



BAI participates in the official opening of the “Protected Summer, Fun Summer 2014,” the first big campaign hosted by the Yucatán State Committee for HIV Prevention and Control earlier this year. Photo: Facebook

What supporting the Showcase makes possible

The **Mérida Showcase of Homes** is such a festive affair, it's easy to forget why the event happens at all. But that would be a mistake.

When seven generous homeowners in the Centro open their doors to the public, they are also opening doors for Fundación BAI A.C. as it continues its mission.

“One of my favorite events in Mérida is the annual Showcase of Homes,” says Greg Casini, a Californian whose grand new home is on the tour. “I have attended several of the house tours in recent years. They are always a lot of fun and you can get a lot of great ideas for your own home.”

The tour ends with cocktails at both Greg's house and Hennessy's, where attendees can exchange notes on what they liked best.

But the more serious and pressing goal of the event is to fund programs for the local community. “I am especially pleased that

the funds raised through the Showcase of Homes are doing important work across the Yucatán to educate young people about HIV/AIDS, other sexually transmitted infections, teenage pregnancies and provide free rapid testing and counseling services, so they can live a healthy life.”

John Bradshaw, who moved to Mérida from Virginia before signing on as a BAI volunteer, sees where the non-profit organization fills a need.

“The Yucatán Peninsula has the highest incidence of teenage pregnancies in all of Mexico,” says John. “Our programs have been well received and supported by both local government and schools and we now have a formal agreement to provide this important education.”

Although BAI has made inroads, it takes money to see their projects come to fruition.

“At this point, Fundación BAI receives no federal or state funding. We rely completely on the generosity of our donors,” says John. “While events like the Showcase of Homes, provide much-needed funding, we have just launched our Pledge Campaign 2014-2015 to ensure that we have regular monthly income to continue these vital programs.”

Also in the organization's favor is a new
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BAI conducts a rapid HIV testing and counseling campaign in Umán.



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— Greg Casini.

structure at the board level.

“Fundación BAI is fully governed by a new Mexico-based board of directors that will establish long-term goals and strategies and will work to expand support from the Yucatecan community,” says John.

Mark Callum, an expat from Britain, has seen the results.

“Since I was invited to join Fundación BAI a year ago, we have made some big changes,” says Mark. “Foremost amongst these has been improving our communication. This is why six months ago, we set up the Communications Committee of which I am co-chair with John Bradshaw.”

And the committee found volunteers with useful skills.

“We had specific goals and a series of deliberate strategies to get our message out there, including the formation of our digital strategy group, consisting mainly of Mexican volunteers who are graphic designers and webmasters, giving their time absolutely free,” says Callum. “They had the vision and creative ideas to drive us forward into a new and exciting area and provided some great black-and-white photos that have really made an impact.”

Fundación BAI rebranded, redesigned and relaunched their website, which now includes short video interviews with volunteers to demonstrate where donation money goes.

One particularly moving article features someone who took advantage of their free testing in the main square. It turns out he discovered he was HIV-positive. The person goes on to describe the experience, including the care and support given by BAI.

“The idea is that the website is THE

If you go

▶ Seven homes are on the tour. Other homes feature design and architecture by **Victor Cruz, Carlos de la Barrera Cardeña, Alvaro Cervera and Mercedes Sánchez, Robert Holtby and Emile Romain, Gonzalo Fernando González and Deborah LaChapelle.**

▶ Afterwards, enjoy a complimentary drink at **Hennessy's** or **Casa de Las Torres**, the house featured in this story.

▶ Read about the important work done by **Fundación BAI A.C.** at www.fundacionbai.com

▶ Tour hours are 2-5 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 9. Tickets (MX\$300; MX\$150 students) are available on the day of the event at **Hennessy's.**

place to go to find out what we are up to, to find out full details of our events and also a place with resources and information to help you. You can also use it to contact us if you need a free HIV test, in total confidence,” Mark notes.

After the Showcase comes another big initiative in time for World AIDS Day. They will light the Monumento a la Patria in red as they lead a march by candlelight down the Paseo de Montejo.

Centro homes are built for privacy, so house tours are always a good vehicle for raising funds and commanding attention for a good cause.

“I am fortunate to be able to raise awareness and money for Fundación BAI and their many excellent projects by simply opening up my home to the community,” says Greg Casini.



Sitting in one of the houses featured on the tour, BAI Director Dr. Carlos Cabrera, Showcase homeowner Greg Casini, and his architect Juan Carlos Alonso talk to a reporter from *Diario de Yucatán* about the upcoming Showcase of Homes.