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FEATURES

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## Documenting the undocumented

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Rudy Adler and Brett Huneycutt met as fourth-graders at Hopi Elementary School in Scottsdale. This summer, the recent college graduates returned to the Valley to collaborate, along with friend Victoria Criado, on a documentary film on immigration.

"It's the most important issue facing our home state," Adler says. "It's also becoming one of the most important national issues."

Adler, who'd recently finished a prestigious 13-month program at the advertising firm Weiden + Kennedy, says he "wanted to avoid getting a job." Huneycutt, a Rhodes Scholar in economics at Oxford University, wanted to do something "more creative with his research." The two had already talked about making a film together when Criado, who was working for Deutsche Bank in New York and wondering if Wall Street was where she belonged, e-mailed Adler to suggest just that. When Adler and Huneycutt told Criado their plan, "I quit my job and came here," she says.



From left, documentarians Rudy Adler, Brett Huneycutt and Victoria Criado flank community leader Cristina Estrada and her daughter, Margerita, in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

*Photo courtesy of Rudy Adler*

The trio spent the summer filming in such places as Altar, 60 miles south of the U.S.-Mexico border, and Nuevo Laredo. They will finish filming at the end of September, at which point, "we break up," Adler says. They plan to continue post-production work on the film long-distance, with help from Adler's brother, Jacob, a musician in Tempe, and hope to have a finished film by the end of the year.

In the middle of what they call "a serendipitous summer," the trio embarked on a new project, as well, called "Documenting the Undocumented."

The three were in Altar when a little girl caught their attention. They wished that they could get the girl's perspective of the difficult and dangerous border crossing - they even joked about giving the girl their video camera. That conversation led to the idea of handing out disposable cameras to residents of migrant houses along the border, many of whom will attempt to cross into the United States. So far, they have distributed more than 90 cameras, each in a padded, self-addressed stamped envelope that's sealed in a plastic bag for protection; they plan to give out around 400 in total. "We're hoping to get a return rate of about 10 to 20 percent," Adler says.

Although they have commitments from a few local galleries to exhibit the results of their project, they're looking for more venues at which to show the photographs. And, they note, donations are welcome. "The project thus far has been largely self-financed," Adler says.

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