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Vatican-level Praise

University of Dayton

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NEWS



Wednesday September 2, 2015

Vatican-level Praise

Ken Hackett, U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican, recently lauded the work of three University of Dayton students with the Rondine Association, a 2015 Nobel Peace Prize nominee for peace and conflict resolution education and training.

Rachel Bernardo, Adrienne Lewis and Gabriella Cipriani are the only students from a U.S. university selected to study at Rondine (RON-dih-nay), which brings together international students, many from conflict zones, to learn peace-building skills they can take back to their nations. Rondine selects about 30 students a year for the program based in Arezzo, Italy.

"That they all came from the University of Dayton is not surprising," Hackett said during the announcement of Rondine's Nobel nomination earlier this month. "A friend of mine was its longest serving president, Brother Ray Fitz, and he saw clearly the role of young people in fostering peace.

"The American students chosen to participate in the program — all coming from the University of Dayton in Ohio — have already demonstrated great dedication to humanitarian issues, conflict resolution and the promotion of a culture of peace."

Bernardo, of Hamilton, Ohio, and Lewis, of West Carrollton, Ohio, graduated from the University of Dayton in 2014 and studied with Rondine for a year before returning to Dayton to continue their master's studies. As an undergraduate, Bernardo worked in the University's Office of Multicultural Affairs, where she organized educational programs and mentored first-year students. Lewis studied in Malawi as an undergrad, where she researched women's empowerment and worked on secondary school development. Lewis also worked with Abolition Ohio, an anti-human trafficking organization in the University's Human Rights Center.

Cipriani, a 2015 University of Dayton graduate from Erie, Pennsylvania, recently arrived at Rondine. As a human rights major, Cipriani was involved in Abolition Ohio, too. She helped promote education on human trafficking in schools and created reference materials for trafficking survivors on how to obtain access to services.

"Their remarkable academic accomplishments, substantial leadership experience and training from the Rondine Association will no doubt prepare these three young women to effect great and positive change in the world over the coming years," Hackett said.

The University of Dayton is a pioneer in human rights education. It started the country's first undergraduate human rights program in 1998 and offered one of the nation's first bachelor's degrees in human rights studies in 2008.

The University's Human Rights Center works to address the gap between theory and practice and scholars and practitioners through education, research and critical self-reflection of the strategies that drive communities dedicated to the advocacy and implementation of human rights.

The center will host a conference, The Social Practice of Human Rights: Charting the Frontiers of

Research and Advocacy Oct. 1-3, to examine how researchers and human rights workers on the front lines can work better together; and how social movements, organizations and coalitions advocating working for human rights can promote, communicate and implement their ideas. Featured speakers include representatives of Colombian human rights organization DeJusticia, the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, the Global Fund for Women, the International Rights Funders Group, U.S. Human Rights Network, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, USAID, the Center for Economic and Social Rights, the Center for Constitutional Rights, the Disability Rights Fund, the Wikimedia Foundation, and the NAACP, among others. Complete information can be found at the related link.

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