



BYTE March Maddness

Welcome to BYTE's March highlight reel, basketball isn't the only program heating up this season! The big news this month is BYTE has been selected for a 3-year mental health grant, to design and pilot our bilingual trauma-informed community coaching course. This investment by the Vitalyst Health Foundation will ensure BYTE's work has a national investment and solidifies BYTE's work as a public health service. We're also highlighting BYTE Yoga instructor, Andrea Gomez Machi , whose work has greatly enhanced BYTE's Mexico programs.

Thank you for continuing to make our work possible and for supporting kids and communities on the US/Mexico border!

Vitalyst Systems Change Grant

Wonderful news! BYTE has been awarded a \$175,000 [Vitalyst Systems](#)

Change grant! Vitalyst Health Foundation is an Arizona-based health institution focused on equity in a variety of sectors. Systems Change awards are direct investments in cultivating creative ideas to improve health and well-being fo vulnerable populations. BYTE was selected out of 54 applicants and Vitalyst's 3-year investment will propel BYTE's impact nationwide.

Vitalyst funding will support the creation and piloting of a bilingual trauma informed community coach training course, in partnership with UofA, the USTA Foundation, the USTA Southwest Section, and the US Consulates in Nogales and Tijuana.

BYTE is excited to welcome a team of experts to develop the project and to let our experience in Nogales improve the quality of coaching nationwide.

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BYTE Staff Highlight



This week we introduce **Andrea A. Gomez Machi**, a certified yoga instructor who has joined on the BYTE Mexico team! Andrea is a proud Nogalense with a passion for yoga and meditation. Andrea has practiced and taught yoga throughout Mexico as well as parts of Madrid and Cambodia. She reflects that "what [she] likes most about yoga is that moment when [she] finishes a session and can see how people reach a state of relaxation that they weren't in at the beginning. Maybe they come in with stress or negative thoughts, but after an hour and after some stretches, people finish feeling lighter, with less burden."

Andrea leads yoga sessions at 5 BYTE sites in Mexico, including two migrant shelters. She enjoys teaching both children and their mothers, allowing them a respite from challenging circumstances. She stresses that "the kids always get excited when trying something new. They share memories or reflections while they stretch and I love that they can calm their minds to reach this state."

Andrea's goal for her work in BYTE is to keep learning and exploring alternative therapies to wellbeing, so she can provide new support to the community.



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Program Highlight | A Saturday in Sonora



Even with the full return to in-person operations, BYTE continues to embrace hybrid learning. This month BYTE's virtual photography and cinematography classes celebrated in-person to create content and share their projects.

Part of the "*Huellas Comunitarias*," or "Community Footprints" initiative, BYTE creates artistic interactions between students and their surroundings, to become their art and share it with others. This program is hosted monthly by [Semilleros Creativos](#), supported by the Mexican Secretary of Culture.

Here, a group of students along with their parents practiced with polaroid cameras, creating and mounting work to be shared by the cohort.



US Consulate Digital Storytelling Gala



BYTE has been offering custom digital storytelling intensive workshops since 2017. This year BYTE partnered with the US Consulate to Nogales Sonora to offer specialty workshops to its Youth Council. A Gala was hosted on Mar 26th to celebrate their efforts, attended by the heads of local institutions and Consul General Laura Biedebah herself. .

We love sharing the opportunity to practice new creative forms of expression. The stories were powerful, depicting truthful narratives of life in the border region.

We'd like to thank our colleagues at the US Consulate for supporting this great experience!



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Please stay tuned for more updates and highlights in our next BYTE Newsletter!

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