



BIG FISH

GOOD & DEEDS

Spearos everywhere share one thing in common. We are all crazed and we know it. Our obsession with the hunt is untamable. Big fish dominate our dreams, dictate our conversations, and break our hearts when we lose them. Why? Because we all know there is nothing more satisfying than landing a large pelagic or a personal best. Or is there?

Our world is often characterized by complexity and entropy, so we are drawn to rare perfect unions – when rainforest meets reef, a cold stubby touches parched lips, or a slip tip cracks through the cheek of a yellowtail with lethal accuracy.

In a quiet, meager town in Mexico I found the perfect union, thanks to the hard work, personal sacrifice, and fulfilled vision of Colleen Gallagher, world record holder and founder of Diving for a Cause (DFAC). Colleen has united her love of the sport with her desire to aid struggling communities around the world. More importantly, she has extended that opportunity to fellow divers.

Colleen leads eleven DFAC trips a year to countries including Greece, Panama, the Bahamas and Mexico. Each trip is strategically timed with seasonal fish runs – yellowtail kingfish, tuna, and billfish – the types of fish that would make your wife jealous if she knew how often you dream about them. All of the fish are donated to a local orphanage, providing months' worth of food to hungry kids.

"I first had the idea for DFAC when I witnessed a friend donate fish to a local he did not even know, and I realized then that spearfishermen have a wonderful gift

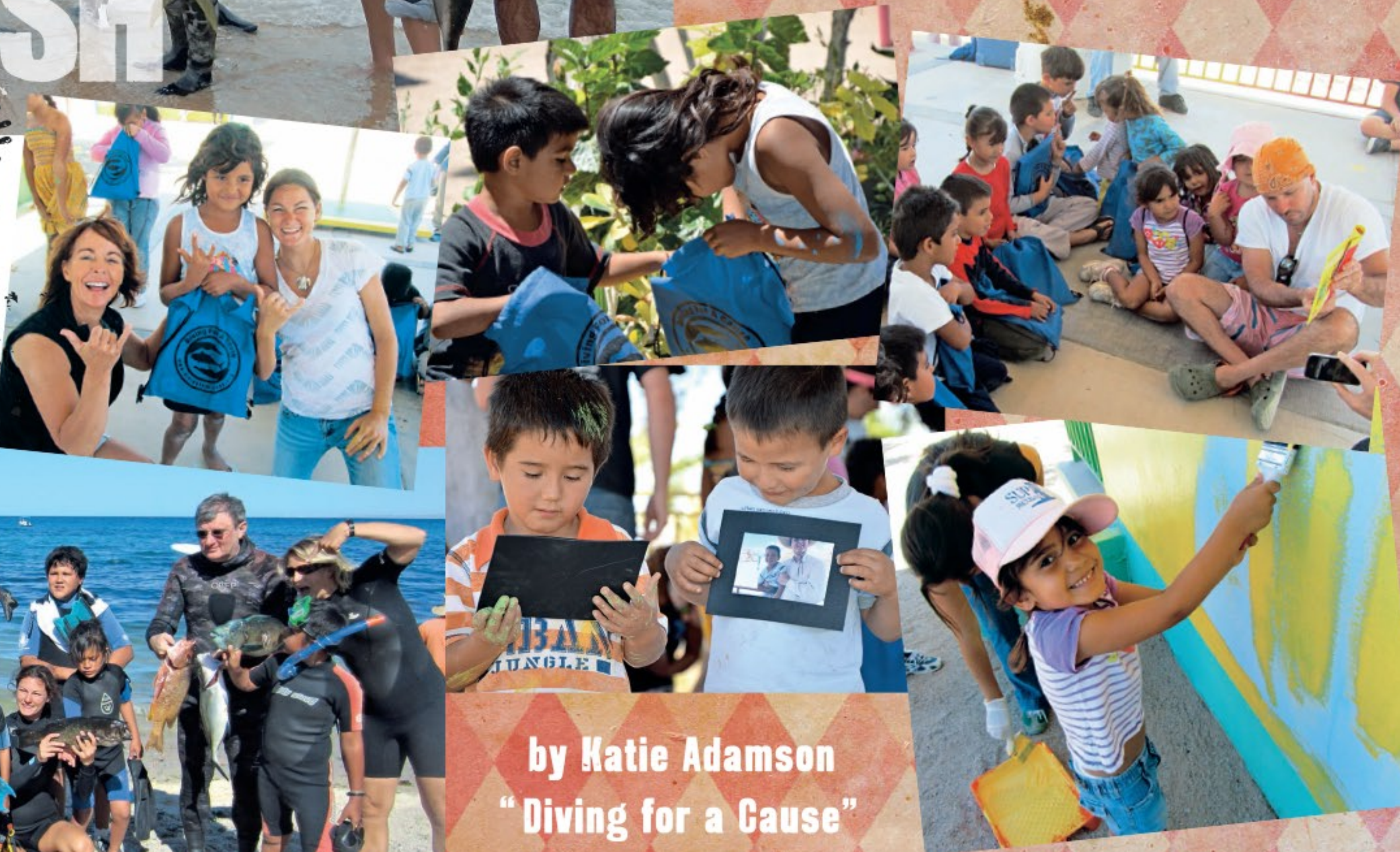
to share with so many in need. DFAC was formulated in La Paz at Palapas Ventana in July of 2010. Time was well spent with the children in La Ventana and so many fish were donated to those in need," said Gallagher.

"From that moment, one trip led to so many more opportunities of giving back with different divers on every journey. On one trip I saw a little boy using a nub of a pencil to complete his math homework and decided then that we would bring donated school supplies and backpacks to share with the children on every trip. The latest addition to our backpacks is early learning to read bilingual books in Spanish and English for children ages 5 to 7. The divers spend time reading in both languages with the curious little ones."

In April of this year, I went on my first trip with DFAC to La Paz, Mexico. The Sea of Cortez is full of life. From the air I could see the water boiling as we flew low over a giant bait ball that nourished innumerable predators. I couldn't help but wonder if it held some of our target species; first and foremost, the yellowtail kingfish.

I joined up with eight divers from four different countries, ranging in age by 40 years, and in experience by the same degree. The group was as diverse as the fish and just as fun too. We couldn't hide our restless trigger fingers; each diver as eager as the next to put food on the table.

Staring down the barrel of her handcrafted, newly christened 146 cm magnum Daryl Wong gun, with "Diving for a Cause" carved into the side, Colleen unleashed a perfectly timed kill shot and landed a 15kg



by Katie Adamson
"Diving for a Cause"



yellowtail. Like a loaded gun, teeming with potential energy, the team followed suit, knocking down half a dozen yellowtail and countless grouper, snapper, parrotfish and trevally (which taste great in these cold, nutrient rich waters).

In just six days, we were able to paint a school; provide 30 backpacks full of school supplies and toys to a local kindergarten; spend time reading in Spanish and English to the little kindergartners; leave 90 bilingual books in their hands; take orphaned children snorkeling and kayaking, many of whom had never been in the ocean before despite their close proximity to it; and stock the orphanage's freezer with over 75kg of fresh fish.

Mucho gracias to our generous hosts, Tim and Jimena, and to all the staff at Palapas Ventana for sharing in our vision, involving us in your community, and making the meanest chile rellenos around. Thank you Rob Torelli for your continued support in helping DFAC share our message.

If you are interested in joining DFAC on a future excursion visit the Web site at www.divingforacause.org to see a list of upcoming trips.

Diving for a Cause is a 501C3 non-profit organization. All trips are funded by the divers and by Colleen's generous out of pocket contributions. If you would like to donate funds or supplies to be directly distributed to children in the communities DFAC impacts, please contact Colleen Gallagher at colleen@divingforacause.org.

