

'Our Hearts are with Haiti Day' at AU focuses on country's plight

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Thursday (Jan. 21) is "Our Hearts are with Haiti Day" on the Alfred University campus. Several programs have been planned to raise awareness and funds for the earthquake-devastated country. The faculty will lead an educational effort with a special panel about the country while students unveil a fundraiser that utilizes their artistic creativity. According to Dan Napolitano, director of the Center for Student Involvement, "the students have created a large 'paint-by-numbers' Haitian coat-of-arms that supporters can donate \$2 and paint one section blue, red, yellow, or green until the intricate symbol is completed. "Many, many steps and hands will be required to rebuild Haiti," said Kristie Valentino, an education graduate student from Middletown, NY who was instrumental in creating the program. "This community art project is symbolic of the work and gradual steps that will be needed to rebuild this ravaged country." Valentino and fellow students anticipate that the Coat of Arms project could raise \$1,000 if all spaces are filled. They also plan on selling miniature coats-of-arms for \$1 each and will encourage students and staff to wear the pin throughout the day. Any funds raised will go directly to a reputable relief agency working in Haiti. The faculty panel will occur at 12:10 p.m. Thursday in Nevins Theater with five faculty members offering perspectives on the country's past, present, and future. Robert Kruckeberg, a historian whose specialty is 18th-century France, will begin by discussing the historical significance of Haiti in the 18th-century Atlantic world, including the Haitian Revolution. Robert Myers, professor of anthropology and a member of the Caribbean Studies Association, offer insights about Haitian politics, culture, and health. Nancy Evangelista, a professor of School Psychology and associate provost, and David Toot, professor of physics, will provide first-hand accounts of their travels to Haiti on service missions prior to the tragedy. Jeff Sluyter-Beltrao, professor of political science, will moderate the discussion and add his own political forecast about the future of Haiti. As has been the case with similar forums in the past, audience members will be invited to share their perspectives in the closing minutes of the program. The event is open to the public and attendees are invited to bring their lunch. Complementary coffee, tea and cookies will be provided by AVI Fresh, Alfred University's Dining Services.