WIN Belize Torch Run

Plenty Belize, an active member of Women’s Issue’s Network (WIN), has been partaking in several activities. One main focus this year was the Annual Torch Run that is done throughout the country and is carried out to achieve a goal; our goal this year was to raise awareness on various issues such as Gender Based Violence and HIV/AIDS and to help people understand the link between these issues.

This year Plenty worked with several organizations in the Toledo District to plan the local part of the Torch Run. These organizations included Toledo Maya Women’s Council (TMWC), TOLCA, Toledo HIV/AIDS Committee, TDC, BFLA, and the University of Belize. We were able to collaborate World AIDS day and its annual AIDS walk along with the Torch Run since they aim to achieve some of the same goals.

The Torch Run was held on the 29th of November 2008 at the Punta Gorda Central Park at 9:00 a.m. It started off with the Traffic Department leading the Runners were made up of students from various schools such as Julian Cho Technical High school, Toledo Community College, University of Belize. They were also joined by members of various organizations such as TMWC, WIN Belize and more.

Immediately after the Run another excited crowd gathered again in front of the central Park to commence with the HIV/AIDS Walk, this large crowd consisted of students from Forest Home Methodist School, UB, Belize Defence Force, T.C.C, Julian Cho Technical High School, HIV/AIDS Committee, WIN Belize, escorts from the Traffic, Police, and the Fire Departments and other members of the local Community.

The walk was filled with excitement, the band from Julian Cho and the noise from the fire trucks along with the banners from all the organizations that participated and created a festive atmosphere. After the AIDS walk the crowd gathered back at the central park where various activities took place. These activities included a Prayer, a Speech from the Mayor, Presentations from Julian Cho Technical High School, The HIV/AIDS Committee, PG Medical Representative, WIN Belize and Oxfam Representatives. Other activities included educational booths, games and free HIV/AIDS testing.

Plenty Belize, WIN Belize and Toledo HIV/AIDS Committee would like to give special thanks to all those who made this memorable event possible. Especially to the PG Traffic Department, PG Police Station, Town Council, and the Punta Gorda Fire Station.

4th Annual Toledo Food Fair set for Friday March 20th

The 4th annual Toledo Food Fair is scheduled for Friday 20 March 2009 at Union Field in Punta Gorda Town.

This annual event brings thousands of students and adults together to celebrate everything about food!

Organized by the all volunteer Toledo School Feeding Program Committee, the Food Fair includes a variety of events, as well as many tasty food options.

Make sure that you are free on March 20th and attend the 4th Annual Food Fair. You won’t go home disappointed!
Plenty’s Miss Conservation Contestant Places 3rd!

This year TIDE, Toledo Institute for Development and the Environment held its second annual Miss Conservation Pageant. The theme this year was The Coral Reef at Risk. The first Place prize was a $2,000 scholarship to the School of the winner’s choice, second was a $1,500 scholarship, and the third place winner was awarded a $1,000 scholarship. Consolation prizes were $300.

Plenty Belize was represented by the beautiful and intelligent Ms. Genilee Parham of Elridgeville. She placed third in the competition; this is the first time Plenty has participated in the competition so we definitely know what to bring to the table the next time.

With the assistance of Mr. Abib Palma (Agriculture Manager) and Ms. Carla Selgado (Office Manager) of Plenty Belize, and not to forget the amazing talent and intelligence of Ms. Parham we were able to place very well in the competition. I have to give Ms. Genilee kudos, because she came up with her ideas by herself, and she even wrote what might be the new theme song for Plenty Belize. This had the audience jumping off their feet.

Even though we placed third, I can definitely guarantee that we brought across some valid and educational points to everyone who were living, for example like ways in which we can preserve and protect our special coral reef.

Let’s not forget to thank all the other young ladies who participated in this fun and educational event namely: Ms. Jeannie Edmonson representing TIDE who placed first, Ms. Natalia Ramos representing Southern Environmental Association who place second, Ms. Genilee Parham representing our own Plenty Belize which placed third, Ms. Stephanie Martinez representing SHI, Ms. Daniela Woolley representing Friends for Conservation and Development, and Ms. Samira Marroquina representing Shipstern Nature Reserve.

Congrats to The Palma’s, for the birth of their second child!

Plenty Belize would like to congratulate Abib and Georgina Palma on the birth of their second child, Vivian Palma.

Vivian was born the morning of Monday, January 5th, 2009.

Again Congratulations, we cannot wait until the baptism!

P.G. Town Family Garden Projects Germinates

A group of NGO’s in Punta Gorda have come together to encourage our people in town to grow some of their own food in their yards.

With the price of food and other basics continuing to rise, things are getting hard out here. A lee garden can help cut food costs and improve nutrition.

Plenty Belize is providing tools and seeds to three neighborhood groups around town. The Cemetery area neighborhood watch group has already received a set of tools that they all can share. Seeds and seedlings will be provided as the garden beds are prepared.

Sustainable Harvest will spearhead training sessions on organic gardening techniques for the participants. TIDE, YCT, and TDC also have active roles in this project.

We hope that with this little help, the people of PG will show we can help in Growing Belize.
Plenty Belize’s 2nd Annual Primary School Home Garden Contest is in full swing and promises to be bigger and better than last year. There are over 300 contestants in this year’s contest.

The students come from many different communities, including: Punta Gorda Town, Forest Home, Jalacte, Corazon Creek, Aguacate, Trio, and San Marcos just to name a few.

We are not accepting any more entries into the contest since the deadline for signups, December 15th, has passed. If you did not sign up for this year’s contest make sure you do so for next year!

Plenty still has some seeds available for those students who have already signed up for the contest. If students from your school or community needs some seeds then we encourage you to come by the Plenty Belize Office located on Jose Maria Nunez St. to pick some up.

We are currently seeking donations for prizes, if anyone would like to donate to the contest, that would be wonderful!

Plenty Belize feels honored that there is such an interest in gardening and would like to thank in advance the contestants for their hard work.

Principals, keep your eyes open for more information from Plenty Belize regarding the Home Garden Contest. We will be sending out confirmation letters soon!

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**Calendar of Events**

**January**

Friday 9th: School Feeding Program Executive Committee meeting  
Saturday 10th: Plenty Belize’s Garden Training  
Monday 12th: Business Training Session, Planning your Micro-Enterprise (Day 1)  
Friday 16th: Business Training Session, Planning your Micro-Enterprise (Day 2)  
Friday 16th: Toledo School Feeding Program General Meeting  
Thursday 29th - Saturday 31st: Rotary Club Project Fair in Belize City

**February**

Friday 6th: International Day against Female Genital Mutilation  
Saturday 14th: Be My Valentine?  
Tuesday 24th: Universal Birth Registration Day  
Thursday 26th: International Youth AIDS Day  
Tuesday 24th: World Tuberculosis Day

**March**

Sunday 8th: International Women’s Day  
Monday 9th: Baron Bliss Day  
Friday 13th: Second Term Concludes (Primary Schools)  
Friday 20th: 4th Annual Toledo District Food Fair  
Sunday 22nd: World Water Day  
Tuesday 24th: World Tuberculosis Day  
Monday 30th: Primary School Exam (PSE) - First Sitting

**April**

Friday 3rd: School Closes for Easter Vacation  
Tuesday 7th: World Health Day  
Friday 10th: Good Friday  
Sunday 12th: Easter Sunday  
Monday 13th: Easter Monday  
Monday 20th: School re-opens, third term continues  
Wednesday 22nd: Earth Day
LAUNCHING OF TOLEDO RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
‘AN ENTERPRISE ENGINE FOR TOLEDO’

Punta Gorda, Toledo, Belize – December 3rd, 2008

Low-income people in rural Toledo are the target beneficiaries of grant funding from the European Union and the Government of Belize with the intention to improve their livelihoods by starting or developing business enterprises. The overall goal is to reduce rural poverty by promoting and investing in the sustainable economic growth within the rural communities of Toledo.

The Consortium of Toledo Teachers’ Credit Union, Plenty Belize and Sustainable Harvest International is pleased to announce the Launching of the Toledo Rural Development project ‘An Enterprise Engine For Toledo’.

The Launching was held at the St. Peter Claver Parish Hall on Wednesday December 3rd, at 9:00 a.m. Present were the members of the 8 groups that have been approved to receive Business Plans, namely; Hinchosonez Women’s Group, San Pedro Columbia Pig Raising Cooperative, Fajina Craft Center & Food, Mabilha Cattle Raiser Association, Santa Anna Rice Huller Women’s Group, San Vicente Poultry Producers, Mafredi Yellow Ginger Project and Boom Creek Sheep Producers. In addition, certificates of accomplishment were presented to the Toledo rural groups and families who have received BRDP grants in 2008 on a variety of agriculture and rural development projects.

The Launching was addressed by the Minister of Agriculture Hon Rene Montero, Hon. Juan Coy, the Toledo Consortium leader Mr. Leopoldo Romero of the Toledo Teachers Credit Union, Ms. Kathrine Mendez of the Ministry of Economic Development, and the Director of BRDP Dr Marcelino Avila. The speakers highlighted the importance of rural and agriculture development for Toledo's economy, and in particular the focus on the small producers, women, and youth.

The Consortium has received applications for grants from numerous Toledo groups but only 15 will pass on to the Business Plan preparation stage. The eight (8) groups present were those that have reached this stage. Of all 15 Business Plans, only the best 10 groups will be final beneficiaries of this grant funding.

This project commenced in April 2008 and will continue to work with the selected groups until April 2010.

“This project is funded by the European Union”

WIN-Belize develops it’s 3 year strategic plan

Plenty Belize is an active member of WIN Belize. WIN Belize is Belize’s leading national network of agencies which champions the rights of women and advocates for gender equality, and the full participation of women in all aspects of Belize’s national development.

Through the strategic planning process, member agencies of WIN identified four key goals for the next three years. These areas are the following:

- Institutional Strengthening (Network Sustainability)
- Membership Development
- Network Awareness
- Advocacy

The Women’s Issues Network works with agencies nationwide to promote Women’s rights and gender equality

Ms. Lynette Williams receiving a certificate of accomplishment from the Hon. Juan Coy

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Plenty Belize Hosts Two Julian Cho Student Interns

Plenty Belize was approached by Julian Cho Technical High School and asked if we would be willing to host a few interns. In the past we have found having interns to be a positive and rewarding experience for all. But don’t take our word for it, here are two reports written by our interns.

“My name is Maria Ical, I am seventeen years old. I live in the beautiful village of Jalacte. I am a Fourth Form Agriculture student attending Julian Cho Technical High School. I am proud to be here at Plenty Belize doing an internship. I began on 15th of December and will finish on 31st.

First we bagged seeds like sweet pepper, cucumber and cilantro for the primary school students involved in the Home Garden Contest. Then we fixed the nursery and the seedlings were arranged in their order of growth. Working in this place is wonderful and enjoyable. The staff members are kind and friendly.

They are hard working people and I have learned new things from them. In conclusion, after I graduate from High School I would like to study further about agriculture and want to become an agriculture teacher or a staff member of Plenty Belize.”

“ My name is Beverly Gillen, and I am a proud Fourth Form Agriculture student at Julian Cho Technical High School. I am doing my internship at Plenty Belize; well so far we have fixed the nursery, spread saw dust on the flooring and bagged cucumber, sweet pepper and cilantro seeds for the primary school students involved in the Home Garden Contest.

Our next big project is to prepare garden beds and to plant other crops. I enjoy working at Plenty Belize, because every one is friendly, hard working, and dedicated to their jobs. As the day’s go by each and every day, we have learn something new to build up our skills for the betterment. By the Grace of God, After I Graduate, I plan to go study further into the Agriculture field. So that one of these fine days, I would own my own business.”

Plenty Belize would like to thank our interns for their hard work!

LightWave Solar makes donation to Plenty Belize

All of us here at Plenty Belize would like to express our most sincere thank you to our friends at LightWave Solar for a most generous donation.

LightWave Solar of Tennessee, donated a Laptop Computer, a Kill-A-Watt meter, and a voltmeter to Plenty Belize. The two meters will surely prove to be invaluable with our continued work with solar energy projects.

Thanks LightWave Solar!

Home Garden Project Wraps Up

Plenty Belize started a pilot project with 20 rural families from four different communities to do home organic gardens. This pilot project was a success.

The Home Gardens Project built on the already successful GATE project, and brought about measurable results for 20 families in the Toledo District.

The average participating family grew hundreds of pounds of vegetables, and sold over $350 worth of the excess.

This environmentally friendly project has had a significant impact on family nutrition, and assisted with family income.

Thanks is due to the Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation and Plenty International for their financial support of this pilot project.
The 16th Uniedo America Project Fair, to be held at the Radisson Hotel, is a huge Rotary event which draws an enormous international crowd. The Fair will be held from January 29th through January 31st.

The event provides an excellent opportunity for Rotary Club Members from, Belize, Central America and North America to meet, interact, and network.

However the main focus of the event, other than creating new friendships, is the Project Fair. For those Rotary Clubs with hopes to form an international working relationship with their fellow Rotarians, such as the Punta Gorda Town Rotary Club, this event serves as a launching pad for creating those relationships.

Two members from the P.G Rotary Club, Mr. Nana Mensa and Mr. Mark Miller, will be attending the Project Fair. They will bring numerous proposals which represent many groups from the Toledo District, including a funding proposal for the Toledo School Feeding Program.

We at Plenty appreciate the hard work and dedication to our community that the P.G Rotary club is displaying, and wish them the best of luck at the Project Fair in January!

Cucumber: Nature’s Skin Cleaner

The cucumber (Cucumis sativus) is a widely cultivated plant in the gourd family Cucurbitaceae.

The cucumber is a creeping vine that roots in the ground and grows up trellises or other supporting frames, wrapping around ribbing with thin, spiraling tendrils. The plant has large leaves that form a canopy over the fruit.

Although less nutritious than most fruit, the fresh cucumber seeds are still a source of vitamin C, vitamin K, and potassium, also providing dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin B6, thiamin, folate, pantothenic acid, magnesium, phosphorus, copper, and manganese.

The silica in cucumber is an essential component of healthy connective tissue, which includes muscles, tendons, ligaments, cartilage, and bone.

Cucumber juice is often recommended as a source of silica to improve the complexion and health of the skin, plus cucumber’s high water content makes it naturally hydrating—a must for glowing skin.

Crunchy Cucumber Salad

Try this delicious and easy to prepare Cucumber Salad as a side dish to any meal!

Ingredients:
- 4 medium cucumbers, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup of vinegar
- 1/4 cold cup of water
- 1 tablespoon of sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- Dash of pepper

Preparation:
Combine sliced cucumbers with other ingredients and refrigerate for 2 to 3 hours before serving.

Try making your own delicious cucumber salad, try adding tomatoes to your salad for some extra flavor.
Plenty Belize’s Photo Page

Primary School Students showing their support for HIV/AIDS Awareness at the World AIDS Day Parade in P.G. Town

Representatives from Julian Cho Technical High School, Toledo Community College, Toledo Mayan Women’s Council and the University of Belize participating in the 2008 Torch Run

Plenty Belize’s Peace Corps Volunteer Mike McGuire taking a serious stance against HIV/AIDS in Toledo District

Ms. Parham during the talent component at the Miss Conservation Pageant with Plenty staff member Abib Palma, Plenty Member Omar Requena, and children

Participant in the Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation Home Garden Project displaying his garden
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.

Plenty Belize Holds Annual General Members Meeting: New Board Elected

On Friday November 28th, 2008 Plenty Belize held our Annual General Members meeting at the St. Peter Claver Paris Hall.

The evening held a variety of presentations given by Plenty Staff and Board Members which covered the various projects, programs and activities of Plenty Belize during the 2007 calendar year.

One of the highlights from the meeting, other than the delicious food, were the discussion group sessions. Plenty Belize Members were able to interact with staff and volunteers and offer suggestions to help better our work.

Nomination of possible candidates were taken from the members. In the end seven members were elected to serve as board members.

Plenty Belize’s 2009 Board of Directors; Dr. Ludwig Palacio, Mr. Gilroy Middleton, Mr. Augustine Lara, Ms. Eva Middleton, Mr. Gomier Ignatius Longville, Ms. Joan Palma, and Ms. Dawn Dean.

Plenty is pleased with the results and excited to begin working with our new Board Members. Congratulations!