



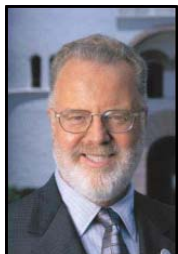
The PRESIDENT'S  
LEADERSHIP *fund*

## ANNUAL REPORT TO PARTNERS

SUMMER 2006



### A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT WEBER



As we celebrate The President's Leadership Fund's 4th anniversary, I am delighted with the impact our partnership has made on San Diego State University. Through the support of more than 100 partners, we have:

- Raised more than \$2.5 million to facilitate transformational change at SDSU and;
- Made more than 60 strategic investments to support deserving students, dedicated faculty and innovative initiatives.

The PLF, like our great university, is maturing. There is greater awareness about our vision to create a university befitting of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We are recognized on campus and within the community as philanthropic leaders with the foresight to appreciate, and invest in, emerging opportunities and pioneering enterprises. We are the team that not only envisions SDSU's potential, but is also committed to take action.

Over the past year, The PLF provided funding for initiatives including *Step Up* and *Alternative Spring Break*. These programs provide inner city teens and SDSU students with opportunities for personal growth and educational enrichment, positioning them for success in higher education. The President's Leadership Fund's investments in these two programs alone changed lives as close to home as City Heights, and as far away as South Africa.

As you read through highlights of this year's investments, you should feel proud of your connection to The President's Leadership Fund and SDSU. You are a vital investor in our university, and your continued commitment enables us to make a difference on a local, regional, national and global level.

Stephen L. Weber

***"As a parent, I see the value of investing in my children's education first-hand. As a result, I've made a personal commitment to give back to the university that gives them so much."***

***- Christy Hilton, PLF Founding Partner***

### SDSU PRISON TOUR

SDSU's 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Prison Tour provided 24 criminal justice majors with a unique opportunity to visit several state prisons. Students came face-to-face with inmates and prison staff in cell blocks and exercise yards, documenting their interaction along the way. Each learned life-altering lessons in tolerance and humanity that will prove invaluable in their careers. Conducted in partnership with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (the world's largest law enforcement agency), SDSU's Prison Tour is the first of its kind in the world for college students and has received widespread media attention.



*SDSU students visiting California Men's Colony in San Luis Obispo Prison*

## ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK SOUTH AFRICA



*Debra Holmes-Brown*

Winston Churchill said “You make a living by what you *get*. You make a life by what you *give*.” Never was this more apparent than when SDSU and Crawford High’s School of Law and Business’ students chose to spend a week in South Africa over spring break funded, in part, by The PLF. During their “vacation,” they assisted 1,000 orphans of the Ithuteng Trust, all of whom were victims of abuse, and some whose lives have been disrupted by AIDS. The objective of the donation-funded center is to help its youth obtain a high school education.

Founded by SDSU Africana Studies’ professor Dr. Shirley Weber, the “Alternative Spring Break” provides students with a unique opportunity to learn about African culture and apartheid. South Africa serves as a living laboratory for examining race relations; students can observe the impact race policies have on South

Africans, and they begin to understand that we all bear some responsibility in creating a world free of racial, sexual and religious intolerance.

According to Dr. Shirley Weber, who makes the trip each year, their work focuses on “education and AIDS prevention.” Over the years, her student volunteers have assisted the Trust with construction and beautification projects, tutoring and providing shoes and school supplies for its students [collected pre-trip through charity drives]. MTV was so impressed with the group’s efforts that this year’s trip was one of five highlighted on their program *Amazing Breaks* last spring. “Students come home feeling like they got as much as they gave.” said Dr. Shirley Weber. “It’s amazing to see the change in how they view the world.” Crawford Counselor Debra Holmes-Brown, who also made the trip, echoed this sentiment: “They learned so much from the orphans at the Trust. The orphans used their setbacks as a powerful force to push forward, and it sent a strong message.”

This was certainly the case for Rebecca Paida, a 2006 valedictorian for Crawford’s School of Law and Business and Sudanese immigrant who came to the U.S. only seven years ago. Rebecca worked diligently to participate in the trip. “My family couldn’t pay for me to go, but I really wanted to be among my people again,” Rebecca said. “It was my chance to give back. And once I was there, I realized that visiting in itself was giving back—people in Africa think we’ve forgotten them, and I could see the intense appreciation in their eyes when I returned.”

Although Rebecca met all of the qualifications—strong grades, good citizenship, community service and completion of a community course on Africana history and culture, she needed to finance her trip. “I fundraised by selling snacks at school for 10 minutes each day,” Rebecca said. “And I asked for donations from community members, but I wasn’t able to raise enough to cover my trip.” That’s when The PLF stepped in, providing a stipend to support Rebecca, and two other students, in making the journey.

In hindsight, Rebecca feels her effort was worthwhile. “I’m a better person after this experience, and I don’t take the little I have for granted,” Rebecca said. Since returning home, she has made a number of public presentations about her visit. What’s more, between her preparation and being paired with a college mentor for the trip, she decided to attend SDSU this fall.

“Saying thank you to The PLF Partners doesn’t seem like enough,” Rebecca stressed. “I’m incredibly grateful to have taken part in such a life-changing experience.”



*Third from left, Debra Holmes-Brown and Rebecca Paida, second from right*

***“I like that The PLF supports enhanced learning opportunities for students. Through my partnership in The PLF, I can help others while having confidence that I’m making a wise investment.”***

***- Dina E. Maxwell, '93, '00, PLF Founding Partner***

## STEP UP PROGRAM

During her junior year at Hoover High, Mina Nguyen was unsure of her future. A majority of her friends faced personal challenges or dropped out of school. And as the daughter of a single mother who emigrated from Vietnam when she was a small child, the environment she grew up in stressed survival over the importance of a higher education.



Mina Nguyen

Mina's perspective changed when she learned about *Step Up*, a City Heights-based program operated out of the Consensus Organizing Center, funded, in part, by The PLF, the program is designed to address the disparity between the number of students from low income neighborhoods who qualify for higher education, but fail to enroll in college. "I realized that if I joined *Step Up*, I'd have the sense of security I needed to consider attending college," Mina reflected.

As a member of *Step Up*'s inaugural class, Mina was one of 20 eleventh grade students from San Diego's inner city schools who completed "Introduction to Social Work," an undergraduate course at SDSU that addresses community problems from a social and political context. What's more, she devoted more than 40 hours to community service work in her neighborhood. Upon finishing these two components of the *Step Up* program, Mina received assistance in the college application process, in areas ranging from essay writing to completing financial aid documents.

"When I considered going to college, I thought my only option would be a junior college, because I didn't have any money," Mina said. "But my advisors at *Step Up* helped me fill out scholarship applications, and Price Charities gave me a full-ride scholarship to SDSU." She graduated in May 2006 with a B.A. in social work and intends to pursue a master's degree in the same field so she can return to her community and create positive change.

***"Being a part of Step Up changed my life. When I was at Hoover, the opportunity to earn college credit while being a part of SDSU made a world of difference—I realized that I could be successful in college, and it made me excited about the future..."***

***- Mina Nguyen, '06, PLF beneficiary***

"I used to be an underachiever—I was shy and nervous. But the people at *Step Up* helped me to gain confidence, and they reassured me that they would be there as a resource until I finished my education. The fact that they weren't my family, but they always encouraged me and told me they were proud of me, meant the world to me. Now I'm the first in my family to graduate from college," Mina stated, her eyes welling up with tears.

For the next year, Mina will take a break from her scholarly work in order to complete a fellowship with *Step Up*. "I really want to pay back the program that changed my life," Mina emphasized. "It's funny to think that I'm now a motivational speaker for disadvantaged youths. It's all come full circle."

*This year, The President's Leadership Fund invested \$75,000, payable over a three-year period, in the Step Up program. After three years of operation, 97% of Step Up's graduates have enrolled in college.*

## TIJUANA INTERNSHIP

The Center for Latin American Studies' Tijuana Internship program offers a unique learning experience that exemplifies SDSU's internationalization and community outreach goals. This program is made possible by a cross-border partnership with Desarrollo Integral de la Familia, a government agency providing social services to Mexican citizens. Funding from The PLF allows the development and resource management necessary to expand the pilot internship collaboration. The goal is to reach 25 to 50 student volunteers per semester (from six), giving them opportunities for students to fulfill their internship requirements for degree programs in Chicano studies, Spanish, public health and social work, among others.



*A weekly meeting where staff and students discuss the Tijuana internship program*

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PLF CHAIR



The President's Leadership Fund's Partners should be extremely gratified by the role they're playing in creating a distinctive environment of excellence at SDSU. Their generosity has enabled President Weber and the university to invest in unique student and faculty programs that are not only having a positive impact in science and engineering, the arts and local business communities, but are also contributing to these communities throughout our nation and the world.

*Tom Darcy*

Thomas E. Darcy, '73  
Founding Partner and Chair, The President's Leadership Fund

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