

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

**2014**

**Peace Corps Belize**

***Community Health Education --***

***-- the road to a healthier Belize***



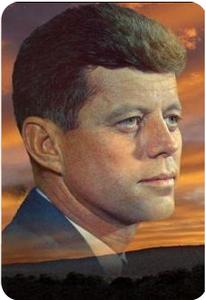
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*“Ask not what  
your country  
can do for you.  
Ask what you  
can do for your  
Country.”*

~John F. Kennedy~



## Mission and History

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy challenged a group of idealistic students at the University of Michigan to consider serving their country by living and working in developing countries. From that inspiration grew the Peace Corps, an organization whose purpose is to promote world peace and friendship.

While much has changed since the first group of volunteers served, the three goals of Peace Corps have not. These goals remain as relevant today as they were 53 years ago:

**Goal 1:** *Help people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.*

**Goal 2:** *Help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.*

**Goal 3:** *Help promote a better understanding of other people on the part of Americans.*

Over the past 53 years, nearly 220,000 volunteers have served in 140 countries, providing training in the areas of health, education, business, information technology, environment, agriculture, and youth development.

In 1962, the first group of Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in what was then British Honduras. Since then, more than 1,800 volunteers have served in Belize.



*First group of Peace Corps Volunteers arrive in Belize (British Honduras) in 1962.*



## A Farewell Message from our Country Director Nina D. Hernández

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I am immensely proud to present Peace Corps Belize's 2014 annual report and share results from our pivotal inaugural year. While this year marks our 52<sup>nd</sup> year of operations in Belize, it also happens to mark the one-year anniversary of the launch of the Rural Family Health Program and our first ever two-year Host Family Program. In many ways, this represents a new and exciting beginning for Peace Corps in Belize. We celebrate our milestones and reflect on how far we have come.

As we look to the future, we have never been more optimistic. Our first year has already shown us what is possible. We have always believed in the potential for building bridges of understanding and achieving successful and sustainable results through volunteer service. Today, more than at any other time in our program's history, we stand in partnership with the Government of Belize. In the upcoming year we will be expanding our health education and promotion work to Belize District and to Kriol communities. We will also strategically partner with the Ministry of Education exploring ways to support health education priorities in schools and maximizing the impact of the work of Peace Corps Volunteers.

For the first time we have begun implementing meaningful ways to assess the impact of our presence in Belize. The data on the pages that follow offer a transparent preliminary assessment of our reach. We will continue to strive towards holistic evaluation of our progress towards project goals and objectives, taking into account not only the outcomes, but also including the satisfaction of community members, partners and Peace Corps Volunteers alike.

Peace Corps strives to improve quality of life for Belizeans and the derivative of this effort is wide-ranging and resounding. At its core, Peace Corps is about people, human connections, and building capacity for long-term



*Country Director with GLOW Club members*

sustainable development. For community members it involves a process of mobilizing others to action and actively participating in development efforts for long-term gain. For the Peace Corps Volunteer two years of service offers a transformative experience inspiring unparalleled resilience and a powerful and life-changing perspective on the things that matter most. Peace Corps' principles are timeless.

As I personally mark this, my final year in Belize, I acknowledge all of the extraordinary people who have made this journey possible. I celebrate the Peace Corps Belize team, which is unmatched in its dedication and talent. I also honor the legions of Volunteers who have nobly served in Belize for over five decades. I also want to thank the many partners at the government and community levels who have worked alongside our Volunteers, helping to guide them and believing in their potential to contribute. Thank you to the representatives from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education for valuing the Peace Corps philosophy and its unique sustainable approach to development.

Thank you also to the amazing families across the country who have generously opened their homes and their hearts to Volunteers, especially to our current pioneering host families in Orange Walk, Cayo and Toledo districts who were the very first to receive Peace Corps Volunteers for two full years. Time and time again Volunteers have shared that they credit their host families for making their service in Belize unforgettable.

Unforgettable is the word I too will forever use to describe my own four year experience in beautiful Belize. I am proud to have served in one of the longest continuously running Peace Corps programs in the world. I celebrate our collective and cumulative successes knowing that our greatest impact lies ahead.

Nina Denise Hernández

Peace Corps Country Director

2010-2015





## The Rural Family Health Project

Peace Corps Volunteers in Belize work to support the goals of the Rural Family Health Project (RFHP). Launched in 2013, the RFHP is implemented in close collaboration with the Belizean Ministry of Health to address the country's priority areas of maternal and child health, and chronic non-communicable diseases.

The purpose of the RFHP is to support Belizean rural families in adopting positive behaviors to improve and maintain their health. Peace Corps Volunteers assist in the planning, coordination and implementation of health promotion, education and training activities alongside rural Community Health Workers and other community leaders. The project emphasizes behavior change and individual empowerment through carefully designed activities that target the following objectives:

- *Engage communities in participatory health education and promotion activities.*
- *Enhance the technical capacity of community health providers and partners.*
- *Empower mothers and caregivers to make positive maternal and child health choices.*
- *Foster positive individual lifestyle changes to prevent non-communicable diseases.*

September 2014 marked one year since the Rural Family Health Project was introduced in 31 rural communities all over Belize and although it has been just one year, the impacts are remarkable. Over 2,900 individuals have been educated on health topics and a total of 325 activities have been carried out by volunteers. Over 100 of these activities were conducted in conjunction with schools.

Volunteers work along with their community counterparts and community leaders. According to the 2014 Belize counterpart survey, 91% of counterparts indicated that PCVs will leave a lasting impact on their communities.



*CHWs and Volunteers work hand in hand to carry out Rural Family Health Project activities.*



Volunteer very comfortable at "home".

## Volunteer Life in Belize

Volunteers in Belize are placed primarily in rural communities with populations ranging from 250 to 3,500 people. These communities often lack paved roads, have limited transportation services, and may be without electricity or running water. Because Belize is a small country, Volunteers rarely live and work further than three hours (by public bus) from a larger town where services may be more accessible.

2014 marked the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the Host Family Program requiring volunteers to live with a Belizean host family for their entire 27-month tour. They are placed with a host family for eleven weeks of pre-service training at one of our Community-Based Training sites and with another host family once they begin their 2 - year service in their permanent site. The intended outcomes of the host family program are that Volunteers:

- *Become active participants in Belizean culture.*
- *Learn and practice one of three local Belizean languages (Spanish, Q'eqchi, or Kriol).*
- *Actively participate in village life and become full members of the communities in which they live.*
- *Enhance their safety through the establishment of a local support network.*

Volunteers understand that living with a host family means making personal lifestyle changes and they also recognize its many advantages. Volunteers learn the local language much faster through full immersion, learn experientially about Belizean culture, and are assisted by host families with integration into the community. Host families also provide Volunteers with invaluable advice and guidance related to safety. And ultimately, volunteers and their host families participate in a rich cultural exchange that furthers Peace Corps' goal of promoting world peace and understanding.

Accommodations with host families are modest but all Volunteers have their own room, bed, chair, and table to work on. Though each home will vary, volunteers share common living areas with host families. Volunteers leave behind a lifestyle of modern amenities and they understand that living with a host family requires an open mind, cultural sensitivity, patience, and flexibility. The rewards, they also realize, are immeasurable.



Volunteer's host home at Toledo, Belize.

# The Rural Family Health

Families will adopt positive behaviors and practices that contribute to the health of pregnant women and children.

## GOAL 1

**31** Peace Corps Volunteers serving in Belize



Belizeans educated on exclusive breastfeeding



Belizeans educated on **nutritional needs** of children from 12 – 59 months of age



Belizean women educated on essential **maternal care services**

Individuals educated on prevention of common childhood illnesses

**470**

**32** pregnant women trained on the importance of fruits and/or vegetables and proteins

**48** women educated on evidence-based weaning practices

**Maternal Neo-natal Child Health - focused Volunteer activities:**

- 87 activities targeted improved quality of child care
- 63 activities targeted healthy pregnancies, safe deliveries and health newborns
- 45 activities targeted improved nutritional status of children

# Project by the Numbers

Community members will be aware and reduce their level of exposure to common risk factors for non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

## GOAL 2



Individuals educated on the importance of daily physical activity

# 1,096

844

individuals reached with **NCD Education** and risk reduction

individuals participated in **cooking lessons** or demonstrations

128

70

individuals participated in household/community **garden session**

Community Health Workers and other work partners participated in **NCD training**

44

44

**Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases - focused Volunteer activities:**

- 98 activities targeted increased physical activity and healthy lifestyle
- 90 activities targeted increased knowledge of risk factor for CNCDs
- 79 activities targeted healthier eating habits to prevent CNCDs

## The Outcomes

# The Rural Family Health Project



\* Statistics presented in this report are for the period October 2013 – September 2014

**Total of 325 Rural Family Health Project activities:**

• 103 of these 325 activities were done in conjunction with schools

## Belizean Community Partners



**Work partners who indicated that the volunteer will leave lasting impact on their communities.**

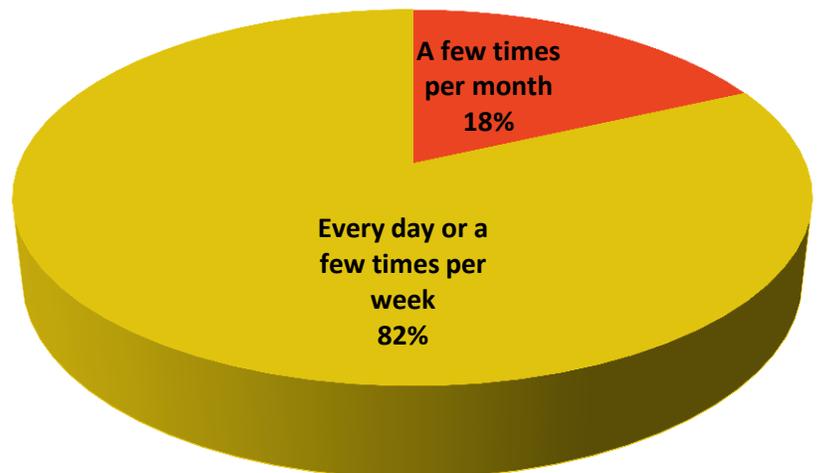
*"The hard work and efforts of the CHWs, and our partner, the Peace Corps volunteer is what led our community to have a functioning health center today."*  
 ~Rosita, CHW~

*"Hosting a Peace Corps volunteer taught me that although we are from different places and different cultures, we are people and there is no big difference with Americans and Belizeans."*  
 ~Alejandra, Host mom~

*"My community's first ever health fair, with over 500 people, was a success thanks to the support of the Peace Corps Volunteers."*  
 ~Noelia, CHW~

*"The village had a non-existing library until the Peace Corps volunteer arrived and now, thanks to her, it is a whole day functioning library"*  
 ~Brian, School Principal~

### How often do work partners and volunteers work together?





*My two mothers*

## Improving women's health

*By: Summer, Peace Corps Volunteer*

Over the past year I recognized the need for NCD education in our communities and decided to create an intervention program that was suitable for rural, village life. We realized that being overweight is a problem even in village life and this is mainly because most men dedicate themselves to farming and most women are housewives so there is little or no time for exercise. Therefore, we decided to create an 8-week diet and exercise program which allowed women in our villages to attend one educational session and two exercise sessions each week. In addition, they would monitor their dietary intake. The educational sessions focused on healthy eating habits, the Belizean food basket, NCDs, physical activity, and cooking lessons. The exercise classes included kickboxing, cardio, Pilates, yoga, Latin fitness, Zumba, and a sports day.

Before the initiation of the intervention, my Community Health Worker, Rosita, and I asked the village leadership for permission to institute the program; they willingly allowed us to use the Community Centre for our classes. We then gathered input from community members on what kind of exercise program they would want to see in the village. Women were asked of their availability, interest and preferences for diet and exercise lessons. With that feedback, we were able to host the classes that were of the most interest—Latin fitness and regular Cardio—and at times that were most appropriate for the women.

We had a great turn out of women because of door-to-door advertising campaign. We started with about 20 women, and consistently had about 8-10 come to every class! Originally, we had planned for the class to consist solely of women; however, since the program ran during summer vacation, we opened it up to children as well. We had two mother-daughter pairs that attended the program regularly, and one of our most successful participants was a ten year old girl who dropped from the overweight BMI category into the normal range!



*Ladies taking notes during educational session of 8-week diet and exercise program.*



*Volunteer taking Blood Pressure.*

At the start of the program, baseline measurements of height, weight, BMI, blood pressure, and arm and waist circumference were taken. Women were also asked to write one attainable goal they would like to achieve during the eight weeks. Some women stated goals such as, “I want to lose 10-15 pounds” and “I want to become more active and lose some of the stress that I have.” Throughout the duration of the program, weight measurements were taken weekly and arm and waist circumference were taken bi-weekly. Educational sessions and a higher intensity exercise session happened on Tuesdays and a class geared more toward strength training happened on Thursdays. Women were also encouraged to participate in self-directed exercise at least one day a week so that they would meet the health recommendations of 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week.

The women most enjoyed the cardio exercises and felt they were getting a better workout because they sweated more. They also expressed their interest in having the program three times per week as opposed to only two. I was elated to hear that and plan to host the program for three days in the next round of classes. In addition to the success of the exercises classes, the women really seemed to enjoy the educational sessions and thought they were beneficial. They’ve since told me that they are now using things like portion control and healthier eating habits in their daily routines!

Overall, the women seemed excited to participate in the program and to continue it. They expressed that they felt better about themselves, and it was also evident in their changes in weight, arm and waist circumference that they were making a difference in their health. One woman in particular told me that she saw a difference in her not only physically in appearance, but also in the way she felt emotionally; she was happier and more energetic. She also stated that she now felt good when riding her bicycle to the store, whereas before she would always feel tired; which showed that she can and was making a difference in her own well-being. For me, hearing that one story was enough to feel like I had been successful in implementing this program!



*Volunteer and CHW working together for an exercise program.*



*My work partner and I*

## GLOW Club in my community

*By: Doreen, Peace Corps Volunteer*

GLOW (Girls Leading Our World) Club is a global Peace Corps initiative that has been active in Belize for approximately 5 years. This year, nineteen girls in my community joined the club. The main purposes for GLOW Club are: to encourage young women to become active citizens by building their self-esteem and confidence, increasing their self-awareness, and developing their skills in goal setting, assertiveness, and career and life planning; and to give young girls the opportunity to develop leadership skills, increase knowledge, and make a difference in their communities.

My community is a rural agrarian village of Q'eqchi Mayans, most being subsistence farmers. It is a beautiful community, which boasts relics of Mayan ruins, old caves, and two beautiful rivers that wrap around the village and its jungles. However, in rural villages, men fill all higher and lower echelons of community and family leadership. Because of traditional concepts of gender roles, young girls were for a long time never encouraged or taught that they could excel in school, make conscious decisions not to get married at early ages, and grow to become active in their communities. Although that has changed to some degree over the last few years, girls still lag behind in school, drop out to get married in their early teens, and never get many opportunities to become leaders or active participants in civic engagements.

The vision for our GLOW Club seeks to: challenge girls to excel in primary school and continue their secondary and tertiary education, teach them to become more self-confident and self-reliant, and develop practical knowledge and skills that can allow them certain degrees of independence. Our current activities include: baking and healthy cooking classes, movie nights, a U.S pen-pal exchange program, public presentations at community gatherings, Girl2Woman health training, writing and reading improvement, public speaking, self-esteem building activities, sports, and cultural skills trainings.



*GLOW club members and volunteer during a GLOW club session.*



Dancing with my host sister

Over the next months, we plan to collaborate with the GLOW Club of another village on a chicken project and a Pigs Dig Education income generation project that will allow the girls to raise chicken and pigs and use generated funds towards their education. These pay-it-forward projects will require the girls to give back one small, female chicken and pig to the program, which will in turn be given to a new group of GLOW Club girls. In addition, an organization has agreed to fund a number of pig pens for the girls. Next summer, we will cap off our GLOW Club activity by hosting a 6 day leadership camp for 41 one girls from various communities around Belize. The camp will reinforce the aforementioned goals of GLOW Club and encourage the girls to lead healthier and productive lives.

At the end of the school year this June, one parent brought to our attention that she was going to pull her daughter out of school because the young girl was approaching 14. Traditionally, Mayan girls were pulled out of primary school before they turned 14 so that they could prepare for marriage and motherhood. My work partner spoke to the mother and encouraged her to reconsider keeping the girl in school because parents' commitment to allow their daughters to join the club was also a commitment to keep them in primary school. The mother reconsidered her decision and later registered her daughter for Standard VI. At the end of the summer, the mother was so impressed by how much progress the girl had made and told her husband that they should make plans to send her to high school next fall. Her parents continue to be supportive of her participation in all GLOW Club activities and projects and now look forward to her eventual enrolment in high school.

Through our activities, I hope my community will realize that the ethos and the fabric of its history, culture, and development are also reliant on women. If successful, we could move women from visibility to participation. The hope is for these girls to realize that their potential is not limited by their gender and that the words *girl* and *woman* are not only synonymous with *motherhood*; that they can indeed lead their worlds and that they do hold half the sky.



GLOW club girls making meat patties for fund raising activities.



CHWs Noelia and Darlene and myself

## Healthober Fest

*By: Celeste, Peace Corps Volunteer*

On Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, my village was treated to a day celebrating health and well-being. "Healthtober Fest" was co-organized by Noelia, Community Health Worker of my village. Noelia commented, "this is the first health fair of this size ever to be held in the village." Approximately 500 people were treated to free diabetes testing, blood pressure checks, PAP smears, and weight and obesity assessments. Being able to serve so many people would not have been possible if it were not for the hard work on the part of the Ministry of Health and Community Health Educator, Rose. In addition, there were additional Community Health Workers from the village and other villages nearby. The Public Health Nurse and Dental unit from the Belmopan Hospital gave their personal time to assist in making the day a success.

During the day long activities, the children were entertained by a fun, but educational activity area where all the games focused on healthy eating and exercise. Led by two Peace Corps Volunteers, the children engaged in many games throughout the day that were not only fun, but all the while incorporating exercise. Additionally, a hula hoop contest was enjoyed, not only by the children, but some adults who were daring enough to join in.

One of the things that made this health fair stand out from those prior health brigades in the village was the participation by many additional Non-Government Organizations, NGOs. The Belize Council for the Visually Impaired provided much needed services to 49 of the participants, including referrals to eye specialists for more complicated vision problems. In perfect timing for Breast Cancer Awareness month, was the Belmopan



Peace Corps staff and volunteers were present for assistance at Healthober Fest.



*CHW Adalia doing a presentation on proper hand washing.*

Cancer Society educating women and teens on life saving breast self-exams, as well as other female cancers that are preventable with early detection.

Along the same theme of prevention, the Belmopan Police Department, along with Crime Stoppers did an excellent job of informing the attendees on crime prevention, local trends in crime, and on personal safety and security. Personal safety and looking out for your neighbor is our responsibility in maintaining our community as a desirable place to live and work.

Anita from Central Farms provided valuable information on simple home gardening. In step with the theme of the Rural Family Health Project and the promotion of healthy eating, home gardens can provide families with healthy food alternatives at an affordable cost.

The Belmopan YMCA showcased some of their skills training programs for women and youth. With more than 30% of the teenage population in my village not attending High School, the opportunities the YMCA offers could be helpful for their futures. For example, the Cosmetology and Barber students provided nail painting and haircuts. Also present, La Immaculata Credit Union provided information to all concerning loan options for homes or small businesses, and how to save and plan for the future.

Was Healthtober Fest a success? I think that could best be judged by the number of people that came to us in the days following raving about the activities, and then following that by saying, “when will you be doing this again?” Stay tuned for, “Spring Fling!”



*Volunteer and Community Health worker working at a health center.*



With my host niece.

## Summer Football Tournament

**By: Patrick, Peace Corps Volunteer**

The boys played a tough game, tough enough that it came down to a shootout. Argentina against Brazil – winner takes third and loser is stuck in last until next year. Argentina was my team, and I stood next to them as they lined up to take their final shots for the season. Easily a hundred people gathered around the goal posts, waiting for the showdown. We all waited to see who would take home the third place trophy for the community’s first children’s summer league.

This past June the principal of a school in my community took the initiative to start a *futbol* league for boys ages eight to fourteen. He asked me if I would like to help him by coaching one of the teams – and I was excited for the opportunity. There was only one slight problem: I didn’t know a thing about this sport. Now I have played a lot of organized sports over my years, American football, basketball, baseball, lacrosse, swimming, golf, track and field. I like to think I had a pretty diverse sporting experience under my belt and yet I can honestly admit to knowing little to nothing about soccer (what people refer to as the “real” *futbol*). Yet here I was, taking up the mantle as a coach for a sport where my team would know more about the sport than I did.

Needless to say I was a little nervous when I walked into the first coaches meeting. We went over what we wanted to see from this initiative. We hoped to create an opportunity for individuals in the community to participate in this league for generations to come, something students will look forward to attending every summer. We sought to give students an outlet over the holidays and give them the opportunity to develop their own skills and promote good sportsmanship in the midst of healthy competition. It was our hope that *futbol* would become an alternative for students to develop interpersonal skills.

We developed rules and a schedule. Teams would practice on Mondays and Thursdays and the games would take place Saturday afternoons at the *Campo*. And so all the coaches shook hands and the league began this



Primary school boys’ football teams.



*With school children at playground that we worked together on.*

past July. The first practices – well, I’ll be honest, it was a rough. Most of these kids had only played pickup games and were used to just chasing the ball up and down the field in a chaotic frenzy. After a few practices things started to click, and as time went by the kids started to get it. I still couldn’t say I knew the sport inside and out (I had to have offside explained to me multiple times; Looking back I think the confusion was the result of the explanations being provided to me in Spanish rather than the concept itself, but so it goes).

And my true talents weren’t wrapped up so much in my understanding of the game but in getting the boys to work together as a team. They learned the drills I made for them, they helped lead the stretches with me, and they came to put the team before themselves. And it was great to be a part of it. We all worked together as a team and took the field looking to do our best. I was proud of them, and I was glad that they accepted me not only as their coach, but as a member of their team.

I missed the last few weeks of play, having a prior commitment and my two weeks back home. Another man in the community took over my job as coach while I was away. When I came back the team had somehow dropped to last in the standings. Real Madrid, who was in last, had won its last four games, and my team struggled when some of the teammates had family conflicts. None the less, I watched the boys warm up and was impressed with their improvement. They had gotten even better since I had left, and they were ready to go out there and give this last game of the season all they got.

Neither team scored in regulation, nor would they during the two overtime periods. It came to a shootout, and I had watched enough of the World Cup to know that this was essentially a game left up to luck. Argentina took the lead, 1-0. Brazil would not be stopped though. Both goalies scored on one another. Brazil then tied it up – and with the next kick they took the lead. Neither team scored again. Brazil won the shootout. Argentina, my team, came in last place the first year of league play. I was sad for the boys, but then as we walked across the field one of them turned to me and said “We’ll win it next year!”



*Infants at a school in a Q’eqchi community learn to brush their teeth during oral hygiene session.*



Pre-school graduation day.

## Pre-School Surprise! – A secondary Activity

*By: Audrey, Peace Corps Volunteer*

Part of being a Peace Corps Volunteer means that you try to help out your community in any way that you can, even if you are asked to do something you have never done before. I come from a background in critical care nursing and I was asked to help start a preschool in my village. Luckily, I too attended preschool almost twenty-three years ago! So, from my experience as a preschool attendee, I remember pretending to be the red Power Ranger every day, learning about the weather, never being taller than my friend Abbey, coloring with gigantic crayons, and getting into my first (and last) fight on the playground. Basically, I knew absolutely nothing about how to teach a group of rambunctious four-year-olds.

What I love about Peace Corps is that one of the main objectives is capacity building, which means that we, as Volunteers, will never be alone while working in our sites. My work partner for this venture is the librarian in the village, Wendy. She and I put our heads together last year to figure out our game plan for January. We held class from 08:30-11:00 Monday through Thursday in the library and focused on the basics such as coloring between the lines, sharing toys, and hand washing after eating a messy mango and before immediately picking up toys to play with. We also introduced colors, shapes, numbers, letters, and days of the week. As you can imagine, Wendy and I shared many laughs together from starting from scratch until the graduation ceremony. Our plan is to continue with preschool in September with the start of the Primary School.

I am grateful that apart from my primary project, I have time to devote to my community and host family in a variety of ways that I hope will have an ongoing impact, as I know my life has been forever impacted.



9 children graduated on Pre-school's first Graduation.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Who are the Peace Corps Volunteers and why do they choose to do this work?

Each year, thousands of Americans ages 18 and over, who are interested in public service abroad, apply to become Peace Corps Volunteers. One of the goals of the Peace Corps is to help the people of other countries gain a better understanding of Americans and our multicultural society. The agency actively recruits people with a variety of backgrounds and experiences to share with the communities where volunteers serve around the globe. Americans who sign up for Peace Corps undergo a competitive and extensive year-long application process. Peace Corps attracts idealistic individuals willing to share their technical experience with others and eager to learn about other cultures.

### What do volunteers do?

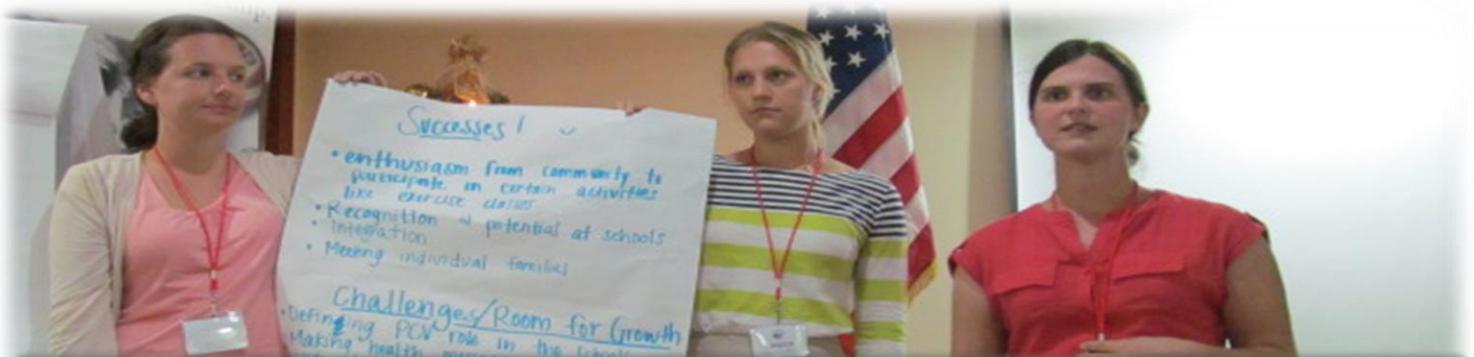
Volunteers are trainers, mentors and change agents who partner with others in rural communities to improve the health of Belizeans on a day to day basis. Volunteers help to identify priorities and to use their own strengths and learn new skills to achieve that change.

### Can volunteers help secure funding for projects?

Peace Corps differs from other aid groups in that it has a unique development philosophy focused on building capacity for long-term sustainability. Volunteers can help train others in the area of fundraising and grant writing, but the emphasis must be on equipping others with these skills to ensure that when the volunteer leaves, community members are able to carry out these activities independently.

### How can I apply for a volunteer?

Peace Corps will consider applications from involved and active community groups interested in working alongside a volunteer who can provide training and technical support for a period of 2 years. Only communities with a willing community health worker and/or school partner that meet the criteria set by Peace Corps will qualify. Volunteers do not provide financial support and they do not take the place of others to fill a job placement slot. If your community is interested in learning more, call Peace Corps Belize at 822-0340 or toll free 0800.Peace.BZ.



*Volunteer presenting successes and challenges during in-service-training.*

# Host Family Photos



*"This is what happens when my host brother, Dennis, completes his homework and we are both happy! Having a younger brother is new to me but so rewarding."*



*"Carolina and I, very excited to have some fun at a cultural day at my community, hear some traditional marimba music and learn about all the different cultures of Belize and maybe eat some tamales."*



*"I can tell I am fully part of my host family when I see my nephew – who couldn't walk nor talk when I arrived – running to me, shouting my name whenever he sees me."*



*"Living with my host family has been the anchor of my service. Without their support I would not be the volunteer I am."*



*"Coloring and doing homeworks with my host cousin Carla, makes every evening special for me."*



*"Having such a close and laughter filled relationship with my host dad was definitely unexpected. I constantly find myself reflecting on how conversations with Teol bring insight and humor into everyday of my service. Without this relationship I would not be having such a positive experience."*



*"Our Mestizo Culture day included an opportunity to do cultural dances with Belizean nationals. This was my opportunity to learn her cultural dance while introducing to her the American west swing dance moves that I was accustomed to."*



*"While living with host family the lessons that one learns both about oneself and the culture within which they are living can be among the most interesting and valuable parts of the Peace Corps experience."*



*"Learning how to make corn tortillas has been one of my best experiences with my host mom. I'm a pro now!"*



*"This is my youngest host brother with whom I enjoyed Belize's September celebrations. I love having younger host siblings. They can always make me laugh and never say no to some backyard soccer."*



*"Ahh my host parents! Got to love them! Especially on days when my host dad takes me to the field for half a day-with few breaks- and when we get back hom my host mom is waiting with a nice plate of 'caldo' - Q'eqchi soup."*



*"My host family are people who I have been able to rely on to help me navigate myself during my service. They are motivation and support to continue through the tough times."*

## Thank You Page

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A special note of thanks to the Peace Corps Belize Communications Committee who made this report possible. Thank you!

- **Doreen Ndishabandi**, Belize Peace Corps Volunteer
- **Patrick Wagner**, Belize Peace Corps Volunteer
- **Patrick Parkinson**, Belize Peace Corps Volunteer
- **Dora Najarro**, Executive Assistant/Quality Assurance Coordinator, Peace Corps Belize



*Peace Corps Volunteer, Country Desk Officer and school children.*



*Peace Corps Belize Team*

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