

**From Schreyer Honors College
Pennsylvania State University**

Authors of Tunnel Kids Join Schreyer Scholars in Book Discussion

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UNIVERSITY PARK, PA— Distance proved not to be an obstacle when Maeve Hickey and Lawrence Taylor, authors of *Tunnel Kids*, traveled from Ireland to visit Penn State for an evening of discussion at the Schreyer Honors College.

Tunnel Kids is a 148-page documentary focusing on the Mexican children Taylor and Hickey met at *Mi Nueva Casa*, a halfway house creatively funded by American money and designed to provide academic lessons and meals to the children who live on the streets and in the drainage tunnel of Nogales, Mexico. The book focuses on the children's lives and adventures as they seek shelter in the drainage tunnels that cross the U.S./Mexico border.

Tunnel Kids was especially well received by a group of Schreyer Scholars who traveled to a U.S./Mexico border community as part of a course that helped aid a Mexican family. During spring semester 2001, members of this course studied and prepared a geographic field guide of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. In May, the group traveled to Ciudad Juarez to help build a home for a displaced Mexican family. While in Mexico, they interacted with the local children and bore witness to the harsh conditions of life in this border community.

When browsing the Web in late summer, author Lawrence Taylor noticed that *Tunnel Kids* appeared on the Schreyer Honors College's recommended summer reading list; he promptly contacted the SHC to acknowledge its inclusion on the list. After learning of Taylor's contact with the college, Jaclyn Walkowiak, a sophomore Schreyer Scholar who read the book and was a student participant in the Ciudad-Juarez course, e-mailed Taylor and invited him to join the SHC for a group discussion about his book and experiences. He accepted and along with his co-author, Hickey, joined a group of Schreyer Scholars to discuss *Tunnel Kids* and the children of Mexican border communities.

Walkowiak reflected on the program by stating, "I believe that Taylor and Hickey managed to illuminate the lives of the tunnel kids and provide a reflective atmosphere for the students so that they were able to sort through emotions, cultural concepts, and vastly different glimpses of reality." This was an extraordinary experience that allowed authors from Ireland and students from Penn State to come together in discussion of their common experiences with border community children; it also served as a learning opportunity for those students in attendance who had not traveled to Mexico.

Hickey and Taylor left Penn State after the discussion to return to Mexico to conduct further research. Hickey and Taylor have co-authored two additional books about Mexico and the U.S./Mexico border: *The Road to Mexico* and *Ambos Nogales: Intimate Portraits of the U.S./Mexico Border*. Hickey is an artist and photographer. Taylor is a writer and anthropologist who is Professor and Head of the Department of Anthropology in the National University of Ireland.