

LAA Honors Melanie Davila as 2013 Recipient of Riki Jacobs Livingston Pride Award



Melanie Davila was selected as the recipient of the 2013 Riki Jacobs Livingston Pride Award, given by the Livingston Alumni Association (LAA) of Rutgers University. [Read her winning essay.]

Davila, of Hackettstown, N.J., graduated from Rutgers University's School of Arts and Sciences in May 2013 with a degree in genetics, with minors in public health and nutrition.

In June 2013 Davila headed to rural Xerem, Brazil, as a volunteer with the organization Casa do Caminho for six months. This organization supports an orphanage, community center, organic farm and language school. Before leaving for Brazil, Davila said her main duties would be orphanage-related and involve providing close supervision for children ages 4 to 12, planning activities that foster personal growth for the children, offering educational support/tutoring, and providing English lessons. She also planned to tend the organic farm a few times a week.

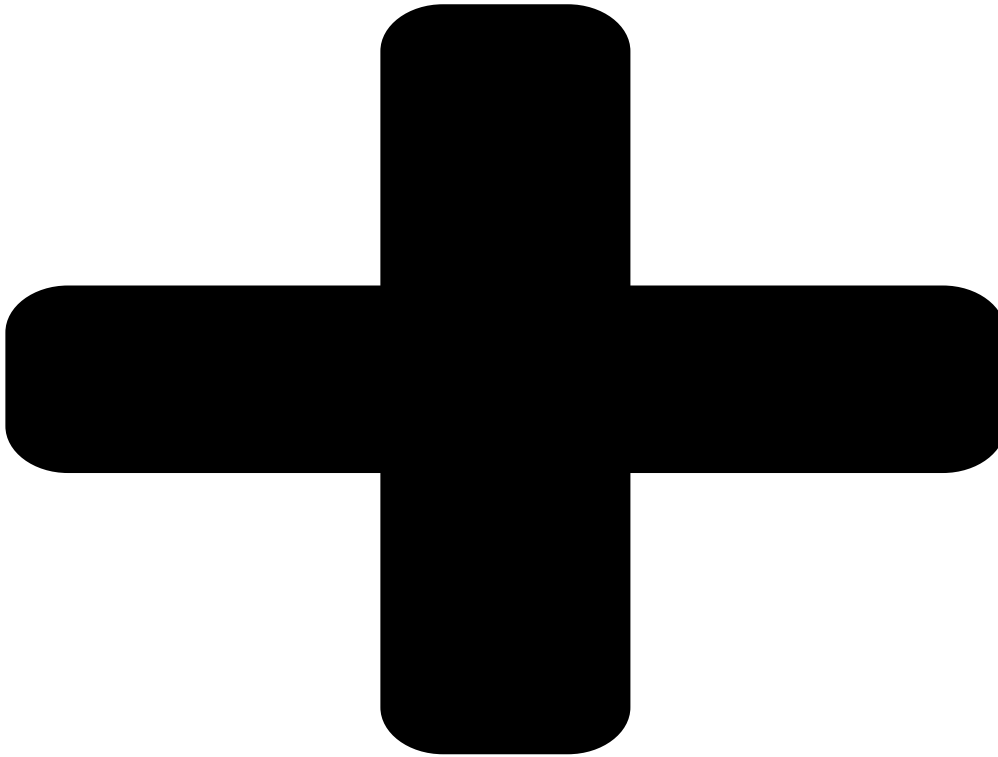
Some highlights of Davila's college career included:

- Serving as a research assistant at the Rutgers Cell and DNA Repository.
- Serving as a founding executive board member and fundraising director for the National Society of Leadership and Success.
- Writing the article The Incomprehensible Nature of the Origin of Life for the student journal, Dialogues@RU.
- Being honored as a James Dickson Carr Scholar, and winning the National Excellence in Leadership Award and the School of Arts and Sciences Excellence Award.

Marty Siederer, LAA past president, recognized Melanie as the Pride Award winner Tuesday, May 7, 2013, at the ROSCARs student life awards. Davila also was recognized at the LAA's annual meeting on Saturday, May 18, 2013.

"Livingston College was an innovator in a number of areas, such as developing student leadership and social action programs, and for being the birthplace of a number of Rutgers SAS major fields of student such as computer sciences, women's studies and philosophy," Siederer told the audience in presenting the award to Davila.

"One of the most innovative graduates from Livingston was Riki Jacobs, who was a guiding light in the fight against HIV/AIDS in New Jersey for more than 25 years. She was an articulate and compassionate voice who was highly respected for her efforts to ensure health care access for those living with, infected with, and affected by HIV. Under Riki's direction, the Hyacinth AIDS Foundation in New Brunswick became the only organization in New Jersey with a public policy and community organizing staff dedicated to protecting the rights and benefits of people living with HIV/AIDS in New Jersey. In earlier jobs, she advocated for laws impacting victims of domestic violence and sexual assault."



Bottom photo: Melanie Davila (Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences, 2013), third left, is congratulated as the winner of the 2013 Riki Jacobs Livingston Pride Award, by LAA past president Marty Siederer, left, and 2013 president Jason Goldstein, second left, and her family, at the Livingston Student Center, Saturday, May 18, 2013.