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The West Texas Aphasia Center:

REPAIRING COMMUNICATION AND OFFERING HOPE

Imagine waking up in intensive care, body paralyzed, unable to access every word once known. Overnight, an active world, along with every dream envisioned, has vanished. Trapped in a body that cannot talk, at the mercy of others, one begins the long journey of life with aphasia.

The National Stroke Association states that over one million people in the U.S. suffer this profoundly devastating reduction in speech that can also affect reading and writing. In most cities across the United States, even though aphasia is more common than Parkinson's and Muscular Dystrophy, people suffering from aphasia are too soon discharged from healthcare systems unable to respond to their chronic challenges. Returning home can mean facing a life of unbearable isolation and boredom. Across America, families and their aphasic loved ones live with awful frustration and resignation. It is this plight that the Mitte Foundation hopes to help reverse with gifts totaling \$30,000.

In this age of managed care, the West Texas Aphasia Center (WTAC) located in Midland, Texas has implemented a creative, responsible means to provide on-going services to match the on-going challenges of this chronic communication disability, and to renew the confidence and dignity of people coping with aphasia. Now, friends and families who share the experience of aphasia gather to network, develop close relationships, share activities and wisdom. The WTAC is the "what happens after" place



The Chi-Gong Community Class aids in increasing focus and flexibility

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THE ROY F. AND JOANN COLE MITTE FOUNDATION

1008 West Avenue Austin, TX 78701

Phone: (512) 233-5599 Fax: (512) 233-5542

Email: info@mittefoundation.org

We're on the web!

www.mittefoundation.org

that makes those grief cycles of shock, bargaining, depression and loss turn into the acceptance everyone eventually hopes for. It is the organization's goal to prove that life is worth living with or without one's speech, and to create an "aphasia friendly" environment where competent, motivated survivors can get back to living life and sharing their life-altering experiences to help others.

Because aphasia affects 25%—35% of stroke survivors each year, the center has responded to what is certain to remain a profound, on-going need. As one of eight non-profit organizations in the entire country, it is the goal of the West Texas Aphasia Center to become the flagship aphasia resource of Texas—eventually offering training so that the template can be replicated in other communities.

WTAC currently serves people as young as forty, with the average age being sixty. Through WTAC's 10-week Introductory Program, people and families touched by aphasia are provided with professional information about the condition as they interact with a network of peers who have adapted to living life with a chronic communication disability. People who had thought they were alone learn that others "walk in their shoes." In addition, through on-going Community Classes, WTAC is the place that many will become involved in life again through "aphasia friendly" programming such as Skill-Building, Conversation Groups, Exercise, Book Club and Music.



Volunteer Training graduates

Since this model of service has been implemented, 24 new families have been served with firm expectations to continue adding approximately 25 new families each year.

This year, WTAC educated 21 volunteers through their 12-hour Volunteer Training Course. This Fall, another training course will take place as the center adds a Computer Lab responding to the high interest of their clients. For more information about the unique services of the West Texas Aphasia Center, please visit their website at www.wtx-aphasiacenter.org.

Philanthropic News

ARE YOU LISTENING?

By Kent Dove



The best kept major gift fundraising secret is this: Be a good listener.

To those who care about your cause, selling its virtues isn't necessary. To those who don't care, it won't help.

Donors give not only to meet the nonprofit's needs but also to meet their own needs, to fulfill their expectations, to sustain their values, to realize their dreams, to leave a legacy.

Too many of us believe the art of highly successful salesmanship involves the ability to articulately and persuasively sell our product. But the best salesmen I've ever known are the ones who are good listeners.

Let's apply that to fundraisers.

In the first example, let's look at a volunteer or staff member who can hardly wait to "tell the story".

In fact, they rush through the "hi and howdy" part of a call and then they don't come up for air for fifteen or twenty minutes. Remind you of anyone?

In the second example, the volunteer or staff member first takes this time to ask questions, to understand the donors needs, never once "making the case" let alone doing any "hard sell".

The second approach is far better. Why? It allows you to understand your prospect and when you do start "selling" permits you to intelligently tailor your presentation to meet the donor's needs while also satisfying your organization's priorities.

Too often the first approach leads the solicitor into traps such as emphasizing organizational priorities that are not of great interest, or maybe even are opposed, by the prospect. This and other similar pitfalls can be avoided by listening before speaking.

Isn't it always better to discuss with a prospect something you know to be important to her? Just about every donor I've worked with considered himself, and his values, views, beliefs and needs, to be important. The plain truth is most of us like to talk about ourselves. In doing so we reveal all a really good listener needs to know to become a very effective solicitor.

The next major gift call you make, try listening first, then speaking. You may be pleasantly surprised by the result.

Kent Dove is the Vice President of the Indiana University Foundation and acclaimed author of the Dove on Fundraising series.

Community News

THE AGING SERVICES COUNCIL STRIVES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY

Starting in the fall of 2004, the Roy F. and Joann Cole Mitte Foundation was proud to grant the Aging Services Council of Travis County and its collaborative partners a \$40,000 start up grant to be dispersed over the course of two years. This grant has been used to ensure that older adults and caregivers have the information and the services that they need to support themselves and their families as they age.

Based on 2002 Census data, an estimated 54,333 (7%) of Travis County residents were age 65 or older. By 2030, this number is expected to climb to 192,131 (20%) of the total population (Texas State Data Center). According to State Demographer, Steve Murdock (2002), as a result of this dramatic demographic shift, "services and conditions impacting older persons will become of increasing relevance to Texas and the rest of the nation in coming decades." Due to these demographic predictions, it is anticipated that current community resources and service delivery systems will not be able to meet the needs of older adults.

To address this situation, in 2001, several nonprofit organizations joined together to produce a community assessment on the conditions of older adults in the Austin and Travis County area. This collaboration resulted in the formation of the Aging Services Council (ASC).

The three central objectives of the ASC are to:

1. Maximize resources for aging service through a formalized collaborative process;
2. Promote community awareness and investment around aging issues; and,
3. Develop a model system of support to guide work around aging services in the Travis County community.

In November 2003, the ASC held its first meeting, in which they developed their group mission, vision, and strategic plan. The ASC's goal is to develop a system for support which ensures client services to

the communities' aging population in order to support vital, proactive, successful aging by 2008. The ASC has used its partnership with the Mitte Foundation to ensure the vitality and existence of this important and unique collaborative effort, and to encourage other foundations to offer their support.

In an effort to answer pertinent questions concerning older adults in the Travis County community, a survey was developed in July 2005. It addressed these questions: "What do older adults in our community need? What are their health problems? What services do they need to continue to live independently for as long as possible?"

The protocol involved a total of 507 randomly selected eligible adults age 60 and older. The telephone interview was used at various times of the day and took about 20 to 25 minutes to complete. When necessary it was conducted in Spanish.

The findings were enlightening and show the ever increasing needs that must be met. The overall conclusions made these points:

- The 75-and-older population has issues and needs that are only going to increase.
- No one is immune—even money cannot protect you.
- These are our neighbors, or even you.

The universality is everyone who lives long enough is going to experience some of these needs.

The main concerns voiced by survey participants include:

- On-going maintenance and repairs of their homes if they are to remain living independently;
- Difficulty in doing heavy house work;
- Not being able to exercise physically;
- Relying on outside assistance for travel to appointments, grocery shopping and errands; and,
- Worries about feeling safe.

Additional issues that were especially noted are:

- Physical problems leave them very vulnerable. Results showed 47% have arthritis or rheumatism, 28% are blind or visually impaired, and 25% suffer from osteoporosis;
- The difficulty they face in managing their health care, navigating the system, filing insurance payments, and access and availability to health care information;
- How often dental and mental health needs go unmet; and,
- Women are living longer than men, so they are more likely to live alone and tend to be economically vulnerable. An unexpected event can change everything. It could affect their mobility, wipe out their finances, or force them out of their homes.

This survey of Travis County elders, tentatively titled, "Maintaining Independence: What Travis County's Older Adults Say They need", will soon be printed and available for the use of service providers, policy makers, students and other interested parties.

The ASC's System's of Care Committee has been charged with the task of identifying issues brought out in the survey and to help develop responses. They will also work together with the Information and Advocacy Committee to craft messages around these issues to better inform the general public.

In addition to its ongoing efforts, the Aging Services Council (ASC) has identified two major subjects that it will be working on over at least the next six months:

Emergency Preparedness

The back to back hurricanes Katrina and Rita brought out great resourcefulness and cooperation from the agencies and organizations who serve the needs of the elder population in Travis County.

However, responding to the evacuees from Katrina and Rita, as well as preparing for Rita to hit Travis County directly, highlighted many shortcomings in city/county preparedness, coordination, data sharing

and tracking as well as a lack of understanding by planners of the needs of elders. The ASC has already begun to address these issues by:

1. Beginning to compile a narrative report and quantitative analysis of members' activities during the twin emergencies. These will be shared with city, county and state planners so that they will have a better understanding of the responses necessary to meet the particular needs of elders in a similar emergency.
2. Forming two project groups to work with city and county planners toward better communication between their respective emergency management teams and their health and human services agencies. These project groups will also participate in existing emergency plan reviews so that language covering the particular needs of elders will be included.

Marketing and Development Campaigns

Due to the above mentioned survey, as well as through a recent strategic planning session, the Council will begin working on building public relations and fundraising efforts to specifically accomplish the following:

- Increasing awareness of the ASC among policy makers;
- Working to develop funding sources for future initiatives; and,
- Helping with educational efforts around recent changes to Medicare.

Academic News

In this section:

- Historic Building to House the Mitte Honors Program
- Texas State to Receive Premier Scholarship

HISTORIC BUILDING TO HOUSE THE MITTE HONORS PROGRAM

Texas State University-San Marcos' university-wide Mitte Honor Program is excited to announce its move into its permanent home—the historic Lampasas Building located next to Old Main. The Lampasas is a spacious facility which features a fully equipped computer lab, large modern kitchen and lounge area, a quiet study room, spaces for seminar style classroom done up in bright colors with lots of windows and charming views of the campus. The first floor of the building houses several student honors organization such as the Mitte Scholars Society, the Mitte Honor Student Association, Golden Key National Honor Society, Alpha Lambda Delta, Terry Scholars and Sigma Iota Rho. Also on this floor, is a media/conference room, program offices and a large wooden gallery where a new "Viennese coffee house" was opened.

This new space is the collaboration of the interior design expertise of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, faculty and staff of the Mitte Honors Program and intern, Marilee Kaines. The renovated housing resulted from the effort and support of numerous members of



the Texas State Community. They are as follows: Dr. Perry Moore (Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs), Dr. John Garrison (Dean of Students), Mr. Vince Morton (Associate Dean of Students, Ms. Nancy Nusbaum (Assistant Vice President for Finance & Support Services Planning), Dr. Pat Cassidy and Dr. Gene Bourgeois (Associate Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs), Deans Ron Brown, Richard Cheatham and Ann Marie Ellis, and Mr. Mike Krouse.



The coffee shop located in the large wooden gallery is designed to foster the Common Experience, where ideas are developed and are allowed to flourish. This is where common intellectual conversation is cultivated. In 2004, the inaugural year of Texas State's Common Experience the theme "Hatred" and Eli Wiesel's *Night* created an immediate synergy among different segments of the campus community. The desire to expand on this natural connection will be fostered and explored. This year's theme, "Courage," will be examined in light of the book, *If I Die In A Combat Zone*, by Tim O'Brien, which is his personal account of his year as a foot soldier in Vietnam. Tim O'Brien is the 2005-2006 Roy F. and Joann Cole Mitte Endowed Chair in Creative Writing. This

year's Common Experience on "Courage" promises to be a challenging and inspiring theme.

The grand opening of the Lampasas is enthusiastically celebrated and provides an interdisciplinary atmosphere designed to promote curiosity, creativity, and a respect for learning.

TEXAS STATE TO RECEIVE PREMIER SCHOLARSHIP

The Mitte Foundation recently announced that beginning in the fall of 2006, Texas State University-San Marcos will be the recipient of the Mitte Laureate Scholars Program. This newly established program will award full-ride scholarships valued up to \$100,000 a year over four years, with a maximum of \$25,000 a year, to four exceptional undergraduate students.

This premier scholarship will provide students not only with ample funding to cover their room board, tuition, and books, but will give recipients the necessary resources to study abroad, participate in a national competitive internship, and be appointed a faculty mentor. This scholarship also includes unique benefits such as automatic membership in the prestigious Student Foundation, advanced class registration, first choice of residence halls, and VIP invitations to selected Texas State events.

The Mitte Laureate Scholars Program is based on the Mitte Foundation's belief that by providing students with a solid academic foundation, an environment of intellectual excellence, leadership opportunities, and encouraging volunteer endeavors, that students will be prepared for both successful careers as well as a future life of leadership and service within their communities. It is envisioned that through this scholarship program, students will achieve a high quality of life through better understanding and appreciation of the many varied aspects of our society, as well as the qualifications for succeeding in a professional field.

The Mitte Foundation wishes to thank the members of the Mitte Honor Program staff, Mitte Honor Student Kyle Morris, the Texas State Media Relations Office, and the Texas State Financial Aid Office for working so diligently with the Foundation to develop the Mitte Laureate Scholars Program.

Foundation News

DR. TRAUTH VALUABLE NEW ASSET TO MITTE BOARD



The Mitte Foundation is honored to have a woman of outstanding accomplishments join its board. Denise Trauth, President of Texas State University-San Marcos, comes with many accolades. In each endeavor her leadership shines through.

Dr. Trauth graduated with a major in English and a minor in Journalism from the College of Mount St. Joseph in Ohio, where she also wrote for the school newspaper. She taught high school English and journalism in Michigan for two years, earned her master's in Journalism at Ohio State University, and entered the Ph.D. program in Mass Communications at the University of Iowa.

While at the University of Iowa, she met John Huffman, who was already enrolled in the Journalism Ph.D. program. She and Dr. Huffman married in 1973 and have authored numerous publications together within the areas of mass communication and telecommunications law and policy, as well as First Amendment issues. They have two adult daughters—one a special education teacher in Iowa, and the other a corporate attorney in Florida—along with four grandchildren.

Their parallel faculty careers took them to the University of Tulsa, then Bowling Green State, then the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. At Bowling Green, between 1977 and 1993, Dr. Trauth progressed from assistant professor to professor, chaired a department, and was Associate Dean of the Graduate College along the way. She went to Charlotte as Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Vice Chancellor for Graduate Programs, providing leadership for the university's first doctoral programs in electrical engineering, mechanical engineering and applied mathematics, along with the development of eleven new graduate programs. She was also instrumental in the self-study process for NCAA certification.

In 1997, Dr. Trauth was named Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at UNC Charlotte. In that capacity, she administered over eighty percent of the university's budget and led the campus through two rounds of strategic planning. She headed the process for reclassification to Carnegie's Doctoral Research-Intensive category. Under her leadership, the university integrated distance education into the curriculum and developed a new College of Information Technology, a new campus and its first residence hall-based learning community. Dr. Trauth also established the Faculty Center for Teaching, led the revision of the general education requirements, and chaired an equity study on faculty salaries.

Dr. Trauth was named President of Texas State University-San Marcos on June 11, 2002, and the Mitte Foundation is extremely pleased that she agreed to serve on the Board of Directors. Further information about Texas State University and Dr. Trauth can be found on their website at www.txstate.edu.