

CTO *TeamCTO Update*

Fall 2005

www.TeamCTO.org

2005 Year in Review: Seeds are sprouting all over Texas!

By Mike Arnold

If you've ever planted seeds in a garden, you know the mixed emotions of satisfaction and anticipation that well up in your heart when the first green shoots spring up above ground.

That's the feeling I have when I sit back and consider the progress we've made in CTO over the past year.

On one hand, there's an enormous satisfaction in seeing the young lives we've already changed, the communities coming together to support our units, the people rallying around our mission, and all the visible evidence of our success to date.



On the other hand, the anticipation of things to come makes my heart race!

CTO is now alive and kicking in five Texas communities, with full-time Outfitters working to "go live" and officially begin local operations. And — just

by word of mouth — we have a half dozen other communities on our waiting list to start units after these first ones are fully functional, Lord willing before long!

Even more important are the countless people who have been impacted by our ministry — growing in faith, and plugging into our great American hunting and fishing heritage.

The Bible says that while we are the ones who plant the seeds, it is God who makes them grow. There is no other way to



A camper hugs founder Mike Arnold after being baptized during a session of CTO Ultimate Summer Camp. San Antonio Outfitter Greg Flores (left) and Advisory Board member Doug McClain look on.

account for the miraculous growth of CTO to date. While we have been careful to take on only as much as we can manage, it's still mind-boggling to think that right now, as I write this, there are many dozens of people across Texas — staff Outfitters, volunteer Rangers, youth members, parents, Root Partners, landowners and others — who are actively working on one CTO project or another. And we're just getting started!

Please pray for the Lord's favor as we seek to grow stronger and bear more fruit during the coming year. CTO

CTO forges community partnerships to impact young lives



Three young men and a house parent from St. Jude's Children's Ranch joined our San Antonio Unit on a deep sea fishing trip this summer, thanks to scholarships provided by the Alamo Chapter of Safari Club International, through a relationship started by Heritage Children Christian Mentorship. This is an example of how CTO is partnering with other organizations to reach youth through life-changing experiences.

CTO has been warmly embraced by groups and businesses that share our vision of helping young men grow in Christian manhood and passing along our American outdoors heritage.

In recent months we have been blessed to work with a number of prominent groups across Texas.

These include Safari Club International, Lions Club, St. Jude's Children's Ranch, Church for Men, Heritage Children, Pacto con Dios, and the Texas Youth Hunting Program. That's not to mention the dozens of churches involved.

Additionally, numerous businesses have stepped up to the plate to help our efforts. These include Wal-Mart, Weatherby Firearms, Pure Fishing, and countless other local businesses across Texas.

To see how these relationships have

benefited young people, just take a look at a recent deep sea fishing trip to Port Aransas organized by our San Antonio unit and Outfitter Greg Flores.

Scholarships to this outing were funded by Safari Club International—Alamo Chapter. Youth from St. Jude's Children's Ranch and the Heritage Children Christian mentorship program came thanks to these scholarships. It was the founder of Heritage Children who introduced us to St. Jude's in the first place. In situations like this, everyone wins!

The first words of the CTO mission statement say that we're a relationship-based ministry. We work hard to build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with groups that share our vision and support our mission. CTO

CTO Member Profile: Zech Hudson

To understand the importance of the progress CTO has made during 2005, it's important to look at what matters most: the youth who are touched by our ministry.

CTO is founded on the mission of forming long-term, year-round, personal friendships with young men based on a common interest in the outdoors, and using those friendships to lead them toward Christian manhood. Those words read great on paper, but they take on real meaning when you get to know the real people behind the mission.

Twelve-year-old Zech Hudson is a fine example of the young men who are involved in CTO. He's a member of the San Antonio unit.

We first got hooked up with Zech through the efforts of his mom, Sheila. She is a hard-working single mother who found out about CTO from an e-mail sent by Community Bible Church, and first contacted us to inquire about scholarship funds. At the time, she told us that she'd been praying for a way for Zech to learn about what it means to be a Christian man, and thought CTO might be exactly what she was praying for.

“ Thank you so much for all the trips, fishing, hunting and all around 'being a boy' for my son before the 7th grade. What memories he has. The photos are fabulous and will be treasured. “But most rewarding to the Glory of God is the fact that my son is reading his Bible on his own. Being a reader myself, and struggling with the world's interruptions, I am encouraged by his commitment. Thank you so much for the gift of your generosity.”

- letter from Zech's mom

While we did get Zech on some great kingfish during a deep sea trip, he still had a hunting itch that was begging to be scratched. The opportunity finally arose in September when we had an unexpected opening in our First Hunt for exotic rams. Thanks to the generosity of Safari Club International—Alamo Chapter, we were able to get Zech on this hunt (they funded all of our summer scholarships in San Antonio), where he made a perfect shot and harvested a magnificent Corsican ram!

Now Zech is applying to become an Apprentice Guide in our CTO youth leadership program, assuring a positive, long-term relationship with us. That's what it's all about!

Watching Zech grow in maturity and faith over the summer has been extremely rewarding. He's developed in so many ways, it's almost hard to recognize him as the same boy we first met at Summer Camp back in June! The impact that CTO has had on

By God's grace, we were able to provide a full scholarship for Zech to attend our CTO Ultimate Summer Camp. Zech had a great time at camp (cactus needle wounds from the snipe hunt aside!), but despite our best efforts he was the only camper who didn't harvest a big game animal. (He missed an axis doe.)

After camp we stayed in touch with Zech and were happy to hunt with him on two hog hunts in August. We knew God was setting the hooks deep in Zech, as he didn't get anything during these hunts, either — but was always eager to sign up for the next one!

While we did get Zech on some great kingfish during a



Top: Hard work paid off when Zech finally got his first big game animal, a nice Corsican ram. Bottom left: Zech cooks breakfast for the crew on the First Hunt in September. Bottom right: He landed two nice kingfish during a July deep sea fishing trip.

him is best summed up by this letter we got from his mother:

“Thank you so much for all the trips, fishing, hunting and all around being a boy for my son before the 7th grade. What memories he has. The photos are fabulous and will be treasured.

“But most rewarding to the Glory of God is the fact that my son is reading his Bible on his own. Being a reader myself, and struggling with the world's interruptions, I am encouraged by his commitment. Thank you so much for the gift of your generosity.” ☪

Meet the Outfitters, CTO's frontline leaders

In late July we certified our first CTO Outfitters after an intense, week-long Outfitter Training Boot Camp, commissioning them to build CTO units in their hometowns.

CTO Outfitters are full-time staff members who are called to serve the youth, volunteers and supporters in a local community.

We fielded over 100 applicants for the positions, and all applicants were put through a rigid screening and certification process. We can happily report that the ones we selected are the cream of the crop in the youth hunting and fishing and youth ministry fields. These gifted, godly men are expert outdoorsmen, solidly grounded on Scripture, and above reproach in every way. (Can you tell we're proud of them?) They are:

Brazoria County: Lee McKinney

Lee grew up in the mission field — in a village 250 miles from the nearest electricity! — and then went on to serve the USA in the Marine Force Recon special forces. He's an ordained minister with lots of youth ministry experience. He and wife Deb are raising two boys and two girls in Manvel, in this fast-growing county southwest of Houston.



Highland Lakes: Earl Spurlock

Earl is a well-loved community leader in his town of Kingsland in this Hill Country area west of Austin. He is an ordained minister and youth leader, and has worked in construction most of his career, as a construction supervisor and building inspector. He and wife Vanessa are raising three sons.

Lufkin: Jeremy Overby

Jeremy is a long-time youth minister and leadership trainer. He has served in staff positions with numerous churches, and as a leader in Young Life. He and wife Chastity have a son and two daughters.

San Antonio: Greg Flores

Greg comes to us from a career in the outdoors industry, as a products supplier and host of his own Christian out-



The Outfitters are tired but eager to take on the world after an intense, week-long 2005 Outfitter Training Boot Camp held at Messiah's Ranch near College Station in July. They are: (top row) Greg Flores, San Antonio; Lee McKinney, Brazoria Co.; Mike Arnold, founder and president; Earl Spurlock, Highland Lakes; Chad Richardson, Tyler. (bottom row) Mike "Bubba" White, Longview; Jeremy Overby, Lufkin. *Inset (left):* McKinney shows off the CTO branding iron he received upon graduation from Boot Camp.

reach hunting and fishing TV show. He also worked for years as a professional musician. He has long served as a lay leader in his church and mentored young men in his neighborhood. He and wife Jackie have one son.

Tyler: Chad Richardson

Chad has had a notable career as a case worker, house parent and counselor for top youth institutions in Texas, and as a church youth director. He and wife Ruby are raising a son and daughter.

Mike "Bubba" White of Longview also graduated from Boot Camp and has been certified as a CTO Outfitter. His unit launch is currently on hold as he is taking a much-needed sabbatical.

We could write volumes about each of these great men. You are encouraged to get to know them personally—you will be blessed! ☪

Local Unit Contact Information

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Tyler: Chad Richardson
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CTO offers one powerful mission, lots of meaningful ways to plug in!

Cross Trail Outfitters is a non-profit grassroots organization. Everything we do is thanks to the faithfulness of our donors and volunteers.

We like to say that we offer the *World's Greatest Volunteer Jobs*. For those who love the outdoors, nothing is more rewarding or fun than hunting, fishing and sharing life experiences with boys who are eager to learn and grow.

There's also lots to do for folks who may not have quite the passion for getting outside, but who believe in our mission just the same. Opportunities include:

Provide financial support

CTO is a life-changing organization that's passing on the Christian faith and preserving our outdoors heritage. We rely on contributions to operate and to provide scholarships for disadvantaged youth. CTO is a great investment of your charity dollars. All gifts are tax deductible.

Help with hunting & fishing activities

Volunteers who help with hunting and fishing trips and skills training sessions are called Rangers. This is where the rubber meets the road. To become a Ranger takes an orientation, interview, background check and training.

Open your land for CTO outings

Outings are held mostly on private land. We provide comprehensive liability protection for landowners. All outings are strictly supervised by highly trained staff and volunteers, and always respect full of every rancher's rules and wishes.



"Camo Sam" has become CTO's top recruiter, as he's featured on the front of our new local unit recruitment brochure.

Get involved in club leadership

The local CTO Ranger Council is comprised of volunteer leaders who help the Outfitter run the local unit. These are meaningful and rewarding jobs for those gifted in leadership and administration.

Introduce us to your church or group

Local Outfitters and Rangers, and Central Office staff, are always looking for opportunities to share the vision.

To plug in to CTO, contact your Outfitter or the Central Office today! ☎



Recently donated hunting rig

Local units need gear!

It takes lots of gear to do what we do. In every CTO unit, the Outfitters maintain a Gear Storehouse to ensure every volunteer and kid on every outing has what he needs to have a meaningful experience.

Lots of kids come to us with their own guns, bows, rods and reels, and such, and that's great. But lots of others either don't know what they need, or they simply can't afford it.

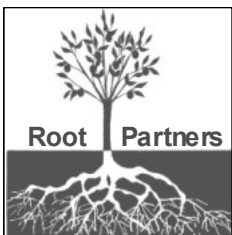
Also, outings require lots of core resources — tents, cook stoves, ice chests, trailers, hunting trucks, boats, lanterns, and so on — and we need to store up a large collection of quality items to outfit our trips for success.

BASSMASTER champion Jay Yelas has sent two huge shipments of fishing gear. Thank you, Jay!

We happily accept new and functional used gear, and always put it to good use. Gear donations are fully tax deductible. Can you help? ☎

Root Partners share the vision, share the need, share the blessings

CTO is supported and sustained by our Root Partners. These are people and organizations who share our vision, and who wish to become a part of the root system of the "fruitful tree" of CTO.



The Bible uses the picture of a fruit-bearing tree many times. It says we are called to bear fruit in this life, and spells out blessings for those of us who do ... and dire consequences for those of us who don't

Not all of us, however, have the

time or giftedness to work on the front lines. This is why we have ministries, so that we can fulfill our life's purpose by supporting those who are called to ministry. When we do this, we are serving as *roots* — an integral and indispensable part of a fruit-bearing ministry.

To our Root Partners, we pledge to continue to focus on the passionate pursuit of this powerful ministry, to keep you informed of the ministry's progress and ways you can be involved, and to pray for you continually.

Our Root Partners pledge to pray for our ministry regularly, and to provide nourishment in the form of tax-deductible monthly contributions. ☎

Contact CTO

Contact us anytime...to become a Central Office Root Partner, for more information about our organization, to get a copy of our financial reports and current prospectus, to find out about upcoming CTO Ultimate Summer Camps, to helping bring CTO to your community, to inquire about becoming an Outfitter, or for any other reason.

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