

# Annual Report

## 2016



**Peace  
Corps**  
BELIZE





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# Message from the Country Director

2016 has been an exceptional year for Peace Corps Belize and the Rural Family Health Project. For Volunteers, government and organizational collaborators, host families, communities, and Peace Corps staff, it was a year of learning, successes, challenges and opportunities. Health and Education Ministry counterparts and Peace Corps Belize Health (BH) Volunteers from cohorts BH2, BH3 and BH4 worked in tandem to educate thousands of Belizeans on critical health topics such as proper nutrition, prevention and treatment of diabetes and hypertension, daily physical activity, and essential maternal care.

Collaborative projects extended to and engaged Belizean communities and towns, domestic and international organizations, host families, and local businesses. These projects abounded in 2016 with the siting and building of latrines, planting and cultivation of vegetable gardens, renovation and launch of community libraries, and the development of GLOW (Girls Leading Our World) and BRO (Boys Reaching Out) youth development clubs and nationwide camps.

This year also marked Peace Corps Belize's 54<sup>th</sup> consecutive year working alongside the people of Belize—one of the longest continuously-running Peace Corps programs in the world. That longevity is a testament to the Peace Corps' commitment to the people of Belize. It is simultaneously a testament to Belizeans' camaraderie with Volunteers, by welcoming them with open arms, working collegially, offering warm hospitality, keeping them safe, and teaching them the cultures and languages of this great country.

This report is designed to provide an annual snapshot of Peace Corps' activities in Belize, including statistics and empirical data which chronicle the progress toward the goals of our formal and complementary projects, but also stories that connect each one of us with the personal experiences, challenges and triumphs that are inherent in the Peace Corps experience, for both Volunteer and community. Through this report, please take some time to get to know the many efforts underway, accomplishments made, and visions being molded into reality across all six districts of the country.

Finally, I would like to thank the extraordinary people who have welcomed me in my first full year here as the Peace Corps Country Director. There are truly far too many to name. I feel very fortunate to have received such a warm reception, supportive environment, and thoughtful guidance from Peace Corps staff, Volunteers, Ministry partners, host families, counterparts and communities alike. It has been a year of learning and of progress and I look forward to several more with all of you as, together, we continue to advance Peace Corps' mission of worldwide peace and friendship.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Melanie Emerson'.

Melanie Emerson  
Peace Corps Belize,  
Country Director





A map of Belize is shown on the left side of the page. The word "Timeline" is written in a large, bold, orange font across the center of the map. To the right of the map, there are two text boxes. The top box is titled "Our History in Belize" and contains a paragraph about the first group of Peace Corps Volunteers in 1962, followed by a bulleted list of their primary work areas: Education, Youth Development, Health, Small Business Development, and Environment. Below this is another paragraph about the Rural Family Health Project (RFHP) introduced in 2012. The bottom box is titled "Peace Corps Mission and History" and contains a paragraph about Senator John F. Kennedy's challenge in 1961, followed by a numbered list of three goals: 1. Help people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women. 2. Help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the people served. 3. Help promote a better understanding of other people on the part of Americans. The background of the page features a sunset over a tropical landscape with palm trees and a body of water.

## Timeline

**1962**— Belize receives its first group of Peace Corps Volunteers. These are assigned mainly to schools teaching English and to the Agricultural Department of Belize.

**1973-1979**— Peace Corps Volunteers are assigned to different organizations in Belize assisting with projects involving marine biology, veterinary labs, English education, special education, engineering, construction, agronomy, and radio and telecommunications.

**1981-1983**— Peace Corps Volunteers work with primary schools on the Rural Education and Agriculture Program (REAP).

**1984**— Belize High School of Agriculture opens in Orange Walk District. A Peace Corps Volunteer secures a grant from USAID to assist with the opening of the school and serves as a teacher there for two years.

**1996-1998**— A Peace Corps Volunteer helps create environmental programs that help Belize to manage natural areas such as Guanacaste National Park, Crooked Wild Tree Life Sanctuary and The Green Iguana Conservation Project.

**2000**— Peace Corps Volunteers assist with the launching of computer labs in high schools. They work with Belizean counterparts and develop IT training curriculum for teachers.

**2006-2010**— Peace Corps Volunteers are assigned to different organizations and rural communities focusing on 4 main projects— Health, Education, Youth Development and Organization and Business Development.

**2012**— Peace Corps Belize bypasses its training class to revise its programs and signs a Memorandum of Understanding with Belize's Ministry of Health to focus primarily on rural community health education.

**2012**— Peace Corps introduces the homestay program in which Volunteers are required to live with host families for their 27-month service.

**2013**— The first group of Peace Corps Belize Health Volunteers commence their service in Belize under the Rural Family Health Project.

**2015**— The first group of Peace Corps Belize Health Volunteers Close their service very successfully.

**2016**— The fourth group of Peace Corps Health Volunteers commenced their service on September 2016

## Our History in Belize

In 1962, the first group of Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in what was then British Honduras. Since then, more than 2,000 Volunteers have served in Belize. They have worked primarily in:

- Education
- Youth Development
- Health
- Small Business Development
- Environment

Volunteers have been assigned to multiple NGOs, government organizations, schools, businesses and communities to improve the quality of life of Belizeans.

In 2012 Peace Corps Belize introduced its Rural Family Health Project (RFHP) in close collaboration with Belize's Ministry of Health (MOH), focusing mainly on health education in rural communities. Since the RFHP was launched a total of 70 Volunteers have served in 59 rural communities in all districts of Belize. Peace Corps works closely with the Ministry of Health and is currently seeking opportunities to expand its activities to meet Ministry of Education (MOE) priorities as well.

## Peace Corps Mission and History

In 1961, Senator 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 54 years ago:

1. *Help people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.*
2. *Help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the people served.*
3. *Help promote a better understanding of other people on the part of Americans.*

Over the past 54 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.



# Our Rural Family Health Project (RFHP)

Launched in 2013, the Rural Family Health Project (RFHP) is implemented in close collaboration with the Belizean Ministry of Health to address the country's priority areas of maternal, neonatal 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. In order to implement behavior changing interventions in their communities, Peace Corps Volunteers work along with their main counterparts (Community Health Workers and school educators) as well as with village leaders, Rural Health Nurses and MOH District Health Educators to plan, coordinate and implement health promotion, education and training activities. September 2016 marked 3 years since the RFHP was introduced. In the past year alone, over 6,000 Belizeans in rural communities across the country have attended educational sessions on topics aimed at improving and maintaining their health.



**In 2016, over 6,000 individuals in rural communities across Belize have been reached with education on topics aimed at improving and maintaining their health."**

- Gian Cho, Program Manager, Peace Corps Belize

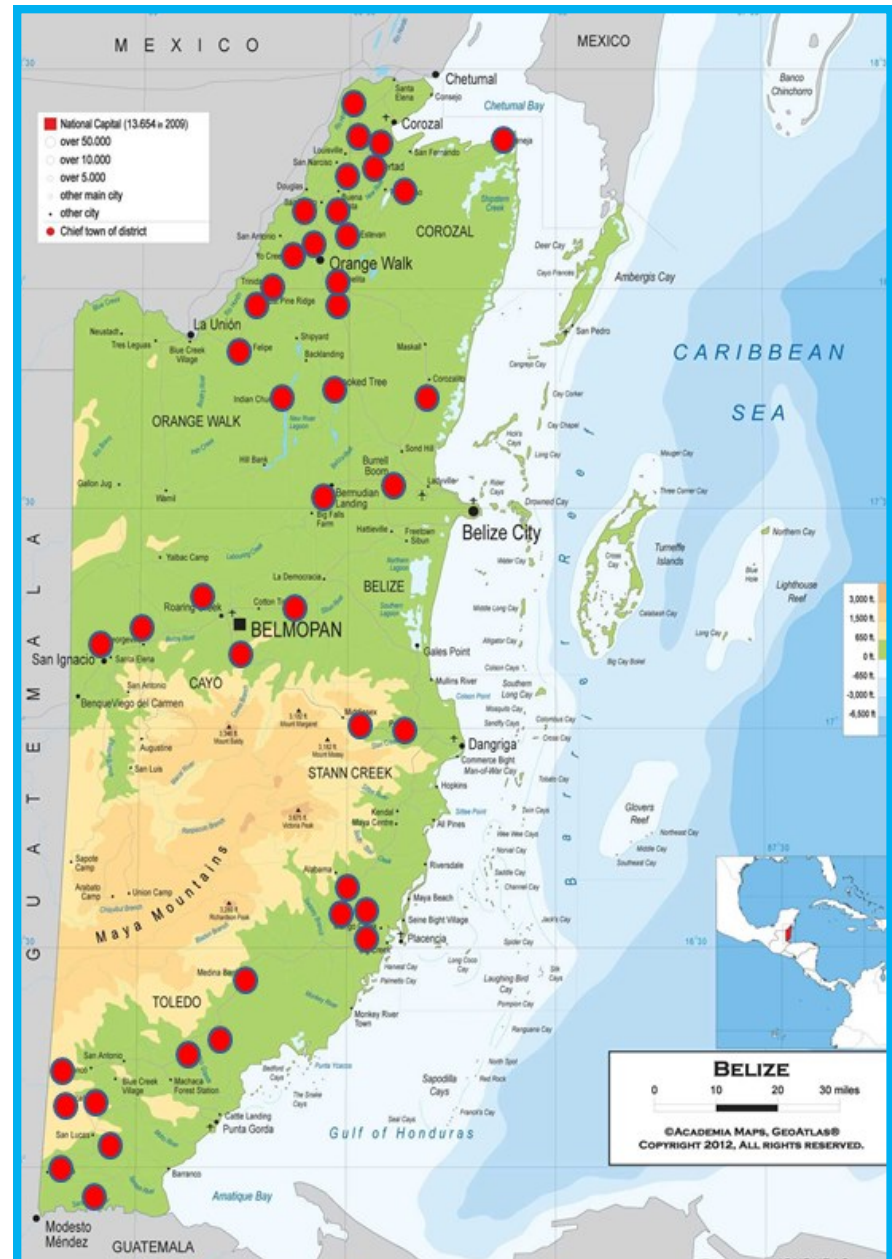




# Volunteer Placement

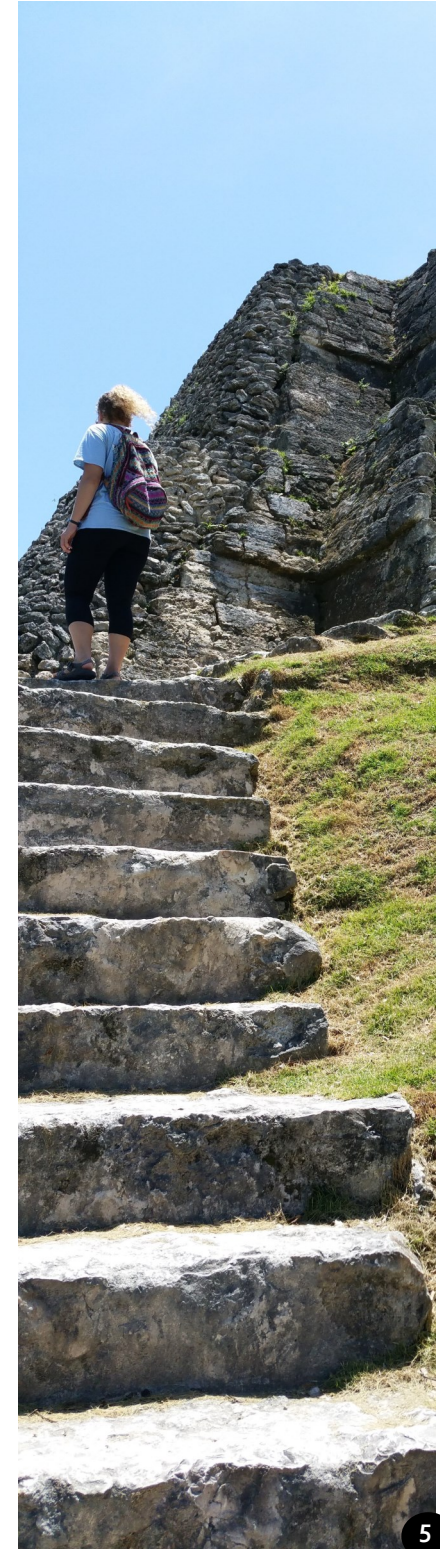
In close collaboration with Belize's MOE and MOH, Peace Corps Belize undertakes a rigorous process every year to select rural communities to host a new group of incoming Volunteers. This process involves a series of meetings between Peace Corps staff and ministry officials, village leaders, prospective counterparts, other community members and currently serving Volunteers to gauge buy-in, discuss needs, select host families, and develop plans for working with the incoming Volunteers.

Peace Corps decides which of the interested communities will receive Volunteers based on factors such as safety and security, language, community needs, host family availability and counterpart interest. In 2016, Volunteers lived and worked in 42 Belizean villages of predominantly Q'eqchi, Kriol or Mestizo culture. Since 2013, over 50 communities in all six districts have benefitted from the RFHP.



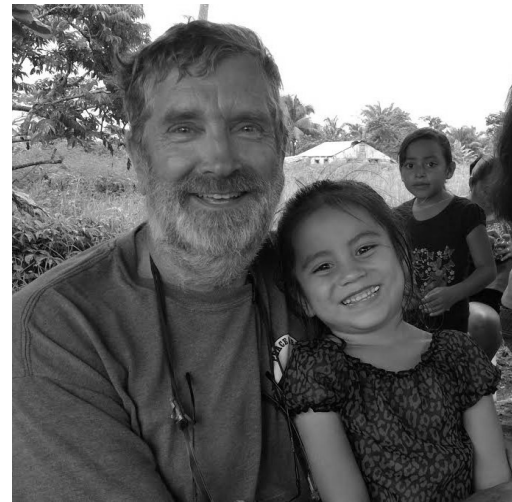
In 2016, Volunteers lived and worked in 42 villages across Belize of predominantly Q'eqchi, Kriol or Mestizo culture.





“ Peace Corps helps promote global acceptance of the principals of international peace and non-violent co-existence among people of diverse cultures and systems of government.”

- Sam Farr, US Congressman & RPCV (Colombia)





# Volunteers' Life in Belize

Volunteers in Belize are placed in rural communities with populations ranging from 250 to 4,000 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 farther than three hours (by public bus) from a larger town where services may be more accessible.

Initially, Volunteers are placed with a host family for twelve weeks of Pre-Service Training (PST) at one of our Community-Based Training sites. Then they live with another host family once they begin their two-year service in their permanent sites.

Volunteers learn one of three local Belizean languages; Kriol, Q'eqchi or Spanish. Formal language training continues throughout the 12-week Pre-Service Training, but Volunteers augment their learning through daily interactions with their host families and community members. Throughout PST, the host family assists the Volunteer with language learning, community integration and with adaptation to the intricacies and nuances of Belizean culture. Living with host families also enhances the Volunteers' security, as host families provide Volunteers with invaluable advice and guidance related to safety and cultural norms.

While each Belizean household is different, all Volunteer accommodations with host families are modest. Volunteers share common living areas with host families but each Volunteer has a private room, a bed, a chair and a table to work on. By coming to live in a rural village all Volunteers leave behind an accustomed lifestyle and understand that living with a host family in Belize requires an open mind, cultural sensitivity, patience, and flexibility. The rewards, they also realize, are immeasurable.

Besides adopting a different lifestyle, Volunteers also learn to work with Belizean counterparts throughout their service. In their villages, they work with Community Health Workers, Rural Health Nurses, school principals, teachers, village councils, youth groups leaders and churches, among others. Volunteers develop strong alliances with these counterparts and carry out their activities and projects collaboratively. Ultimately, Volunteers engage with Belizeans in a rich cultural exchange which furthers Peace Corps' goal of promoting world peace and friendship.





# Living with Host Families

In 2013, Belize launched the 27-month Homestay Program for all incoming Volunteers. This program requires each Volunteer to live with a host family (HF), throughout the two-year term of service. The 27-month Homestay Program was an integral part of the Volunteer support initiative which was developed to improve Volunteer safety, identify host sites and integrate Volunteers into their assigned communities. The intended outcomes of the host family program are that Volunteers:

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

Peace Corps Belize is now in its fourth year of the Homestay Program. The Homestay Program has yielded excellent results, particularly in the area of Volunteer safety. While crime against Volunteers has not been completely eliminated, there has been a significant reduction in the numbers of reported crimes, with the Homestay Program being a strong contributing factor.

In addition to improved safety, the Homestay Program has resulted in stronger networks allowing for increased opportunities for integration, cultural exchange, language proficiency and friendship building. Since the implementation of this program we have made significant advances in achieving the second and third goals of Peace Corps. Peace Corps Belize continues to refine the Program to ensure success for Volunteers, host families, counterparts and communities-at-large.





# The Rural Family Health Project by the numbers

## IMPROVING MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

### RFHP Goal 1



317

women were reached on essential maternal care services

167



adults were trained on Belize Ministry of Health's Family Planning Methodologies



394

individuals reached on prevention of common childhood illnesses

289

individuals reached on the nutritional needs of young children from 12 months to under 5 years old

130

individuals reached on evidenced-based complementary feeding practices for infants 6 - 11 months old

88

individuals were able to identify at least 4 local foods that provide essential nutrients needed during childhood for good child development

53

individuals adopting one or more new behavior(s) to reduce the risk of malnutrition in children under 5 years of age

32

individuals adopting at least 3 new practices to reduce the risk of diarrheal disease in children



239

individuals reached on benefits of exclusive breastfeeding



60

pregnant women were trained on the importance of having at least 3 servings of fruits and vegetables and 1 protein/animal source of food



98

women were able to identify at least 4 or more warning signs indicating the need to seek immediate care with a healthcare provider during pregnancy

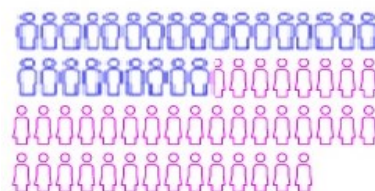


134

out of 290 individuals demonstrated how to prepare a nutritious meal with locally available and affordable foodstuffs

35

out of 51 individuals demonstrated ability to prepare safe and nutritious complementary foods



■ Males (40%) ■ Females (60%)

65

infants were reported to have been exclusively breastfed

346

individuals were able to demonstrate proper handwashing



# REDUCING THE RISK OF CHRONIC NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

## RFHP Goal 2

2172

individuals educated on non-communicable diseases and risk factor reduction



Men (32.18%) Women (44.94%) Children (22.88%)



individuals by age

0-9 (17.38%) 10-19 (63.99%) 20+ (18.63%)

1122

individuals were able to identify the four behaviors that contribute most to the development of non-communicable diseases



individuals were reached on how to incorporate physical activity in their daily routine



65

individuals have reported benefiting from community/household gardens

468

individuals were able to identify 2 or more ways to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives



90%

10%

individuals surveyed



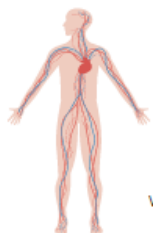
106

individuals participated in at least one household/community garden training session



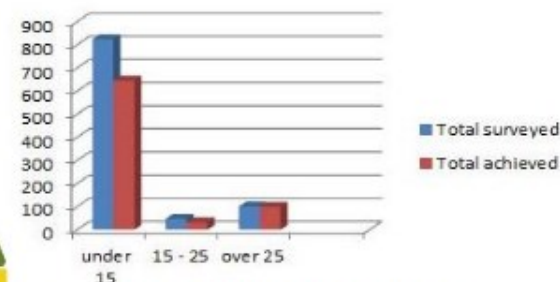
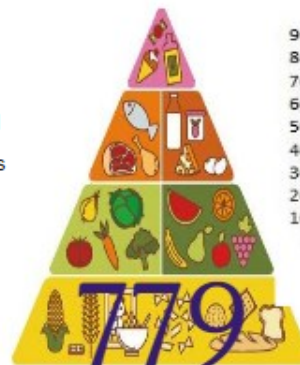
males (28.67%) females (71.33%)

individuals participated in Volunteer/partner supported cooking lesson or demonstrations



34

Community Health Workers and other work partners report delivering at least one educational session in their communities in which two or more NCD risk factors are covered



779 out of 974 individuals were able to identify 5 out of 7 food groups of the Belizean food basket



27

Community Health Workers attended a prevention of NCD workshop







# From our Belizean Counterparts

Throughout their service, Volunteers do not work alone; rather, they work very closely with Belizean counterparts such as Community Health Workers. The MOH, in collaboration with village leaders, identifies and trains Community Health Workers who are Volunteers themselves and who work closely with Rural Health Nurses, District Health Educators and Peace Corps Volunteers. Together they plan and carry out various activities promoting healthy living with a special emphasis on maternal and child health and chronic non-communicable diseases (CNCD), as per the goals of the RFHP. Some of these activities include: community health fairs, home visits, CNCD open houses and educational sessions, physical fitness programs, lessons on maintaining healthy pregnancies, sessions covering childhood malnutrition, sanitation and hygiene programs, and community or household gardens.

Volunteers also work extensively in the local primary schools. In the schools, they work closely with the school principals, vice principals and teachers. Together they work to educate children on health-related topics, including nutrition, physical fitness and hygiene by co-teaching the Belize Health Curriculum with classroom teachers.



Peace Corps Volunteers are resourceful, energetic, and well-intentioned individuals who come willing and able to help communities advance along the path of healthier life styles and social development. Along this process new relationships and new bonds of friendship develop which I believe are key elements for a better and more peaceful world.”

- Dr. Ramon Figueroa, Chief Executive Officer,  
Ministry of Health, Belize

Besides their primary projects with Community Health Workers and schools, Volunteers also work with their many counterparts on secondary projects that benefit the community. Some work with the elected village officials, youth leaders or women’s group leaders on activities such as starting up pre-schools, re-vamping libraries, developing literacy programs, involving youth in constructive activities, organizing summer camps for children, starting healthy gardens and re-modeling buildings to create entrepreneurial spaces for women to sell handicrafts or other products.

Counterparts play a central role in the lives of Volunteers during their service. While Volunteers share their expertise with counterparts and help to train them in technical aspects of their work, counterparts similarly share their knowledge, skills and experience with Volunteers, providing invaluable assistance in navigating the many cultural differences between their home and host countries. Counterparts and Volunteers leave long-lasting impacts on each other’s lives and on the lives of the people they serve.





# Exciting Successes from the RFHP

## The work we do...

— Sarah P.

Towards the end of February, I started a workout group. Approximately five to six women came initially. Using a tape measure and scale, I took their initial measurements and weight. I also started tracking their attendance for each meeting. We meet four times a week for an hour at the community center or on a nearby hill and do a mixture of different exercise videos, cardio, and bodyweight exercises. We mainly focus on bootcamp/HIIT style exercises and hill workouts.

Through our sessions, I emphasize the importance of proper hydration, fruits and vegetables, other aspects of healthy eating, the difference between fat and muscle, and the impact of fat/lack of exercise on our overall physical and mental health. I also provide different pieces of motivation, one of which is a picture of what five pounds of fat look like. Over time the group has increased in size to about 13-14 women. Whenever a person joins, I take their initial measurements so that after a period of consistency, they can see with numbers, apart from the number on a scale, how they've changed and where they've changed. I also emphasize that the number on a scale is not always indicative of change.

There are a few dedicated women whose measurements and weight I've been taking for over two months of participation. Two women in particular had lost more than a total of 10 inches but had not lost any weight according to the scale. Both reported feeling smaller, fitting into their clothes better, and now feeling even more motivated. Their success was contagious as other women present felt more motivation from their success. I am hoping that through the example of these two women and changes seen in myself that the other women of the workout group and anyone else who decides to join in the future will be motivated to attend and keep up the healthy practices.



## The people we work with...

— Grace H.

A major health issue I noticed in my village was the amount of garbage and litter the ground.

Garbage was not only found on the main road of the village, but also in the nearby creek and river, which act as the main water source for our village. With the help of visiting students from a Utah university and the creative talents of GLOW (Girls Leading Our World) club girls, the Aguacate Village Health Committee and I set up several garbage bins and signs along the main road of the village to be easily accessible for the community. In order to promote our waste management project, we also hosted an environmental health fair during Earth Day to encourage children and parents to utilize the bins.

## The conversations we have...

— Anna M.

This past month I was invited to help a group of women prepare *Caldo chilan* (local chicken soup) for a group of men who were going to the farm to plant. Ten of us women were all sitting in a circle as we plucked the feathers and began cutting up the chicken. One of them asked me what "Sweet Blood" was and how you get it. It opened up a great question and answer session about diabetes and hypertension among the women. Most of them didn't know that it was preventable or that the body converts tortillas into sugar. The women were engaged and asked so many questions. This was one of the best health education opportunities I have had in my community, and it happened so informally and by accident!





## The impact we make...

— Daniel G.

When I first arrived in my village two years ago, only about half of the village homes had a functional latrine and many of the existing latrines were in much need of renovation. Many of these families had toilets that were built with wooden floors that had rotted, and families without toilets went into the forest around the homes to use the bathroom. This led to obvious health risks.

After my arrival, community health worker, Emiliano, and I went to each house to meet families and ask what their community needed. Many people indicated they wanted functioning latrines, so Emiliano and I sat down to discuss how we could make this happen.

After talking with Peace Corps Belize staff and community leaders, the village created Ac Yuam (New Life) Development Project, a group to raise money for the latrine construction project. We wouldn't just hand out materials, however; residents would have to work in order to get their toilets.

From the beginning, Emiliano and I agreed that the project needed to be based around education sessions, including the importance of latrines, the hazards of diarrheal-related illnesses and how to build and maintain a latrine. To receive the materials for a toilet, families would first have to attend these sessions.

We initially focused on the 35 families without functioning toilets, after which village leaders made it clear they wanted everyone to have the opportunity to attend education sessions and receive materials for a toilet. Another 24 families were able to participate in the project thanks to the support of their community.

As I begin closing out my service, I am happy to say that 59 families have participated in this project and received materials to build their latrines. As of this writing, 31 toilets have already been constructed. Before I left my village, it was important to speak with leaders and ensure the sustainability of the project. I'm confident the remaining toilets will be built.



## The changes we see...

— Megan G.

Throughout the month of November my Community Health Worker (CHW) and I worked with the teachers to teach the students how to brush their teeth. We managed to find enough donated toothbrushes and toothpaste so that each child has his/her own set, and we have been practicing in each class up to Standard II. Now that the students have their supplies, the younger students have been brushing their teeth every day when they come back from lunch break! Soon this will be a practice school-wide. What started out with one lesson from my CHW and me has turned into a successful daily health routine!

## The events we engage in...

— Chase B.

After a random late night, I began to discuss my ideas about a village event with counterparts to educate the children of my village on non-communicable diseases (NCD's). The event idea was to somehow uniquely engage primary school students and them ultimately benefiting with an increase of knowledge. The solution we came up with... have them compete! There are four major NCD's that are prevalent in all six districts of Belize: Cardiovascular, Chronic Respiratory, Cancers, and Diabetes. Each of the four upper level classes that were selected to participate, were assigned one of the four major NCD's. Included in their assignment, was to develop a creative presentation as a class to cover sub-topics for their assigned NCD such as: prevention, risk factors, danger/warning signs, and treatment.

For a solid month, I was in and out of each class during their scheduled health class periods to assist them in any way possible. After each class had completed their beautiful posters and their creative presentations they were then judged on who had the most correct information, best public speaking, most creativity, presentation management and organization. Oh yeah, I forgot to mention what the prize was for the winning class— a field trip to the Belize Zoo!

It was time for the big day and with the collaboration between local counterparts, fellow Volunteers and myself this health educational event was successfully planned and implemented at the village primary school. The event included the participation of the entire school— 450 students. The classes rotated their presentations and fellow Volunteers led educational games/activities that correspond to each of the four major NCD's that had been targeted. After the long day of presentations a class winner was announced for best overall presentation... Cardiovascular!





# Other Exciting Successes

## The summers we have...

— Fata N.

As a health Volunteer, I find myself doing several education projects, and this summer was no different. With not much going on in the summer, and understanding the education need in my community, my counterpart and I decided to start summer classes. Small project, we thought, after conducting a community survey to gage the interest of the community, we realized that this project would consume our entire summer.

The classes were divided into different grade level; Infant I & II on one day, Standard I & II, Standard III & IV and Standard V & VI. The classes were composed of an hour of language arts and an hour of math. These classes have been one of the most lessons learning experience of my Peace Corps career this far. Patience is something I thought I had, but realized that I needed more, especially teaching infants. I had to constantly remind myself that although I found the topics I was teaching easy, it was not as easy for my students. Seeing how excited they were to learn motivated me to try harder and look for more resources to teach. I did not fully comprehend the impact until school started. Listening to students give answer to topics they have not cover in class and attributing that to the summer class made me proud. The infant teachers have told me on several occasions how well the kids learn in summer. It is amazing to see these young kids excited about education.



## The questions we answer...

— Tiffany S.

When I arrived at my site my host family asked me where I was from originally. I ignored the fact that they were really asking, "From which country in Africa is your family?", because they weren't the first people here to ask me that. Because my family has been in Alabama for over 200 years and we haven't been able to trace back to a particular country in Africa yet and because my host family had been referring to the U.S.A. as "the States", I answered that I was from "the States". They then asked if I was from California and I answered, "No, that's a different state; I'm from Alabama". This confused them because even though they used "the States" to refer to the U.S.A., they didn't understand what states actually were. I pulled up a map that I saved on my phone and I pulled a dollar bill out of my wallet. I showed them the 48 continental states, explained why they start small in the east and get larger as you move west. I explained the process to statehood and then showed them "E Pluribus Unum" on the dollar bill and explained "out of many one". I said that even though we struggle with it frequently, we as a country pride ourselves on the parts that make the whole. Whether we're talking about states or people, our many differences and experiences come together to create a stronger and better country. In the end it took comparing our states to districts here in Belize but they understood. Sometimes they still talk about my "country" Alabama and it makes me smile, it reminds me of people back home who say that visiting Alabama is like visiting a different country, but my host family members usually catch themselves and correct their mistake before I can get to it.





# Recipes from the Field



**Belizean Salbutes**

- 2 lbs masa (corn dough)
- 1 1-inch cube red recado
- 1 lb stewed boneless chicken breast—shredded
- 1 head lettuce (or cabbage), chopped
- 1 lb tomato
- 1 lb yellow onions
- Limes
- Habanero peppers
- 1 medium green pepper
- 1 bunch cilantro
- Cooking oil
- Salt

Masa Tortillas: mix together masa (corn dough), recado and salt to taste. Using a tortilla maker and clear plastic make tortillas and fry them in hot cooking oil.

## Toppings:

Pickled onions: dice  $\frac{3}{4}$  pound yellow onions and place in container. Add water to slightly cover the onions, then add lime juice, salt and (if you're daring) sliced habanero peppers to taste.

Tomatoes: Slice  $\frac{3}{4}$  pound of the tomatoes.

Cabbage/Lettuce: chop cabbage or lettuce and add a bit of lime juice and a pinch of salt to taste.

Sauce: Put remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  pound of tomatoes to remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  pound of onion and cilantro, green pepper, one habanero, salt and black pepper to taste, and the juice of six limes into a blender. Blend until saucy.

## Assembly:

Place shredded chicken on fried masa tortilla topped with some chopped cabbage or lettuce, a slice of tomato, pickled onions and the sauce. Serve immediately, with lots of napkins as these are super juicy (and delicious)!



**Creole Bread**

- 6 cups flour ( $\frac{1}{2}$  wheat and  $\frac{1}{2}$  white)
- 1 sachet of coconut powder (2 for a richer coconut flavor)
- 1 pkg. instant yeast
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup white sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  stick butter
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup vegetable shortening
- 2 cups water (more or less may be required depending on flour texture)

Directions: Combine all ingredients, except water, in a bowl and mix thoroughly ensuring that butter and shortening have been properly incorporated.

Begin to add water half a cup at a time and mix in with hands. Continue adding water until dough comes in a ball that is firm to handle but is not dry and neither is it sticky. Roll unto flat surface and knead until smooth. Form into a large ball and place in a greased bowl and cover with a damp cloth and let rise for an hour.

Turn out dough unto a flat surface and cut into 6-8 even pieces. Roll out into balls making sure they are smooth. Place on a greased flat sheet and let rise for 10 mins.

Bake in a hot oven at 350 degrees for 20 mins. and then turn down to 250 degrees for another 20 mins. Bread is finished when brown and is hollow sounding when tapped on the bottom. Enjoy!!!



**Chicken Caldo (*chilan*)**

- 1 local chicken – cleaned and cut into pieces
- Water—enough to cover the chicken and vegetables
- 1 onion, sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 tsp of salt
- 1 tsp black pepper (optional)
- 1 tsp pepper (optional)
- 3 tbsp of *ach'ote* (natural red food coloring)
- 3-4 vegetables of choice (cassava, okra, potatoes, ginger leaves, cilantro)

Directions: Clean the chicken, cut into pieces and boil in a pot of water (cover the chicken with water and add more if needed). Cook chicken for about 2 hours (or until tender).

Add salt and the seasoning (if desired).

Add the sliced onions, garlic, and vegetables and continue cooking until vegetables are tender.

Let simmer for 10 minutes.

Serve hot with fresh corn tortilla or white rice.



# Peace Corps Belize Staff

**Program Manager**

Gian Cho

**Director of Management and Operations**

Imani Davis

**Information Technology Specialist**

Odion Edenojie

**Country Director**

Melanie Emerson

**Cashier**

Maria Gonzalez

**Host Family Coordinator**

Raquel Gillett

**Medical Clerk**

Kent Haylock

**Director of Programming and Training**

Greg Macdonald

**Safety and Security Manager**

Cyril Nal

**Executive Assistant/Quality Assurance Coordinator**

Dora Najarro

**Programming and Training Assistant**

Patty Pate

**Training Manager**

Sharmaine Ritchie

**Financial Assistant**

Ruth Tillett

**Receptionist/Administrative Assistant**

Eden Thompson

**Janitress**

Tereza Torres

**General Services Assistant/Driver**

Rueben Vargas

**Language and Culture Coordinator**

Rocio Vasquez

**Peace Corps Medical Officer**

Jackie Waight

**General Services Manager**

Anthony Williams

**Programming and Training Specialist**

Lynelle Williams



Bottom left to right: Rueben, Maria, Tereza, Patty, Rocio, Odion, Jackie, Gian

Middle left to right: Kent, Sharmaine, Dora, Ruth, Greg, Raquel, Imani

Top left to right: Eden, Anthony, Melanie

Missing in photo: Cyril & Lynelle



# 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. Peace Corps actively recruits people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences to share with the communities they will serve around the globe. Americans who apply to the Peace Corps undergo a competitive and extensive year-long application process. Peace Corps attracts idealistic individuals who are willing to share their technical experience with others and are eager to learn about other cultures.

## What do Volunteers do in Belize?

Volunteers are trainers, teachers and mentors. They are agents of change who partner with others in rural villages to identify community needs, establish educational priorities and apply their skills, knowledge and experience on a daily basis to improve the health of Belizeans.

## Can Volunteers help secure funding for projects?

Peace Corps differs from aid groups in that it has a unique development philosophy focused on building human 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 to serve in my community?

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 two years. Only communities with a willing Community Health Worker and 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 hosting a Volunteer, call Peace Corps Belize at 822-0276.







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