

Dear Friend:

Earlier this year as I crossed the finish line of a half-marathon run, I was ecstatic. Not that I came in first or second; actually I was in 2300th place! About half the people in the race finished before I did, but that didn't matter. I was happy because it was a personal best, my fastest time for that distance, and exactly what I had been training for. Everyone takes pleasure in accomplishing a goal. I think this is something that God has built into us; this desire to advance, to achieve, to make a difference, to be all we can be.

I had the pleasure of seeing one of our PathLight students doing his "personal best" just last week here in Belize. Before the start of school, we called a parents meeting. Since many parents speak only Spanish we usually arrange for an adult to translate for us. But that day, no one was available, so I was relieved when Danald, one of our tenth grade students, agreed to do it. I was also a bit surprised because last year he was more of a typical 14 year old boy. (You know the type; focused more on themselves than others and more on having fun than being helpful.)

I was happy that he volunteered, but also worried. As I explained PathLight's child protection policies, I wanted the parents to fully understand what type of information and photos we planned to share and how we would allow students and their sponsors to communicate by mail. More than anything, I wanted to treat the parents with dignity by enabling them to have a voice in what could and could not be shared about their child. Even if they weren't comfortable sharing anything at all, their choice would not affect the sponsorship of their child in any way. But translation is difficult; it requires a strong vocabulary and great listening skills, so I was nervous.

Once we started the presentation my worries faded quickly. In fact, Danald really impressed me with his translation skills. He was fast, accurate and downright professional for a 15 year old. Later, he surprised me again by volunteering to deliver the parent agreement forms and textbooks to those parents and students who were not able to attend the meeting. It was great to see Danald using his knowledge, skills and gifts to serve others; that is exactly what PathLight is about – growing young men and women into faithful adults with both a desire to serve their communities, and the capabilities to do it well.

With this new school year we are challenging donors to serve the *global* community by partnering with us. For the first time, we are offering the opportunity to sponsor a specific child. For \$150/month you can provide all that a young student needs to get a secondary education: school fees, books, a backpack, supplies, uniforms, shoes, bus transportation and a hot lunch. In addition you will get to know the student through photos and other information provided by PathLight, and will be able to exchange letters with your student a couple of times each year. This is a great opportunity to make a life-changing impact.

For \$50/month you can contribute to the spiritual side of PathLight's work. This amount funds our tutoring & discipleship program, student-driven community service projects, and special events for the students. In addition this gift would be used to support those students who haven't yet received a sponsor.

We greatly appreciate any support you can provide, but we hope you will consider sponsoring a student. In addition to providing a child *hope through faith and learning* you will have the opportunity to learn more about their life and to provide encouragement and spiritual support through your prayers and letters to your student. I think you will find yourself encouraged as you reach out to help one of these kids and watch them grow into an educated, faithful, caring adult.

Blessings,



Mark Parcher

PS: The photo below is of Danald (left) and his friend Neri. They painted the cisterns at their (former) primary school as part of their community service work last spring.

