

Brazos Abiertos Newsletter

September, 2007



BRAZOS
ABIERTOS

Brazos Abiertos Mission Statement

Brazos Abiertos, Inc. (BAI) is a Texas-based non-profit 501c3 organization (Fundación BAI, A. C. in México) whose mission is to understand the level of HIV infection in Mérida, Yucatán, México and surrounding villages, improve access to healthcare for those already infected, decrease the spread of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV, and educate the local community about HIV and the people who are infected. Our website is www.brazosabiertosyucatan.com.

Brazos Abiertos Upcoming Events

LOCATION:
Mérida, Yucatán, México

**Second Annual Wine Tasting
and Luxury Silent Auction**
October 27, 2007, 7:00 – 10:00 p.m.

This event will be held at The Villa @ Mérida Boutique Hotel & Restaurant. Tickets are \$200 pesos per person. Underwriters for the event include Undurraga Wines, Covi Stores, González Byass Winery of México City, The Villa @ Mérida, Cascadas de Mérida B & B, Yucatán Today and Jose Angel Solis Pacheco.

To donate an item to the *Luxury Silent Auction*, please contact George Fischer and Sam Woodruff at georgefischerarroyo@yahoo.com, Suzanne Larimer at willandsuzanne@yahoo.com, Giovanna Marchant at giovanna@akimbo.net, or Michell DeVoid Molina at brazosabiertos@sbcglobal.net. Proceeds from this event will pay for the shipping of \$500,000 USD worth of medicine and medical supplies donated to Brazos from Medical Bridges. These supplies will completely outfit the new Brazos Abiertos free HIV clinic in Mérida. For more information about Medical Bridges, check their website www.medicalbridges.com.

Mérida Board Meetings

The Brazos Abiertos Board of Directors meets eight times a year. Seven of the board meetings are held in Houston, Texas, and one is held in Mérida, México. This year's board meeting in Mérida will be held on Sunday, October 28, at the home of Board Secretary Jose Angel Solis Pacheco. If you

are interested in attending this meeting, email us for more information at brazosabiertos@sbcglobal.net.



Last year's Wine Tasting event

Second Annual Dinner with Friends
January 19, 2008

Hosts for the *Dinner with Friends* event invite any number of guests to their home for dinner. Each guest contributes a suggested donation to Brazos Abiertos of \$200 pesos per person. Brazos supplies all necessary information and support to host a dinner while hosts supply the food and drink. After dinner all guests gather at one location for the *Champagne & Dessert Finale*. Again this year the event finale will be at the home of Paul Ziegler and Samuel Barrera on Avenida Reforma. If you would like to host a dinner, please contact the Brazos office at brazosabiertos@sbcglobal.net, Suzanne Larimer at willandsuzanne@yahoo.com, or George Fischer and Sam Woodruff at georgefischerarroyo@yahoo.com. All funds raised for this event will go to Oasis de San Juan Dios, A. C. AIDS shelter to help with their general expenses.

LOCATION:
Houston, Texas, United States

Cocktail Party
September 20, 2007 at 6:00 p.m.
2330 Bluebonnet Boulevard

Ellyne Basto, Dr. Gordon Crofoot, George Fischer, Jane Kavanagh, Suzanne Larimer, Nita Lindley, Michell Devoid Molina, Chris O'Niell, Sherrie Reinhackel, Bill Russ, Sally Russ, Jose Angel Solis Pacheco, John Truax and Sam Woodruff cordially invite you to a *Cocktail Party* at the home of Bill

and Sally Russ. Brazos Abiertos, Inc. is celebrating the acquisition of the building which will become our HIV Clinic in Mérida, Yucatán, México. Catering generously donated by Jim Manning. To RSVP please call John Truax at 713-208-2482 or e-mail brazosabiertos@sbcglobal.net.

An Enchanted Garden Party

The *Garden Party* will be held in 2008 and will be the first major fundraising event in Houston for Brazos Abiertos. More information coming soon about this event!

Brazos Abiertos Educational Outreach Program

TEAMM Texas

TEAMM (Teenage Education on AIDS in Mérida, México) Texas is made up of young people ranging in age from 17 to 25. TEAMM Texas 2007-2008 consists of Al Carrasco and Jose Marquez, UT Health Science Center at Houston; Holly Del Junco, Emory University; Domale Dube, Trinity University; Michael Keys, Stephen F. Austin State University; Winston Nguyen, Columbia University; Lena Noecker, Regis University; Claire Poff, University of Southern California; Molly Russ, University of Richmond; Nick Scott, Memorial High School, Houston; and Lauren Waters, Denison University. Five TEAMM members are former students of John Truax from Episcopal High School in Houston.

During the summer, the group went through an intensive HIV/AIDS training program conducted by Gordon Crofoot, M.D., one of Houston's leading HIV/AIDS physicians, and Barbara Walker of Legacy, the HIV clinic of Houston. In August, members of TEAMM Texas 2007-2008 came to the Yucatán accompanied by Brazos Educational Outreach volunteers Sally Russ and Chris O'Niell. Brazos is grateful to the new owners of Angeles de Mérida B & B and John and Irene Hetling who graciously opened their homes to house the group.

While in the Yucatán, TEAMM Texas conducted a weeklong workshop with 33 young people from five

remote villages ranging in age from 12 to 21. They were selected because they are leaders in their schools, villages and communities. Group members said they want to attend universities and pursue professional careers. Culturally they are encouraged to marry young, raise a family, and stay in the village, so many of these young people face obstacles from their families and villagers.



The August, 2007 workshop

The workshop was conducted in the village of Komchen. The program incorporated formal education about HIV/AIDS, proper condom usage, and other sexual education components using role-playing, vocabulary games, short plays, and word association games. The teaching goal was to give the young Mayas the tools necessary to protect themselves from AIDS and STDs.



TEAMM Texas and TEAMM Yucatán

TEAMM Yucatán

Members of this group of young Mayas are becoming the first TEAMM Yucatán. They will assist the staff of Brazos Abiertos and adult volunteers from Houston in presenting workshops to their peers. The first will be held October 29 - 31, 2007. Topics to be covered will include HIV/AIDS prevention and safe sex practices.

Plans are underway for TEAMM Texas to return to Mexico in January, 2008, to continue work with TEAMM Yucatán.

Oasis De San Juan de Dios and Brazos Abiertos Partnership

Recently, representatives of Brazos Abiertos and Oasis San Juan de Dios held a joint board meeting to discuss how the separate organizations could work together for the benefit of those afflicted with HIV. Representing Oasis were Director Carlos Mendez, Fr. Raul Lugo, volunteer Jim Duignan, and treasurer Olga Moguel Pereyra. Representing Brazos Abiertos were Director Michell De Void Molina, board member John Truax, and members of the Brazos Advisory Board Suzanne Larimer, George Fischer and Sam Woodruff.

The meeting outlined the working relationship between the two organizations for the next year. Brazos will continue to supply Oasis with \$2,000 USD worth of food and operating expenses until the funds donated are depleted. This contribution does not fill all needs of the residents of Oasis. Brazos Abiertos urges individuals and corporations to continue their personal support of Oasis.

In 2008, 100% of the proceeds from the *Dinner with Friends* event will go to Oasis. Further, Brazos has pledged to conduct an additional fundraising event in 2008, to be decided later, with proceeds being equally split between Brazos and Oasis. Any other events organized by Brazos Abiertos for the benefit of Oasis will be discussed and agreed upon with the Board of Oasis. Brazos Abiertos may choose to conduct other fundraising

drives for the benefit of the Brazos free HIV clinic in Mérida with all proceeds going to the clinic.



Former US Consul Lisa Vickers and Carlos Mendez, Director of Oasis de San Juan Dios, A. C., HIV Shelter in Mérida at the 2006 Wine Tasting event

The Brazos Abiertos board has requested that the board of Oasis de San Juan de Dios keep Brazos informed in writing of needs at Oasis. It is the desire of Brazos to continue to support Oasis as much as possible; however, the focus for Brazos in 2008 will be to support the free HIV clinic opening early next year. The clinic building, located near Parque Santiago, was purchased with funds donated by an anonymous Houston donor. Permitting has begun for the restoration which is expected to start later this year.

Brazos Abiertos, Inc. Board of Directors

Board President

Gordon Crofoot, MD, Houston, Texas

Vice President & Advancement Director

John Truax, Mérida, Yucatán

Board Secretary

Jose Angel Solis Pacheco, Houston, Texas

Educational Outreach

Sally Russ, Houston, Texas

Medical Coordinator

Jane Kavanagh, Houston, Texas

Finance

Sherrie Reinhackel, Houston, Texas

Brazos Abiertos, Inc. Advisory Board

Ellyne Basto, George Fischer, Suzanne Larimer
Nita Lindley, Chris O’Niell and Sam Woodruff

Long Range Planning Committee

Steve Lock, Sherrie Reinhackel
Jose Angel Solis Pacheco and John Truax

Events Committee

Ellyne Basto, George Fischer, Suzanne Larimer
Nita Lindley, Michell De Void Molina
Sally Russ, John Truax and Sam Woodruff

Educational Outreach Committee

Gordon Crofoot MD, Holly Del Junco, Jane Kavanagh
Nita Lindley, Winston Nguyen, Chris O’Niell
Susan Rule, Sally Russ and Barbara Walker



**BRAZOS
ABIERTOS**
1409 Michigan
Houston, Texas
77006