

## Community Service at Caye Caulker Ocean Academy, Belize

Ocean Academy is a school built literally upon a foundation of “service above self”. The school was created in response to community desire for education on the island of Caye Caulker. The land and building were donated by an individual; all school supplies are donated; school co-founders work as unpaid volunteers; donors and volunteers from around the world sponsor students.

In our very first year, 2008-2009, students participated in many rewarding community projects in the areas of conservation, intercultural activities with overseas volunteers, school improvements, and education activities with our primary school and community library. A key requirement for graduation from Ocean Academy is that all students provide a minimum of 45 volunteer hours over the course of their studies. Parents are asked to contribute 10 hours/year of service to the school. We are excited to find a Rotarian sponsor and form an Interact Club on Caye Caulker for 2009-2010.

The Caye Caulker business community is supportive of community development and has donated generously to Ocean Academy with student scholarships, time and services. Creation of a Caye Caulker Rotary, in partnership with other clubs, would be able to support many worthwhile community projects.



Painting signs identifying plants for the interpretative nature trail in the Caye Caulker BTIA Nature Reserve.



Assisting marine biologists and rangers with the FAMRACC Mangrove Growth project on Caye Caulker north island.



Form-One student, Mercedes, teaching a Standard III class about sea turtles as part of her marine biology apprenticeship.



Student interviewers for “Inspirational Women of Caye Caulker Project”.



Carrying the banner for WIN Belize’s (Women Issues Network) Torch Run against stigma of HIV/AIDS and domestic violence.



Intercultural exchange with Sewickley Middle School, Pennsylvania. Mural painting at Ocean Academy; friendship sports; pen pals.

**ROTARY PARTNERSHIPS AND COMPUTER LAB PROJECT**

Volunteers from the University of Vermont worked alongside Ocean Academy students to lay foundation blocks for a new computer lab.

Edmonton Interact Club is providing grant money to secure and furnish the lab.

Rotary 5370 Belize Literacy Project donated 10 desktop computers.



Computer Lab



**OCEAN ACADEMY IS INTERESTED IN:**

- Forming new Caye Caulker Rotary and Interact clubs.
- Partnering with well-established Rotary Clubs to fundraise for projects for Ocean Academy, conservation groups, and the Caye Caulker community.
- Contributing to goals and initiatives of Belize Literacy Project, including role of computer technology.
- Arranging international exchanges, and cross-cultural friendship activities.
- We have many project proposals for education and community development on Caye Caulker. We hope your clubs are excited to partner with us too!



Planting a mahogany tree for Earth Day.



Volunteering with the Audubon Society Invasive Coconut Removal Project on Half Moon Caye.



“Fun in the Sun Summer Camp”: Ocean Academy welcomes international volunteers to help organize community events for children. High-school students gain experience as Junior Leaders and role models.



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