



3rd Quarter July - September 2020

This has been another challenging quarter while the world continues to struggle with COVID-19. Due to the cancellation of our normal events, with fewer stories and pictures to share, this issue is focused more on the people behind the scenes and the lesser known activities of BSF.



Provides Not Only Scholarships to Baja's Youth but also medical & dental assistance; art, music & dance classes; food & school supplies; student & family consultations; English classes; mentoring.

A Little About Our Wonderful Founder and President

Judie Kesson, and her late husband, Ken, bought their first home in Mexico in 1988, making Mexico their permanent residence for more than 30 years. That home was in Bajamar and they later moved to Club Marena, just further up the coast. For the five years prior to this time, they traveled around the world, mostly in a VW camper ... stopping for months at a time when the spirit moved them!

Ken was a businessman and Judie was involved in city management. Both had always been active in their community and knew that they would find a niche in Mexico where they could become engaged.

In 1995 that opportunity presented itself when a need was identified to help economically stressed students to continue their education. Judie often says that if she had started with a proper business plan, it would look very different. But, somehow, the Baja Scholarship Foundation grew and developed and succeeded in spite of its very unformed beginnings!

Judie continued to work in the field of international development / local government management in Romania, Suriname, Jamaica, Indonesia, Serbia, South Africa and many other countries after moving to Baja. She continues to love travel and hopes to be back on the road when COVID-19 is under control.

Judie says; "she and Ken raised five kids together, have 10 grandchildren, 4 great grandchildren and a whole lot of Mexican students and their families that fill her heart."

On to Our Energetic Vice President

Sonja was born in Wankie, Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. Before going to college she went to Thermopolis, Wyoming in 1974 as a high school level Rotary Youth Exchange student, developed an interest in Psychology and Sociology and traveled around the US for 2 months on Greyhound buses with another Zimbabwean exchange student living in Colorado.

She earned her Bachelor of Social Science Degree and a Post Graduate Diploma in Personnel Management from the University of Cape Town. She then worked in London and traveled extensively throughout Europe.

She returned to Thermopolis in 1980 to marry her husband of 40 years, Charlie. They have 3 adult children, 2 boys and a girl, and 3 grandchildren, 2 girls and a boy. Before retiring in 2007 and moving to Club Marena Sonja managed and was the Purchasing agent for a Family owned Clothing, Footwear and Souvenir Store. She was also involved with Rotary International in Thermopolis and then in Rosarito for 20+ years. She also served on the local District Youth Exchange Committee for several years, selecting out bound students, working with Inbound students, and the family hosted several students in their Thermopolis home. Sonja and Charlie moved to Club Marena part time in 2008 and made it their permanent home in 2009. They have been long time supporters of BSF and have sponsored Tania since she was 9 years old.

Sonja is the Energizer Bunny in the flesh and has contributed many, many hours to BSF functions, students and their families.



About the Editor

(by Judie Kesson)

Did you recently receive an email from “THE EDITOR?” Well, it is time to meet him, Steve Manning. Steve and his wife Lee are long time BSF sponsors and supporters and Steve joined the Board of Directors about nineteen months ago.

Steve spent twenty-five years in the US Navy where he served as both an enlisted sailor and a Commissioned Officer. After retiring from the Navy as a Lieutenant Commander he worked in private industry for the San Diego based company Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) and retired as a Senior Vice President after 18 years.

Steve and his wife Lee have lived at Club Marena since 2000 and full time since 2013. Lee is a much admired glass artist, with a gallery and studio at Calafia Hotel. They have 1 son and 3 grandchildren. Steve has an undergraduate business degree and a MBA in Telecommunications Management.

Note: On behalf of the Board of Directors, we are truly happy to have Steve add his many skills to BSF and particularly his willingness to take over the Newsletter! He is more than happy to hear from you about what you would like to see in future editions.

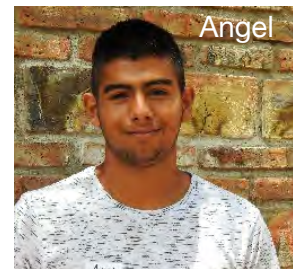
Wonderful reasons to celebrate!!



Adi



Alexa



Angel



Edgar



Jessica



Lupita



Marco



Marialuisa



HAPPY
BIRTHDAY!



BEYOND EDUCATION

BSF has several different funds to support our students and their families beyond their education. One such fund is the Marylee Bottom of the Heart Fund. Marylee Donovan joined the BSF Board in 2001 and, before her death, constantly contributed not only to the “business” of BSF but the “heart” as well. This Fund is maintained for support in emergencies to include unique medical problems.

There are also the Jorge Imana Fund for the Arts, which has paid for musical instruments, endless folkloric classes, etc., and the Ken Kesson English Fund which has paid for many Cambridge English classes.

A Current Situation

We are currently experiencing a unique medical situation with our long time student Cesar.

Nearly four years ago Cesar was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. The family "pretended" that things were under control and Cesar actually started his University education as planned. Unfortunately, the family's lack of funds of any kind meant no medicine was available, and, in fact, the local hospital told him that the only treatment available cost \$50,000 so to go home and do the best he could. The family tried eating better...not easy when money is so tight, and Cesar soon found he could no longer negotiate getting around campus as his disease was rapidly progressing. Throughout his schooling, Cesar has been an outstanding student and throughout this ordeal, his spirit and kindness is not new to those that know him. Unfortunately Cesar had to put his goal of becoming a mechanical engineer on hold. His dream in the future is to continue to pursue this goal.

About a month ago, one of our angelic Directors, who did not really know Cesar well, had occasion to sit with Cesar and his Mother when BSF was distributing some emergency funds. The Mother finally admitted that they desperately needed help, repeated the hospital's "recommendations" and shed some tears with several people in attendance that day.

The Angel decided to personally take on Cesar's situation and was determined to see what could be done. She paid for several consultations with neurologists in Ensenada and Tijuana, subsidized MRIs and various lab costs. It was finally determined the best possible approach would be through Stem Cell Treatment. The physicians doing this were carefully vetted and all had amazing reviews. And, frankly, it was the first real hope we had to help Cesar. And, it cost just over \$20,000, with many donated services included.

Thanks to the continued angelic support and extremely generous donations from several BSF supporters, Cesar started stem cell treatments on September 2nd and has experienced miraculously fast results.



September 3rd status report from one of his Doctors: "it's amazing how the cells are taking to his body so fast. He hasn't been able to walk on his own in two years and guess what? He's actually walking on his own! Great progress and much more therapy to go, but all headed in the right direction. The patient is totally happy and his mom as well. We will continue physical therapy post procedure so he can learn to balance, and walk properly. Bottom line, it's all amazing!"

The situation doesn't end there. Because of Cesar's impaired coordination, BSF is also looking at how to facilitate easier access to his home, which is situated on a rugged terrain with very steep steps to get to and from his house, as well as household appliances to make his and his family's life easier.



Looking up and down the stairs to the main level of his parents home.
Difficult for even an able bodied person.



From Cesar: "I want to thank you for helping me with this, this is something that I need every day."





Sometimes certain situations tug at our heart strings. This is one of those situations. Cesar has been a BSF student since 2008, has always been an excellent student and always willing to give back to BSF by volunteering to help out at our BSF socials. Any donation would be greatly appreciated. Please specify that your donation is specifically for Cesar! Thank you to our readers and know that we love having you as part of our BSF community!



Because the Fiesta was cancelled this year, we met with our students individually on August 22nd to ensure that they had inscription fees to attend online classes starting in September.







Meeting and greeting our new students!



Antonio

Vanessa

Jaime

Jesus

Education lights every stage of the journey to a better life! Not a hand out but a hand up!



BSF Board Members making it work for our students in this time of social distancing.



***Transforming Lives through
Education***

Closing with an inspirational story from Sharon

(unedited)



Since I can remember (and even before, because my mom tells me I expressed my wish when I was 4 years old) I wanted to become a doctor. It was my lifelong dream, and making my family and BSF proud motivated me. Then, I did my best in school and the day when I finally was going to apply for Medical School came. I was so happy when I got the results: I got in!

So, school started and... Well, something just didn't feel right, and deep inside me a doubt arose: What if this really isn't where I should be?

Some time passed, and one day a teacher was giving us a talk, and he said, "Students, I will give you an advice. If you are having doubts, if you are starting to think that this is not really what you want and your true vocation, this is a good time to make your mind." And he told us the story of a student that was about to graduate, but he realized that it wasn't what he wanted to do for the rest of his life and he got out of Medical School. I could only imagine what he experienced; all the time and all the money spent (and kind of wasted) only because he didn't realize it before. So in that moment I knew. I wasn't going to go through the same as that boy. I realized soon that medicine wasn't my vocation, so I decided to get out. I talked about this with some of the BSF board members and they were totally comprehensive, they encouraged me to find and pursue my true vocation and passion. My parents, on the other side, were a little less comprehensive, but they still supported me. Although I didn't have a plan or an idea of what I wanted, I was determined to not give up like the way BSF didn't give up on me. So, after a tough existential crisis and a long year of working, I found what I truly want to do for the rest of my life. I am studying Translation at the UABC Faculty of Languages and I couldn't be happier. It is something I am passionate about and actually really good at. All I went through taught me that sometimes things don't go the way you plan or expect, but it doesn't mean is bad. You just have to make the best of it, and everything can even turn out better.

BSF has always been there for me, so one of my main goals when I graduate is to be a sponsor in the foundation and help in everything I can the way they have helped me.