



May 2008

Dear Friend,

In past letters you have heard about the personal transformation of Concepciona and the academic development of Prenda. This month I want to share the story of Samuel.

The government of Belize makes education mandatory through Standard 6 (their equivalent of 8th grade). After that, education is dependent on the student's test scores and their ability to afford high school. Thus a great many students, especially rural students far from a high school, drop out after Standard 6.

Samuel would have been one of those dropout statistics. He was a mediocre student that did not work hard on his lessons. This was not because of any lack of ability – it was because he had no hope of attending high school. Financially, it was impossible for his family to handle the expense. Without financial aid, there was no hope of continuing his education, and so there was no reason to apply himself to his studies. He had resigned himself to working the fields or some other type of manual labor for the rest of his life.

Then PathLight offered a ray of hope. Our staff led a workshop on test taking skills at Samuel's school. On the same day, PathLight announced that students in the class might be eligible for a high school scholarship. To become eligible, they needed to pass the high school entrance exam (called a PSE) and show decent grades. Samuel later told our staff that this day was a turning point for him. Suddenly, he was attentive in school and began working harder. He saw hope where there had been none before.

Much to his surprise, he passed the PSE. Although he was not toward the top of his class academically, PathLight still offered him a scholarship because our staff saw something special in him.

How did our support of Samuel work out? Well, today Samuel is Class President at Belmopan Baptist High School. He is doing well in school and discovering the joy of learning. He is in leadership training at his church and is truly devoted to developing his faith. I'd say PathLight's support has worked out pretty well!

Samuel is a model of hope through faith and learning. All it took was a spark of hope in him and a bit of support from us to transform a life.

In a few weeks we will see the scholarship students complete their first year of high school. What an achievement for these students! These boys and girls live in a rural village, most without electricity in their homes and none with running water. Most of them are the first in their families to get this far in school. Five days a week they have taken the bus into the "big city" and attended classes with kids from all over the region. Like all teenagers, they face challenges growing into adults.

And yet they manage to persevere. This past year has been a tremendous time of spiritual, academic and social development for these students.

To celebrate their completion of the first year of high school, we invite you to send them a note of congratulations. We sent a card to all of our “snail mail” recipients and asked them to return it. And even though our new website is up and running (www.pathlight.org), we are not yet set up to do cards online. Perhaps, if you feel so moved, you could send a note to us and we will get it to the students. It’s a card for all of the scholarship students, so please write to the whole group. You can send it to PathLight, 3037-T Hopyard Road, Pleasanton, California, 94588.

The students will be so surprised! And greatly encouraged. They love knowing that people are praying as they tackle the challenges before them.

Thank you for making this possible. You are a key partner in this ministry of hope, and we appreciate your support.

Blessings,
Roy Goble

PS If you could put the card in the mail no later than May 30th it would be great. The last day of school is soon and it takes time to send things to Belize. Thanks!