders' empower young adults with the knowledge and skills required for them to be productive members of society.

"Bucknell was supported with an additional \$10,000 grant this year in honor of the late Reverend James Richard Leo, a 1956 Bucknell graduate," said Jennifer Figueroa, director of International Student Services at Bucknell. "Philanthropist and Projects for Peace founder Kathryn Davis chose to honor her friend Reverend Leo with the designation of this second award for Letsie's project."

This is the sixth year Bucknell has participated in the Projects for Peace program. As a Davis United World College Scholars Program partner school, Bucknell is invited to nominate student projects for the program.

Bucknell students have worked on providing clean drinking [water](#) in South America; establishing a sewing [co-op](#) in Guatemala; designing a water pumping [station](#) in Nicaragua; making a [documentary](#) about the plight of banana workers in Nicaragua; establishing a bicycle co-op for two villages in northern Uganda, a project that has become [Bicycles Against Poverty](#); and raising awareness of a government-funded [healthcare](#) program in Sierra Leone.

In its sixth year, the Projects for Peace program honors philanthropist Kathryn Wasserman Davis, who launched the initiative on her 100th birthday in 2007. Each of the 100 projects selected are designed to encourage and support motivated youth to create and implement their ideas for building peace throughout the world in the 21st century.

University students from more than 90 partner schools will collectively receive more than \$1.25 million in funding during the summer of 2012 for projects in all regions of the world.

"I want to use my birthday to once again help young people launch some initiatives that will bring new energy and ideas to the prospects of peace in the world," said Davis. "My many years have taught me that there will always be conflict. It's part of human nature. But love, kindness, and support are also part of human nature, and my challenge to these young people is to bring about a mindset of preparing for peace instead of preparing for war."

A complete list of the participating schools and projects, as well as a summary of all previous projects and a video interview with Davis from 2006, is available on the program's [website](#).

Contact: [Division of Communications](#)



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members of the campus community. As a resource, ISS promotes a campus climate that allows positive educational experiences to occur across cultures, both inside and outside the classroom.

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