

THE PEOPLE OF BCA



PROFILE:

JIM HOFF, BCA BOARD MEMBER

Interview by Dar Goatley

Jim Hoff is a BCA Board Member and the Coordinator of the BCA Spanish Language Courses, *Let's Speak Spanish!* Jim created this innovative Spanish language program to meet a need and interest in learning Spanish. The classes teach not only the Spanish language, but help participants learn about the Mexican culture, as well.

How were you initially involved with BCA?

I joined some BCA tours and attended BCA Forums. I could see that BCA was performing an important function by helping people understand the unique nature of our area - one that is both precious and precarious.

What role do you think that BCA performs in Southern Arizona?

I believe that the educational efforts of BCA helps those who are moving here from other parts of the country and who are not acquainted with the rich culture that surrounds them.

Helping Americans to understand the value of maintaining the border culture is one of the biggest accomplishments of BCA. The borderland social structure, cultural practices and ecology all need to be preserved. There are hundreds of years of unique and rich culture.

BCA continues to expand support for non-profit social service agencies in Mexico. One of the biggest weaknesses of the social structure in Mexico is the lack of a formidable presence of charitable organizations. They primarily have the government and the family with nothing in between to help their people. I believe that we can help Mexico realize the value of volunteer organizations in helping the people of Mexico.

How does BCA reflect your humanitarian values?

As I travelled for business throughout my career, I became increasingly aware of the many cultures in our world. As someone who grew-up in the Midwest, it opened my eyes. I started to see the richness of different cultures and realized that it was important to understand and respect our differences.

What have you enjoyed most in your involvement with BCA?

I have really enjoyed developing “partners” in Sonora and for those partners to realize that BCA respects them and their culture. I am proud to say that “I am with BCA” and that they will understand who I am because of my association with BCA.

How would you like to see BCA move into the future?

I would like to see BCA perceived as much more than a non-profit tour business. While that is an inspiring entry for many people to learn about the borderlands, BCA has a much greater purpose. I want to see BCA have a role in reinvigorating the entire Frontier Community. There is massive potential for economic development from Tucson to Hermosillo, Mexico, including high tech and environmental (green) technology. Such direction could help drive sustainability practices and optimize economic growth.

The city of Nogales, Arizona, for example, has experienced huge economic challenges. BCA could be a leader in helping this community with its rich culture and history.

I believe that BCA should always maintain a focus on seniors. They have more time to invest, more discretionary money, and are ready to experience new things. They are well-positioned to both benefit from and contribute to the BCA mission.