



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF HOUSTON NAMES
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS STUDENTS GLOBAL AMBASSADORS**

Houston (Oct. 27, 2006) –The World Affairs Council of Houston recently named Center for International Studies students Raul David Avalos and Philippe Nassif as Global Ambassadors. The Global Ambassadors initiative for the 2006-2007 academic year was launched to bring some of the most outstanding college students to 6th-12th grade classrooms to speak about their experiences abroad. The goal of the program is to expand middle school and high school students' knowledge of world cultures through a first-person presentation. Avalos and Nassif were selected through a rigorous application process to ensure that the presentations are interesting and substantive.

"I'm grateful that UST has such a wonderful and extensive International Studies program," said Avalos. "The relationship between the student and their mentors is unique here at UST, as they have guided and helped us grow as individuals. I'm honored to have been given the opportunity to represent the Center for International Studies and the University of St. Thomas, while spreading global appreciation."

Avalos has traveled to Japan and Brazil and was the first UST student to live and study in Barcelona. He was there for the spring and summer 2005 sessions. Nassif has traveled to Europe, London and Lebanon.

"Philippe's and David's volunteer efforts as ambassadors for the schools in Houston are reflective of what is best about St. Thomas' International Studies students – their sense of service to the community," said Dr. Gustavo Wensjoe, director of the Center for International Studies.

Both students were recently featured on the educational outreach page of the World Affairs Council Web site. To learn more about the World Affairs Council of Houston go to <http://www.hwac.net/>.

Raul D. Avalos – A senior International Studies major at the University of St. Thomas, Raul, or David as he likes to be called, has studied and traveled throughout the globe. His travels began at the age of 16 when he was selected to be an ambassador for his home city of Huntsville, Texas for the Sister City Program in Japan. This introduction to traveling abroad opened his eyes and mind to the global community. During Raul’s last year in high school, he was awarded a scholarship from the Rotary International Exchange Student program to travel to Brazil. Staying for over a year with two separate host families, Raul was exposed to a way of life that he had only read about in National Geographic magazines. His most recent experience abroad was in 2005 when he studied in Barcelona, Spain for seven months. He hopes to share his experiences abroad with American students to encourage them to learn more about their world.

Philippe Nassif – A senior International Studies major at the University of St. Thomas, Philippe has traveled and lived in many interesting places. Growing up in New Orleans and Houston most of his youth, Philippe suddenly found himself packing up to move to London at the age of 11 after his father received notice of a job transfer. In London, Philippe attended the “American School of London” where he says most of the students were neither British nor American. On any given day, he could walk down the halls and hear dozens of different languages from all over the world. This multicultural experience profoundly changed his view of the world around him. He also traveled extensively throughout Europe and Asia while living in London – including Greece, Austria, Ukraine, Thailand, Dubai, and Caracas. In 2003 Philippe returned to the United States and began his college education. The next year he traveled to Lebanon for the summer to study Arabic and learn more about the place where his father and many relatives had left many years before. Here he learned many lessons, interacted with many locals, and will never forget the resiliency of what he describes as one of the most interesting places he has ever been.