



# THE SPECTRUM

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## Mitte Foundation Teams with Habitat for Humanity

### MITTE SCHOLARS AND JIMMY CARTER WORK PROJECT IN VERACRUZ, MEXICO MAKE AFFORDABLE HOUSING POSSIBLE FOR MANY



Scott Mitte, Mitte Foundation Senior Vice President, became convinced of Habitat for Humanity's worthy goal of building affordable houses for impoverished communities after participating in the 2002 South African Durban Project (pictures from that trip can be seen [here](#)). Preparations for the next Jimmy Carter Work Project (JCWP), which takes place biannually, began almost immediately. The appointed site was Veracruz, Mexico, and work was slated for October 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup>, 2004. The Mitte Foundation gave a grant to sponsor two houses and committed to bringing a group of volunteers to assist. Ten Mitte scholarship recipients volunteered, forming the teams along with four community participants and staff from the Foundation. The volunteers included Scott Mitte and Cheryl Nolting from the Mitte Foundation, Family Eldercare Executive Director Karen Langley, Mitte Scholars and Fellows Vanessa Valdez, Daniela Radpay, and Kendra Komar from Texas State University-San Marcos, Robin Vaughan and Edward Uland from Ohio State University, Phillip Asseto, Lauren Messmer, and Brad Segal from Pennsylvania State University, Mitchell Olsen and Scott Doran from Indiana University, and Philip Just, William McHugh, and Santiago Lopez from CTCM Construction.



*The Mitte Volunteer Team*

*Continues on next page*

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This humanitarian endeavor provided far more than the building of houses. It offered camaraderie for the teams and future homeowners, creation of international friendships, hours of strenuous manual labor, tired weary bodies, and an overwhelming sense of accomplishment for all parties involved. While the able crew was originally scheduled to build only two sponsored houses from ground level up, upon arrival, Habitat asked the Mitte crew to build a third house and send people to help with a fourth! In all, the Mitte volunteers built four cinderblock homes that included plumbing, electrical, sheet rock, painting, and finish work.

Veracruz is the capital of the state that bears the same name. It is a lovely port city located on the Gulf of Mexico. The chosen building site was in the outlying area where the need for simple, decent, affordable housing was the greatest. The tropical heat and humidity offered an extra challenge. This 2004 JCWP brought together 4,000 Mexican and international volunteers, including President Carter and wife Rosalynn, to complete 150 homes in one week. The JCWP has been affiliated with Habitat for Humanity International (HfFI) for several years, a non-profit ecumenical Christian housing ministry dedicated to eliminating substandard housing and making decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Habitat has built more than 150,000 houses worldwide. Volunteers work with future homeowners to build or renovate houses, which are then sold to partner families at no profit, with no interest charged on the mortgage. The money from the sale of each house goes into a revolving Fund for Humanity, to support future building projects. For more photos of the experience in Veracruz, please visit our [website](#).



# Community News

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## 2005 COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL PROGRAM GRANTS

### FAMILY ELDERCARE



In 2001, with a three-year gift of \$60,000 for general operational support, the Mitte Foundation became a vital partner in building Family Eldercare's capacity to provide affordable housing for low-income seniors in the Austin community .

And, when Family Eldercare's capital campaign was launched for Lyon's Gardens, the Mitte Foundation again took an active role. Lyons Gardens is a senior living community which facilitates "aging in place", enabling independent living with support services. In recognition of the Foundation's participation, the center courtyard and playscape area are respectfully named and dedicated to the parents of Mrs. Joann Cole Mitte, Weldon and Adell Cole, and the brother and sister-in-law of Roy Mitte, Charles and Paula Mitte.



Family Eldercare is once more a recipient of a two-year grant for general operational support in the amount of \$20,000. Funding will be used in underwriting the growing demand for providing services to low-income clients at reduced rates.

### WEST TEXAS APHASIA CENTER



Established in September of 2001, the progressive West Texas Aphasia Center (WTAC) has achieved a glowing reputation. Modeled after the oldest program in the world, the Aphasia Institute of Toronto, the WTAC implemented its first 10-week introductory program for caregivers and people with aphasia by December of 2003. It is their vision to repair communication and hope to individuals with aphasia by establishing on-going Community Classes. The main mission of the WTAC is to seek to improve the quality of life of individuals and families living with aphasia by overcoming communication barriers.

About one million Americans, or 1 in 250 people, have aphasia (a loss of language following brain injury such as stroke). Each year more than 100,000 Americans acquire this disorder. A person with aphasia is intelligent, knows what they want, and are competent adults trapped by the inability to retrieve words. This inability to ask for help with basic needs is unimaginable but the most devastating impact comes from the reduced opportunity for conversation thus creating days of boredom and isolation.

Recognizing the achievement and ongoing work of the West Texas Aphasia Center, the Roy F. and Joann Cole Mitte Foundation is pleased to continue our support this year with a grant of \$20,000.



## SUSTAINABLE FOOD CENTER



The Sustainable Food Center (SFC) provides benefits for more than 16,000 individuals annually. The people served are low-income families with young children, the elderly, those living with diet-related diseases, farmers, consumers, youths, and gardeners. The basic concept is to create a food secure community by improving access to local, healthy, and affordable food for people in Central Texas. There are three programs that the SFC delivers: cooking and nutrition education, community and youth gardens, and food systems education and [farmers markets](#). A grant by the Mitte Foundation will assist in costs associated with delivering direct services and program evaluation, and the infrastructure improvements at the garden and farm stands.



## SUNSHINE KIDS



*Dedicated to children with cancer*

The Sunshine Kids Foundation is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to providing exciting, positive, group-oriented activities and emotional support for children diagnosed with cancer. A gift of assistance from the Mitte Foundation will aid the 2005 Sunshine Kids Texas Hill Country Adventure. The goal of this week-long trip is to enable children with cancer to temporarily escape the daily stresses, indignities, and pain of their treatments so they can have fun and meet other children who understand their emotions and experiences.



## FAMILY CRISIS CENTER



A gift from the Mitte Foundation has been given to the Family Crisis Center to support the Center's children's program. The overall goal is to provide prevention and education, crisis intervention, and counseling to children of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. The children's program is a school-based educational program that provides anti-victimization prevention education to children and youth in nineteen rural school districts for kindergarten through sixth grade. The second part is the SHAPE program which is Positive Esteem school-based counseling to children in kindergarten through eighth grade who are experiencing domestic violence, sexual assault or child abuse.



**Sonja Williams, Child Abuse Prevention Educator, presenting a child abuse program in a local school**

## AUSTIN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



The Roy F. and Joann Cole Mitte Foundation is proud to present a \$15,000 grant to the Austin Symphony Orchestra to support the Building Block program and the Halloween Children's Concert during the 2005-2006 Season. The ultimate goal is a lifetime awareness of those intrinsic quality-of-life issues that make a difference in our daily lives—harmony, beauty, happiness, and complex problem solving made easier through an understanding of the building blocks of lifetime learning.

Children in pre-kindergarten through third grade are the recipients of the Building Blocks program. They will experience a personal introduction to orchestra instruments, thereby laying a foundation for music

appreciation. An ensemble of ASO musicians made up of brass, woodwind, string, percussion, and a harpist will perform at every Austin ISD elementary school cafeteria or gym. This 20-minute interactive performance will feature familiar tunes.

The Halloween Concerts involve Austin Symphony Orchestra's "youngest" performances for the youngest patrons. Austin ISD's first- and second-graders are bused to the historic Paramount Theatre for their first concert experience.

The Mitte Foundation is pleased to play a part with the Austin Symphony Orchestra in accomplishing their mission of bringing classical music to every child in Austin and Central Texas.



## Academic News

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### **BECOMING A PHILANTHROPIST**

***By Kent Dove***

***Vice President for Development, Indiana University Foundation***

*Kent Dove, acclaimed author of the Dove on Fundraising series, has graciously agreed to inspire the Mitte Foundation E-Newsletter readers with an article on philanthropy which will appear in each newsletter.*

*Kent Dove is Senior Vice President for Development for Indiana University Foundation, and serves on the Board for The Mitte Foundation. For more information on Mr. Dove, see his biography [here](#).*



This column over time will address a wide spectrum of topics as our newsletter is distributed to a diverse circulation list. In this issue, however, I want to address our Mitte Scholars specifically about decisions and choices they will have to make that will affect their adult lives and talk with them about becoming philanthropists.

Some of the early decisions you have to make are why are you giving, what can you give, and how do you feel about giving?

What is a philanthropist? A philanthropist is anyone who gives voluntarily to support the common good. You need not be rich to be a philanthropist, just personally generous. And, you can, and should, consider giving more than money. Your time, talent, energy, effort, and wisdom hold value as much as does your checkbook. Do you sincerely feel the need to give and to share?

Giving is an acquired trait, not a genetically transferred one. We all learn how to give and through the process come to know the joy of giving. Joyful giving is an important concept. Have you ever heard someone say: "Give until it hurts"? Never do that. Give until it feels good. If it's going to hurt you to give, don't do it. If you do, you will miss the point of giving and the joy of living a compassionate life.

Once you decide to give, and I assume that you all have or you wouldn't be Mitte Scholars, you next need to explore where to give and why.

There is an adage that states charity begins at home and as you move from your campuses into your adult lives, you will be constantly reminded in many ways by many sources to keep the home fires burning.

What does this mean with regard to your personal philanthropy? While we wish for each and every one of you the financial good fortune of a Bill Gates, we know most of you will earn less than Mr. Gates during your life times. With nearly two million non-profits in the United States alone, the possibilities of places to give are mind-boggling -- and even Mr. Gates can't support them all!

So, you have choices to make. Which non-profits will you support and how much will you do for each. Most of us choose to support charities that matter to us personally because charity really does begin at home.

Your religious organization and your alma mater are logical considerations. Organizations that benefited you or with which you were involved growing up, i.e. Boy Scouts, Girls, Inc., come to mind, too. Activities in your adult community that interest you or benefit you, the arts and culture for example, are logical considerations. Organizations that are responsive to traumatic events that touch your lives like the American Cancer Society or Mothers Against Drunk Drivers may also be organizations that appeal to you.

The range of options is virtually endless, but you need to make choices because you will not be able to support every good cause. You will also need to decide whether you will give nominal amounts of your time, talent, and treasure to a number of organizations or more substantial amounts to a focused few.

You need to start thinking about all of this now. Just as you build a plan for life, you also need to build a plan for living that life and it will, hopefully, include thoughtful generosity.

Because you are receiving this newsletter, because you are a Mitte Scholar, you already are a special person, one who has already been given much. Begin now to plan how you are going to share your good fortune with society and continue the tradition of philanthropy you have pledged yourself to as a Mitte Scholar.

### **TEXAS STATE HONORS COURSE "THE COMMON EXPERIENCE" BECOMES THE EXPLORATION OF THE ENTIRE CAMPUS**

Kara Holsinger and seventeen other students and two professors never imagined the influence or impact the honors course "Anatomy of Hatred in Life and Literature" would have on the entire Texas State University-San Marcos campus. In the "hate" course, instructors emphasized that conversations on hate should not be limited to small groups of students but to everyone. That vision became a reality in Texas State's inaugural Common Experience initiative.



**Students discuss Wiesel's Night**

The Common Experience is a yearlong initiative designed to bring students, faculty, staff and community into conversation on a central theme. This year's theme deals with hatred. Predetermined events on the campus throughout the year will connect to this theme. Beginning



**Joseph Brown, center, with Provost Perry Moore, left, and Dean Ron Brown**

with the use of Common text, Elie Wiesel's *Night* will be read in all the University Seminar courses and in other courses around the campus.

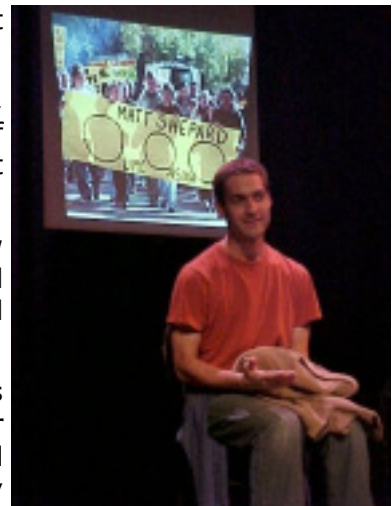
A former Honors Program graduate, Joseph L. Brown (Physics '84)—now current Assistant Dean for Multicultural Student Affairs at Stanford University—gave the first lecture introducing Common Experience. His topic was "Brown vs. Board of Education: Social Identities, Stereotypes, and the Next Fifty Years". Dr. Brown offered several theories as to Stereotypes Threats and Social Identity Threats, which have negative effects on performance. He suggested one way to decrease this threat is to ensure that we

have diversity among our population and understanding about different social identities.

Also promoting "Common Experience" Professor of Art and Design, Roger Columbik will showcase his art exploring the resurgence of ethnic-based hatred as he witnessed it while on a Fullbright Fellowship to the Republic of Georgia.

Featured this semester will be Judy Shepard, the mother of Matthew Shepard, a college student who was murdered because of his sexual orientation. *The Laramie Project*, a play on the same subject, will culminate the Common Experience.

The Common Experience initiative is designed to engage all Texas State students and the San Marcos community in a quest for excellence. It is hoped that through discussion, events, and volunteer projects that the intellectual life and a sense of community will be fostered among students, faculty, staff, and the people of San Marcos. A website devoted to the Common Experience and all related components can be viewed [here](#).



Scene from Texas State's production of *The Laramie Project*

## **NEW PARTNERS**

### **MITTE FOUNDATION AND THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY**

***By Dr. Richard G. Boehm***

***Jesse H. Jones Distinguished Chair in Geographic Education***



What a year 2004 was for the Mitte Foundation! In addition to continued generous support for higher education through scholarships and endowed chairs, the Foundation crafted an exciting partnership with the [National Geographic Society](#) (NGS), an honored and widely respected education and exploration society with headquarters in Washington, D.C. NGS has its own television station, and its magazine reaches over nine million readers in more than 30 countries. Perhaps the most popular of NGS' activities falls in the explorations category, including work by the late Jacques Cousteau, the Leakeys, and Jane Goodall. More recently, you may have read about Bob Ballard's undersea work in photographing and exploring the Titanic.

On September 21, a glittering gala was held on the Texas State University campus to celebrate the establishment of the

Grosvenor Scholars program. Under this program, a Texas State University-San Marcos Ph.D. student in geographic education will go to the NGS headquarters in Washington DC to do research and public policy work to help the Society to improve geographic education in America's schools and to give invaluable experience to the student. This is the only program of its kind in the U.S.

The program is funded by a grant from the Mitte Foundation that was then matched by the NGS Education Foundation. This million-dollar plus fund yields enough income to support at least one student per year, and perhaps two or more in the future.

At the September 21 gala, several people gave testimonials to the importance of this landmark program.

Texas State University–San Marcos President Denise Trauth sees the Grosvenor Scholars program as a highly visible extension of the university’s Ph.D.-level work and “an appropriate celebration of our close seventeen-year relationship with Gil Grosvenor and the National Geographic Society. Without Mitte Foundation support this important scholarly opportunity would have eluded us.”

Scott Mitte, Senior Vice President of the Mitte Foundation, voiced pride in the partnership between National Geographic Society, Texas State University–San Marcos, and the Mitte Foundation, “marking this program as another critical step in the ascendance of Texas State to national prominence, as well as a tribute to Gil Grosvenor and his vision of quality geographic education for all school children.”

Gilbert M. Grosvenor, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of National Geographic Society, stated that “The Grosvenor Scholars program is a fitting capstone to the Society’s \$100 million effort to return geography to its rightful place in America’s schools. Our symbiotic relationship with the Mitte Foundation has helped to keep us moving in the right direction.

In the meantime, Scott Mitte has become excited about exploration, particularly of places and people hidden in the darkest jungle, the deepest rainforest, or the most obscure river basin. We are talking to NGS explorers in residence Wade Davis about an upper-Amazon foray, and with Michael Fay for Scott’s joining his “megatransect” across tropical Africa. Will Scott go? Does he truly have the exploration bug? Tune in to the next issue of this newsletter.



***Gilbert Grosvenor, left, with Dr. Boehm***