



DIRECT EFFECT

Young, flush, and engagé, a group of local philanthropists attend a swank sit-down dinner and discuss how to help Southwest Asia help itself.

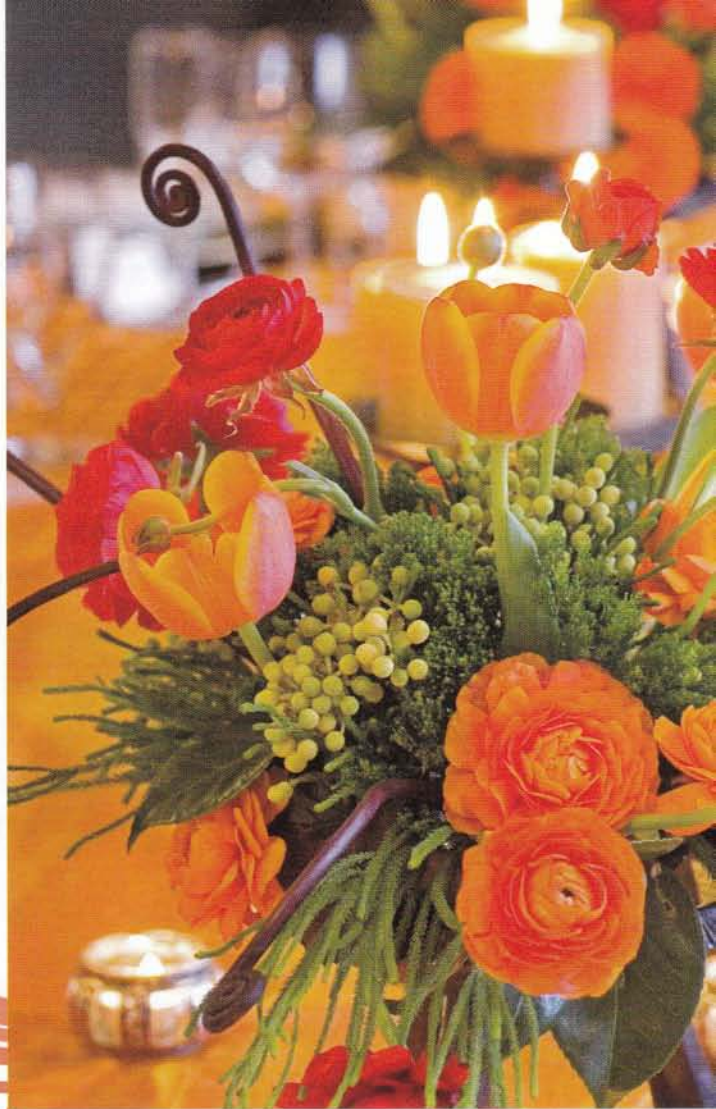
BY AMIEE WHITE BEAZLEY
PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICCARDO SAVI

In late March some of the Valley's most promising young philanthropists gathered at the Carbondale home of Silbi and Tim Stainton for the dynamic kickoff of Silbi Stainton's nonprofit, the Marshall Direct Fund (MDF). Stainton organized the fête with dynamic board member Estela Cockrell. The smart, sophisticated, and stylish group of fund- and awareness-raisers made for a colorful event with a significant global undertone.

Stainton, a 33-year-old mother of two, is among a growing group of young philanthropic leaders in the

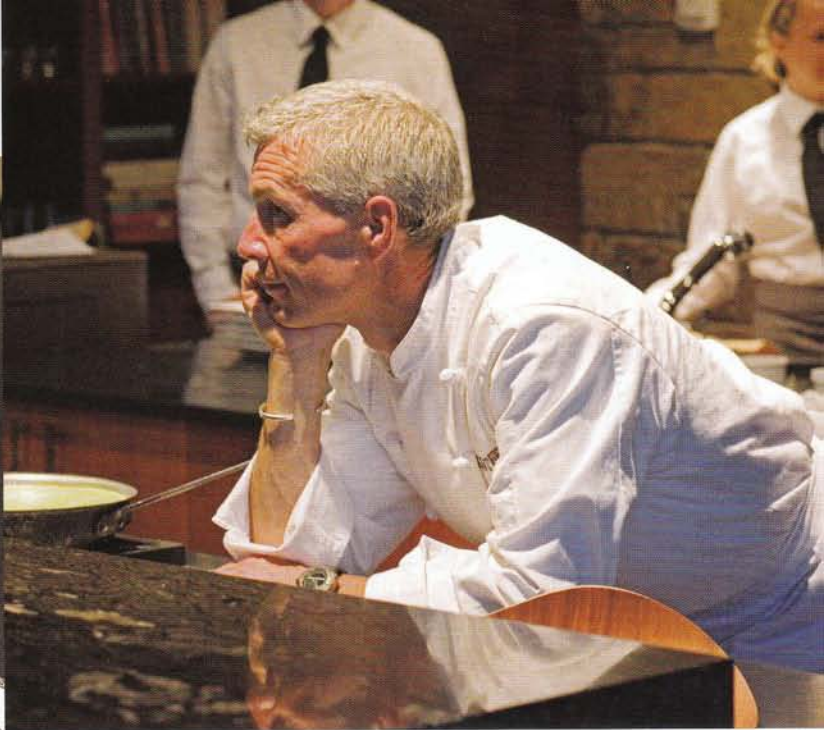
Aspen area. She sees the organization as a modern-day Marshall Plan for Southwest Asia funded by charitable donations. The MDF directly supports educational projects for children by building schools and providing seed money to aspiring entrepreneurs in the form of microloans.

"We truly live in a global society," says Stainton. "What happens in countries like Pakistan has an impact on our own society; the events of 9/11 proved that." The nonprofit is an outgrowth of her Master's work in Middle Eastern politics from



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Hosts Tim and Silbi Stainton; poppies were the evening's theme; Agha Imran Ali Khan, Estela Cockrell, and Silbi Stainton; a menu "fit for a diplomat"; poppy-infused cocktails; the program.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: Chef Mark Fischer; curried lentil soup; the cocktail reception; goat-cheese gnocchi with spring mushrooms and asparagus. OPPOSITE PAGE: Parmesan frico with herbed chevre.

Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts and her continued study of conflicts in the Middle East. “We’re a facilitator, matching the goodwill of the people here in the Valley with the goodwill of those people working for a better future in Pakistan,” says Stainton.

Draped in vibrant colors and filled with the sounds and smells of Southwest Asia, the Stainton home was transformed for the intimate dinner of 25 guests. Poppies were a theme of the evening, “a sign of beauty, something Pakistan and the region are at their core,” explains Stainton. Many of the MDF’s host committee members sat among the opulently arranged red and orange flowers from Aspen Branch. The committee includes well-known and emerging Aspen-area philanthropists such as Soledad and Bob Hurst, Blanca and Cavanaugh O’Leary,



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ABOVE: Silbi Stainton presents her vision for the Marshall Direct Fund. LEFT: David Cockrell, Peter Stainton, and Ron Speaker.

Heidi Zuckerman and Chris Jacobson, and Ron Speaker, Sue and Joe Kolbe, Kathy David Raife, Tracy and Bubba Egges, Alyssa and Ben Genshaft, and Holli Gunter Schaldach.

A dinner "fit for a diplomat" was prepared by distinguished chef Mark Fischer, owner of Restaurant Six89 and Phat Thai, who began the evening by serving poppy-infused vodka cocktails and hors d'oeuvres such as curried lentil soup. "We chose Mark because we're longtime fans of his," says Stainton. "He has local ties to the community and he has a heart of gold. I knew he'd be good, and his food can't be beat. Since it was the spring we decided to focus on spring food, with a little bit of Southwestern Asian fusion."

Dinner included goat-cheese gnocchi, spring mushrooms and asparagus; a main course of perfectly prepared roast Alaskan halibut with a parsnip-potato cake; and a final course of chocolate-dipped strawberries accompanied by poppyseed shortcake. "That was my shameless personal request for dessert," says Stainton. "I chose strawberries for spring and put the chocolate on them for me."

A dialogue on Pakistani politics, education, and the country's evolving relationship with the United States was a highlight of the evening. Key speaker Imran Ali Kahn, another member of the MDF's board of advisors and former protocol officer for the chief minister's secretariat in Pakistan, spoke at length about the need for education and financial initiatives in Pakistan, ideas that struck a chord with the group.

Stainton says her guests and the Aspen community at large have "some of the best business and philanthropic minds in the world. They're supporting the entrepreneurial efforts of the poor to stimulate economic opportunity in Pakistan."

This summer the MDF will host its annual fundraiser, "Mad Tea Party," on July 7 at Sole and Bob Hurst's home. The party, cohosted by Woody Creek resident Mary Scanlan, will feature samplings of the Valley's local teas and delicious Punjabi-style food.

"Our goal is to raise \$50,000, enough to build a school in Kirahi, Pakistan, a village outside Islamabad," says Stainton.

Marshall Direct Fund, 970-963-3150; marshalldirectfund.org

VENDORS

*Restaurant Six89, 970-963-6890; six89.com
Phat Thai, 970-963-7001; phatthai.com
Aspen Branch, 970-925-3791; aspenbranch.com*



The Marshall Direct Fund Board of Advisors

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- **Dr. Andrew Hess**, professor of diplomacy and director of the Southwest Asia and Islamic civilization program at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University
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Kathy Stainton, Amiee White Beazley,
Lisa Speaker, Silbi Stainton, and Emily Perry.