

PathLight International

November 2007

Dear Friends,

Over the last year you may have heard of our new ministry in Belize. It's actually an old ministry with a new vision. Jaguar Creek Mission & Conference Center was built in the 1990's by many great volunteers, and then fell on hard times in the last couple of years. As of January 1, 2007, we took over Jaguar Creek, even though we were not really sure why. We wanted to focus on the needs of the poor, but it was hard to define the vision with any more detail than that.

Over the last few months the vision has started to form. We are excited about how God has orchestrated this and how things are coming together! This letter is intended to share the latest news and explain the new mission.

The story begins with Jaguar Creek itself. This is a beautiful facility on 1900-acres of rainforest. It has short-term housing for up to 50 guests and is within a few miles of several smaller villages. For years the non-profit organization Target Earth used Jaguar Creek to house short-term service teams and academic programs, usually from churches or Christian colleges. But Target Earth was struggling to make Jaguar Creek operate efficiently. They contacted us about taking it over and restoring it, we said yes, and that's how all of this began.

As we began repairing the facility we also began intentionally interacting with the local villages. We met people who wanted to talk about the challenges in their communities. Many of the key infrastructure issues are being addressed: clean water, secure food supply, and access to health care. Please understand that these are still challenges at times. But in general the community, the village leaders, or other non-profit organizations are addressing them.

It was in the educational field that we found the biggest need. Time and time again we would meet a village leader, a parent, a child, or a teacher who wanted to talk about how difficult and expensive it was to get a decent education. As we investigated the educational system, we saw a tremendous opportunity to serve Belizean children-at-risk and their families. According to the President of the University of Belize, only 70% of the children finish primary school. Only 35% finish high school. Fewer than 7% will attend college.

That led to many more conversations. We spoke with principals, teachers, students and their parents. We met with people from the government, the Peace Corp, and the churches. Everybody we met asked us to get involved with the educational system. Everybody we met also encouraged us to bring our faith to the conversation, with one official from the University of Belize pointing out that it is the "religious schools that are doing the best job of teaching our youth."

Clearly there was a need. And just as importantly, education was something near and dear to our hearts. God was leading us down this path for a reason.

Out of all these conversations came a vision for ministry: we serve children-at-risk by providing educational opportunities that integrate faith and learning. How do we do that?

- By recruiting, training and hosting short-term service teams from North America that will build classrooms, lead training seminars for teachers, and bring their skills to bear on the educational needs in Belize.
- By placing teachers from North America into the Belizean school system as teaching assistants.
- By providing scholarships for students to attend high school.
- By hosting conferences, seminars and other venues at Jaguar Creek for educators, volunteers and others who work with children.

This is not going to be a short-term fix. Impacting a child can happen quickly, of course, but it will take years, perhaps even decades to see the impact on a community. We need to build strong relationships with the students and the educators. We need to continually emphasize the hope that education provides when it is integrated with faith. Education can start these young boys and girls down a path that leads to a new future.

To express this thought, we've decided to name our new endeavor PathLight. The enlightenment that comes from education impacts us spiritually, intellectually and economically. Our tag line is "hope through faith and learning."

So that is the story of how PathLight has been formed over the last year. You may have more questions, and it would be great to hear from you! You may wish to get involved or support us financially, and we would of course welcome that.

But most importantly, we wanted you to know what is happening with this new adventure. And we wanted to find out if you would like to stay in touch.

Enclosed are an envelope and a card. If you want to keep getting updates from us, please let us know. We'll send out periodic letters or emails. We'll keep you apprised of special events, trips, and ways you can pray or help. So please take a moment to check the box on the card, fill in your contact information, and drop it in the mail.

Thank you for your time. We are excited about PathLight, and we hope you are as well.

Blessings,

Roy & D'Aun Goble
Founders

Mark & Adrienne Parcher
Executive Directors

PS. PathLight International is so new we don't even have a logo yet! A website, brochure and other materials are in the works and we'll be sure to keep you updated as they develop.