



Belize - A land of Plenty

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Women's Issues Network Conducts HIV/AIDS Workshop in PG Town

On 18th April 2008, Women's Issues Network (WIN-Belize) held a workshop at Parish Hall in Punta Gorda Town. As one of WIN's active member organizations, Plenty took on a lead role in organizing this event. The workshop was attended by some of our brightest young and energetic high school students from around the Toledo District.

The objective of this workshop was to educate the young people of the Toledo District on HIV/AIDS, stigma and discrimination, and gender based violence.

The students were all taken up in the discussions that happened throughout the day. One activity placed the students into groups to demonstrate the different types of violence that occur within a home. The point was for all to

note what children in a violent home experience when their parent, especially the mother, is being mistreated.

The dramas that the student showed were really interesting, they were very realistic, and true to actually experiences that could happen inside a home.

Students also participated in an unique HIV/AIDS situation. The situation left them with the basic understanding that most of the time a person does not want to become infected with HIV/AIDS, however sometimes they just chose a wrong partner.

By the end of the day many of the students had a different point of view on HIV/AIDS. Most observed that when you know someone who has



Toledo Community College Students participating in the WIN HIV/AIDS Workshop

HIV/AIDS it is not good for you to feel superior to that person, but rather to put oneself in that person situation and try to understand how they feel.

Toledo Food Fair 2008 - Another Great Day in Punta Gorda!

On Friday April 11th, 2008 PG Town saw thousands of students and hundreds of adults enjoying the 3rd Annual Toledo Food Fair at the PG Sports Complex. With a huge variety of food, entertainment, educational displays, and Belizean vendors, this day was a great experience for everyone who attended.

Highlights of the day included key speeches by District Education Officer Oscar Requena and by the Hon. Peter Eden Martinez Toledo East Area Representative and Minister of Human Development.

Students from several primary schools entertained with unique cultural presentations.

The awarding of prizes for the Toledo Primary School Student Home Garden Contest sponsored by Plenty Belize took place in the morning, the volleyball tournament and a grand raffle with more than a dozen excellent prizes donated by area businesses highlighted the afternoon.

Micro-Grant Applications Now Available to Assist Rural Small Businesses

Plenty Belize now has application forms available for residents of rural Toledo to apply for a micro grant to assist in starting or improving their small business. Funding for the micro grants is provided with support from the European Union after consultation with the Government of Belize on how to best implement the program.

The Micro Grants for the Rural Poor Project is being run by the team from Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology (BEST) and Plenty Belize. The project seeks to help rural people in the Toledo, Belize, and Cayo Districts by improving their lives through micro enterprises. We expect to give out 60 grants in the Toledo District over the next 2 years.

To qualify for a grant, the applicant's household must be below the official poverty line. All applicants must have a valid business idea, be capable and interested in being self-employed, and possess a valid social security card. Applicants will need to attend two business planning classes prior to being reviewed for approval.



Mangoes: Delicious and Nutritious

“An average sized mango can contain up to 40% of your daily fiber requirement”

Mangoes started being cultivated from the wild in the foot hills of the Himalayas in India and Burma around 6,000 years ago. Today's mango is succulent and healthy! Several varieties of mango are grown in Belize, and the trees make great shade too!

Ripe mangoes are an excellent source of vitamins A and C,

and for those who are physically active, whether working out or constantly on the go, mangoes are a great way to replenish lost potassium.

An average sized mango can contain up to 40% of your daily fiber requirement. If you are eating your mango-a-day, irregularity is not a problem for you and so we'll spare the gruesome details

regarding constipation, piles and spastic colon.

Research has shown that dietary fiber has a protective effect against degenerative diseases, especially with regards to the heart; it may help prevent certain types of cancer, as well as lowering blood cholesterol levels. So why not eat a Mango today!



Caption describing picture or graphic.

Mouthwatering Ripe Mango Salsa

With mango season fast approaching Plenty would like to share an excellent mango recipe with all of you. Its easy to prepare and wonderful to eat!

Ingredients:

- 1 large ripe mango, cut into small bite-size chunks, about 1 ½ cups
- 1 small or ½ medium

onion, cut very small

- 1 jalapeno chile pepper, cut very small, include seeds for spicy, no seeds for mild
- ½ bunch of cilantro, chopped small
- 1 lime, squeeze juice into recipe

Optional:

1 small cucumber, diced small (about 1 cup)

1 small sweet pepper, turned red already is best, diced small

1 tomato, chopped

Combine in a bowl. Add salt and black pepper to taste and enjoy!

News from one of our partners

In the coming months, Aguacaliente Management Team (AMT) plans to collaborate with the Social Investment Fund (SIF) to further enhance the ecotourism capacity of the Aguacaliente Wildlife Sanctuary and the hospitality services skills of local community members.

AMT plans to construct a new Welcome Center at the AWS entrance in Laguna Village, where they will offer: craft sales for any community member who wishes to sell;

maps and other information on the AWS; AWS tour guiding information for those visitors who did not bring a guide; and information on local site guides and meal opportunities for visitors who would like to learn more about Laguna or other nearby villages, or have lunch with a local family.

AMT also plans to offer further training to community members in hospitality services skills, such as nutrition, first aid, and hygiene. This

project is still in the planning phases, but AMT hopes to begin the work in the next couple of months. Please contact AMT for details by phone: (+501) 665-4301, email: amt_aws@yahoo.com or on the web at: www.aguacaliente.bz.



Sunset at the Aguacaliente Wildlife Sanctuary, photo courtesy of the Aguacaliente Website

Calendar of Events

May

Friday 16th: Teacher's Day Observed

Friday 23rd: Chocolate and Wine Evening with music by the Caribbean Trio

Saturday 24th: Sovereign's Day

Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th: Monkey River Creole Festival

Saturday 24th: Cacao Festival at Punta Gorda Town Park with music by Leela Vernon

Cacao for Kids at Civic Center in PG Town

Sunday 25th: Deer Dance at Lubaantun Ruin in San Pedro Columbia Village, and a firework finale in Punta Gorda Town with music by the Garifuna Collective and Paul Nabor

Sunday 25th: Punta Negra Beach Bash

Monday 26th: Sovereign's Day Observed

Saturday 31st: Toledo Teachers Credit Union Annual General Members meeting, 9:00am

June

Saturday 7th: Taste of Belize Competition, Radisson Fort George Hotel

Sunday 8th: Toledo Community College Graduation, 2:00pm at Punta Gorda Sports Complex

Saturday 14th: Julian Cho Technical School Graduation, 9:00am at Parish Hall

Sunday 15th: University of Belize Graduation, 2:00pm at Parish Hall

Sunday 15th: Lobster Season Opens

Friday 27th: Primary Schools Close for End-Of-Year Vacation

Friday 27th through Sunday 29th: Placencia Lobsterfest, Placencia Village

September

Monday 1st: Schools Re-open for 2008/2009 School year



Home Garden Project going strong

Plenty Belize’s Home Garden pilot project is on stream, funded by the Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation.

This project is funding twenty families throughout the Toledo District to grow home gardens. Over the past five months the families have received tools and seeds, valued at over \$300.

There are five families in each of the following four villages:

Forest Home, San Pedro Columbia, Pueblo Viejo, and Aguacate.

This project will be carried out over one year, aiming to end December, 31 2008. Each family will also be receiving regular visits from one of Plenty Belize’s two Agriculture Extension Officers.

These families have shown great interest in the program and will be harvesting their

first crop in less than a month’s time!



Aguacate villagers and their Home Gardens

“the organizations and groups in attendance discussed key issues effecting our work and livelihood”

Plenty Meets with Minister of Agriculture and Area Reps.

On Thursday, April 17th Plenty Belize met with Honorable Rene Montero, Minister of Agriculture. Minister Montero was accompanied by the Toledo Area Representatives the Honorable Eden Martinez, Minister of Human Development, the Honorable Juan Coye, Minister of State, and CEO of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

The meeting, held at the TIDE office in Punta Gorda Town, was attended by key stakeholders from across the Toledo District.

The organizations and groups in attendance discussed key issues effecting our work and livelihood prior to meeting with the Ministers.

Plenty Belize would like to thank the Ministers for the opportunity to meet and to share our agricultural experience with the Ministers and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. We hope to foster a strong working relationship to continue the growth and development of the Toledo District.

Plenty attends Dolores Village Fair

On the 12th of April there was a Village Fair held in Dolores Village. The event was scheduled to show appreciation and give thanks for funding provided for the newly built school and medical clinic.

The Fair was attended by the Hon. Eden Martinez, the Hon. Juan Coye, members of Central Development Bank,

the Social Investment Fund, numerous other organizations, and of course the Villagers of Dolores.

The Fair provided an excellent opportunity for organizations, including Plenty, to set up informational displays about the work they are currently doing through out Toledo.



Plenty Agriculture Extension Officer Abib Palma at the Dolores Village Fair

Special Guest Article by Plenty's Chairman, Dr. Ludwig Palacio

A new culture or Productivity

I have always maintained that Toledo is rich; perhaps the richest part of the entire country of Belize. Yet we continue to believe what we were told.

There is a global crisis as we speak, an international food crisis. Belize is blessed with a beautiful tropical climate and even more so Toledo. Therefore it is important to focus on re-building our culture of self sufficiency and productivity in order not to ever experience any food crisis here in Belize.

We must actively promote home-based gardens

As Chair of Plenty Belize I have actively advocated for home based garden. Note that there is no use of the former term ***backyard gardening***, thanks to a correction made by Mr. Burton Caliz a true organic farmer. Indeed we can plant anywhere we want and this should be actively promoted by the community in general, especially parents, teachers, community and religious leaders, among others. Self sufficiency and productivity will bring success.

The new culture of productivity must include access to land and resources for a decent life. Politicians and policy makers must facilitate and create conducive environments for the people

There is a task for the policy makers and politicians and ordinary citizens should make certain that this happens. First and foremost there must be total land security, infrastructure development and marketing. In my next column I hope to share some ideas on a marketing facility at the border village of Jalacte that could impact significantly on agriculture in the district.

Fortunately there are institutions that work together so please feel free to contact any of the organizations below if you are ready to start on your road to increased productivity

Plenty Belize
Sustainable Harvest International Belize
Agriculture Department

Additionally if you are interested in appropriate technologies such as biogas, efficient wood burning stoves, (Bridget Fire hearth) biodiesel, use of bamboo for construction or furniture purposes, do contact the Toledo Development Corporation (TDC). TDC can also assist you with planning as well as writing of your project, scholarships to study abroad, to name a few. Share what is your vision and we will do whatever it takes to challenge you to see it through.

Finally, we must not be afraid to act in accordance with our immense wealth.

“Belize is blessed with a beautiful tropical climate and even more so Toledo”



“Indeed we can plant anywhere we want and this should be actively promoted by the community in general”



Drummers from Barranco providing entertainment for the guests

Plenty's Second Annual Mothers Day Banquet – a grand night!

Over 40 people enjoyed an elegant night of live music, fine food and wine at Plenty's Second Annual Mothers Day Banquet at Parish Hall on Saturday 10 May 2008.

With music by the New Edition Band, drumming by a Garifuna youth group from Barranco, and a liturgical dance by students in Miss Shamira Lambey's class at St Peter Claver

School, the entertainment was a real celebration of mothers.

Prizes were given out to a number of mothers, including a watch from Mel's Mart, a pair of ladies footwear from Raju's store, roundtrip bus fare for two to Belize City from James Bus Lines, bath and body lotions from Rosalma's Pharmacy, and much more.

All mothers were given a compilation CD entitled "I Love U Mama" made by DJ Fresh.

Excellent Food, Excellent Company, a Great Celebration!



"the resource center services includes: business plan writing, business training classes, assistance with making business forms"

Small Business Resource Center Opens!!!!

On May 5, 2008 the small business resource center opens its doors to the general public. The resource center is an initiative through the consortium of Plenty Belize, Toledo Teachers Credit Union, and Sustainable Harvest International. Support comes from these 3 organizations and the European Union.

The resource center services includes: business plan writing, business training classes, assistance with making business forms, a library of references, and networking with other professionals.

The center is opened to the general public. Businesses around town are also invited to

stop in and leave pamphlets or information about their business to be available to the public.

For more information you can visit the office on Queen Street, the former DFC building or call 722-0060.



Local primary school students from St. Benedict Roman Catholic select their plants on Earth Day

Plenty Helps Celebrate Earth Day in Punta Gorda

Each year millions of people across the globe join together on April 22nd to celebrate Earth Day. This year Plenty Belize participated in the celebration of the 38th Earth Day by organizing a plant give-away in Punta Gorda's Central Park.

Plenty gave away over 200 plants to local residents and school children. Many of these people were in town to

participate in the Earth Day Celebrations organized by TIDE, others were just citizens of Punta Gorda who wanted to help out.

The requirement for receiving a plant, collect five plastic bottles off the streets of Punta Gorda. Plenty will use the collected bottles to start vegetable seedlings. In all we collected over 1,000 bottles! Seedlings are always available

at Plenty, you just need to bring in 5 plastic bottles to receive one vegetable seedling or purchase them for \$0.50 each.

Currently we have Sweet Pepper, Tomato, and Cabbage in stock. Stop by and pick up some plants!



BCVI exhibit at the Food Fair about Eye Sight and Nutrition



Jabiru Bamboo exhibits Diesel to Vegetable Oil Conversion kit for Vehicles



St. Peter Clavier Students exhibiting Garifuna Drumming at the Food Fair



Gomier's Health Foods exhibits soy Ice Cream and other healthy snacks at the Food Fair

Na Luu Caa, a Model Garden!

Since the inception of the GATE Program, Plenty has assisted 32 Primary Schools throughout Toledo with their Gardens.

One of the main goals of the Program is Sustainability. Na Luu Caa School could be described as the model for School Garden Sustainability.

Plenty has only been with Na Luu Caa for a short while. This year the school has been able

to grow enough Cilantro to make over \$30 profit, and save enough seeds for many future crops!

Despite infrequent visits from Plenty Staff, due to a already full work schedule, the school has established a successful program.

It is our hope that Na Luu Caa will keep up the good work, and that other schools will be able to follow their example.



Na Luu Caa Students working in the School Garden



Student displaying the Cilantro Seeds!

PLENTY BELIZE

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Plenty Belize

Mission: Promoting the well-being of the people, the communities, and the environment we share in the Toledo District of Belize

Plenty Belize is a registered Belizean NGO with its office in Punta Gorda Town. Founded in 1997 Plenty Belize has a history of working hand in hand with other local groups to address local needs in a sustainable manner. Plenty Belize has acted both as a service provider within projects spearheaded by other organizations and as a project manager.

An Enterprise Engine for Rural Communities in Toledo District, Belize

The Consortium of the Toledo Teachers' Credit Union, Plenty Belize, and Sustainable Harvest International came about when all three institutions, with similar interests, applied for a Grant to Implement a Program of Rural Development in Toledo District' from the European Union in late 2007.

Our proposal was approved by the European Union. Monies were provided to fund small business projects for 10 groups in the Toledo District over the next two years.

Three employees were hired to specifically manage and work with this fund; namely, Ms. Aurelia Cal as Project Director, Ms. Tasha Petillo as



The advertisement of the availability of funds to assist small businesses will commence in early June.

Application Forms will be available starting in June at the Consortium Office on Queen Street, previously the DFC building.

Interested rural groups will be able to apply and, if they meet the criteria set out, they may qualify to be a part of this initiative.

Please stop in to the office for more information, or email Aurelia Cal at consortium.euproject@gmail.com.

Small Business Resource Center Manager, and Mr. Luther Noralez as Extension Officer.

