HelpArgentina honours social ambassadors

COURTESY HELPARGENTINA

Winners, members of the jury and Agustín Pichot, Cecilia Baccigalupo and Manuel Contepomi at Thursday night's annual HelpArgentina Social Ambassadors award ceremony in the Palacio San Martín.

HelpArgentina held its annual social ambassadors awards ceremony on Thursday night at the Palacio San Martín to honour volunteers abroad who gather donations for those in need in Argentina.

Agustina Blanco and Rubén Ángel Pensa were the winners of the "Contra Viento y Marea" award. Blanco was born in Argentina and has lived in the United States since 1990. Together with Constanza Nogueira, she started an educational reform programme in an impoverished, rural school in Las Lomitas in the province of Formosa.

Pensa is from Córdoba city and has been living in Neuchatel, Switzerland, for the past six years. He collects money for a children's soup kitchen in Santa Fe and hosts a wide range of activities promoting Argentine culture and traditions in order to raise money.

The winners in the "Social Leader" category were Hernán Silva and Mirian Ana Mansilla. Mansilla is from Santa Fe province and supports a soup kitchen for children there. In 2003 she held the first Tango Festival in Ferrara, Italy, in order to raise funds for her cause. Her non-profit organization can be visited at www.mateando.org.

Silva, the other award recipient, is Argentine, and has been living in Chicago for the past six years. Together with several other Argentines, he founded a non-profit organization that brings together Argentine professionals who donate their time and money to gathering funds for the construction and maintenance of schools in rural Argentina.

The winner of the "Compromiso Entre Dos Mundos" award was Father Liam Hayes, who is from Ireland. He spends half the year in Oberá, Misiones, Argentina. In 1989 he founded the Santa Teresa del Niño Jesús Home in the town, which cares for mentally disabled people abandoned by their families. He has since founded Virgen de Luján, which cares for elderly people abandoned by their families or who have nowhere to live.

For more information on this year's winners and HelpArgentina visit www.helpargentina.org.