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## Walls That Unite holds art fundraiser at CSUF for Mexico's recent earthquake

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*(Lauren Hofer / Daily Titan)*

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After a magnitude 7.1 earthquake devastated Mexico City in September, a group of CSUF students and alumni organized an art sale fundraiser as a call to action.

"We're not experiencing what they're feeling, but we're heartbroken at the same time. And so for all of us, for the city that we love and we cherish, we wanted to help," said CSUF alumna and event organizer Kristi Krepton.

Walls That Unite is a nonprofit organization created to perform community outreach in both the United States and Mexico. Its fundraiser took place Thursday in the Exit Gallery from 5 to 8 p.m.

"Walls That Unite is an organization that looks at building a future with creativity. It can be anything from art, to creative ways of education and basically just reaching out to people for the better good," said Rose Adams, CSUF faculty member who led the trips. "They all have a personal connection to Mexico, having traveled there with me."

CSUF alumna Araceli Figueroa said she thought about her cousin who lives in Mexico City as soon as she heard about the earthquake. It wasn't until later that night that she heard her family was safe.

Krepton, Figueroa and other organizers traveled to Mexico with CSUF Study Abroad during the 2016 to 2017 intersession.

While abroad, the students studied murals, traveled to Mexico City and did service learning projects in a small town called Ojos de Agua. These projects prompted Adams to create Walls That Unite.

Adams said the fundraiser was the students' idea. She told them she would help promote it, but the students would have to make it happen.

"They got the gallery space, they got people to donate and basically, they're running the show," Adams said.

Figueroa was personally inspired by her mother who, after hearing about the earthquake, contacted Home Depot in both Mexico and the U.S. and asked them to help.

The event organizers donated art pieces and directed others to do so as well. On Thursday, Walls That Unite raised a total of \$1,224 for relief in Mexico, selling half of the donated art. They plan to hold another fundraiser as a part of the Santa Ana Artwalk Oct. 7. The event will be in Suite C of the Santora Arts Building and will run from 6 to 10 p.m.

Laura Black, a CSUF exhibition design graduate student, said she experienced a minor wave of sadness after she first left Mexico because she had grown so used to the way people constantly greeted each other.

"I have been very much impacted by the kindness of Mexico and by the warmth that's there," Black said.

Adams is proud of her students for taking action and working together during Mexico's time of need.

"This is them coming together and overlooking the differences that people may have when putting together an event like this and working together for something that is bigger," Adams said.