



Mixing sweet corn and scholarships

Annual corn roast raises \$14,000 for Belize students from rural areas

BY ARTHUR CHURCHYARD



Scholarship students in Belize outside their high school during a visit with SHARE representatives Isabelle Harmer and Les Frayne.

Somewhere between serving heaps of sweet corn and enjoying the mellow music of this fall's annual corn roast, the SHARE community managed to raise more than \$14,000 for the Belize scholarship fund. Good food, good weather, and a good cause all combined to make the corn roast memorable -- not only for those who were there, but also for the many students in Belize who will now be able to continue their high school careers.

Financial barriers prevent high school students in Belize from finishing their secondary education. The average semester's tuition -- about CDN \$250 -- is equal to an average year's income for

many people in rural Belize.

"These students are hard workers, but the money just isn't there for them to continue paying for high school," says Les Frayne, scholarship fund manager. "A little bit goes a long way in Belize; the SHARE scholarship fund is helping many students to graduate who would not have had the opportunity otherwise."

The scholarship fund supports 80 students, one half on scholarships and the other half on partial scholarship. The students supported by the fund come from rural areas such as Indian Church Village in northern Belize. They are recommended by teachers for their

potential, based on excellent marks. All the scholarship students also volunteer in the community and show good character in day-to-day situations.

The need to support such students was recognized by Isabelle Harmer, who hosts the SHARE corn roast every year on her family's farm. As a former teacher, she knows how important education is in fostering healthy communities and life long learning.

"If you had the chance to meet the scholarship students in Belize, to see how wonderful and engaged they are, you would understand why we need to continue supporting them," says Harmer.

Some of the more than 300 people who attended this year's corn roast have been part of monitoring trips to Belize. Among the crowd were several University of Guelph students from the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow club, which toured villages in Belize last spring.

Monitoring trips usually involve teams of up to a dozen people, with diverse backgrounds. The teams fly down together, and once there, people such as Isabelle often see a way they can help. They return to Canada with the determination to make a difference, an increased awareness and enthusiasm for aid in the rural communities they've visited.

These new activities complement and reinforce the agricultural projects SHARE is already running in Belize.

Increased awareness of international development issues had a strong presence at the corn roast. Fair-trade coffee was the drink of choice, and many conversations ranged over issues of international development. Harmer says to learn more about SHARE projects in Belize, there's no substitute for taking part in a monitoring trip.

"Go there," she says. "That's the only way to really appreciate how much of a difference we can make."

Value-added production goes a long way to help women

BY LAURIE WEBER

Market prices of raw sugar in Honduras are especially low right now, so grassroots efforts are underway to try to find ways to add value to the raw product, and diversify. With SHARE's help, small-scale farmers are able to provide better quality food products to their families and the community.

SHARE has recently completed a project to benefit rural Hondurans with Horizons of Friendship, a like-minded Canadian organization based in Coburg, Ontario. Equipment and training were provided to five campesino* small businesses and women's associations in communities located in Comayagua department. So far, 45 members of the campesino associations and 270 family members have benefited from the project.

A project goal was to improve the quality and quantity of production of

bread or sugar-cane derived products. SHARE contributed funds towards necessary tools, such as a mixer, baking molds, and utensils. As well, the group has received training on commercial baking and help in many other aspects of setting up a business, including record keeping, acquiring commercialization permits, and establishing quality control measures.

The Hondurans are working towards organic certification for the raw sugar. Their buyers' network will only purchase organically produced sugar, and the certification process requires a field study and various other requirements that are time consuming. Support from SHARE has been used to assist with this process.

SHARE has joined forces with Horizons to fund two more projects, in Honduras and Guatemala. Both projects will enable over 1000 rural teenagers and young

adults who are not able to attend regular full time classes to continue with their education while they work. These projects facilitate critical skill development and the integration of otherwise unengaged youth into society.

*Campesino, a term used throughout Latin America, refers to small-scale farmers who either own or rent small plots of land on which they practice sustainable agriculture.

Women at work in the bakery





Micro-credit around the world

BY LAURIE WEBER

The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded last month to economist Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh and the Grameen bank he founded, providing loans to millions of poor people. Yunus's work in what's called microcredit has now been recognized as a practical solution to combating rural poverty in Bangladesh.

Microcredit has become an important liberating force in societies where women, in particular, struggle against repressive social and economic conditions. SHARE has been providing loans to impoverished people in Brazil for many years and have also found microcredit to be very effective.

Loans are often in three graduated stages, with a maximum outstanding of CDN \$600. Borrowers must start with small loans (for example, \$50) and demonstrate credit worthiness before advancing to the subsequent stage of loan. Sometimes the arrangement is one-third grant, one-third loan, and one-third

contribution from the borrower.

A microcredit program initiated with SHARE funds has been in effect in Pelotas, Rio Grande do Sul state, since 1995 and now totals approximately CDN \$40,000.

In Brazil, groups of farmers (15 to 60 families in a community) rather than individuals apply for assistance. Some current projects include beehives and equipment, a roaster for cashew production, and equipment and jars for preserving fruits and vegetables.

In El Salvador, SHARE has recently started more than 65 micro-enterprise projects in three districts. SHARE works with ANTA, a local agricultural not-for profit organization, to ensure the funds are being properly distributed and repaid. Some current loans to families include vegetable and fruit production (papayas), speciality market items such as herbs and various livestock including rabbits and chickens.

The average loan in El Salvador is \$225.

This goat project is an example of micro-credit in Brazil. Pele, the owner of the goats has doubled his income through increased quality and quantity of production since SHARE has helped his village.

Loans are repaid and include the pass on principle of giving the offspring or plants to other local families. Of note is the fact that the loss ratio of loans to date has been zero.

Please consider making a donation

To continue the work that SHARE does, please consider making a donation. More than \$160,000 in donations were made last year, an increase of just two per cent over the previous year. This year, donations are down and SHARE has lots of good project proposals just waiting to be given the green light.

SHARE's good deeds are something to sing about

The Covenant House Band sang at a fundraising concert in Brampton this summer, expressing gratefulness and thanks for SHARE's good works. The Covenant House band, from Orangeville, performed light R&B, blues and gospel rock, for a crowd of more than 100 people. A highlight of the evening was the song specifically written about SHARE, simply called SHARE. SHARE's principle of lending a hand, by providing a "hand-up" rather than a "hand-out", came out strong and clear. The event raised more than \$1,500. Plans are in the works to repeat the concert in the Fergus area in the spring.

SHARE's annual fundraising events such as the Terra Cotta Sharing Hands Ladies Group annual plant sale and the golf tournament were a success again this year. The Scholarship Corn Roast was well

attended with over 400 people at Isabelle and John Harmer's farm in Burlington. Many individuals and organizations have contributed greatly to SHARE this year, through various events and generous donations of time and resources.

A big thanks to all the generous people who helped to make the 7th annual corn roast at the Harmer Farm such a great success. Eighty students in Belize are able to attend high school with the help of the scholarships. Thanks also to family and friends who donated time, talent and food, to feed and entertain the over 300 hungry kids and adults who came. A special thanks for Parkside Farm for donating the corn. All in attendance had fun and SHARE hopes to see everyone next year, same time, same place, the second Sunday in September.



Youngsters enjoying the SHARE scholarship Corn Roast

Excerpt from "SHARE"

Written by Susan Gardhouse

Won't somebody send me some help
Can't my Angel whisper my name
in your ear?
It's not easy to be in need
I have to ask in desperation
And the dirt was on my knee

Then they heard
Then they understood
And they sent you
SHARE the world (chorus)



S.H.A.R.E. AGRICULTURE FOUNDATION COMING EVENTS 2006

Annual General Meeting, Saturday January 20, 2007 — 1:15pm
Mayfield United Church, 12496 Dixie Road, Mayfield, ON (North of Mayfield Rd.)

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In memoriam

SHARE is saddened at the loss of one of the founding members who passed away this past June. Don Cleave became a director in 1979, and continued to be involved on the Board of Directors through the 1990s. Don helped organize SHARE's first project, sending cows to



Brazil. His dedication to SHARE has helped countless people. Don will be missed.

Tax changes for charitable donations

To encourage individuals to increase their charitable giving, there is a tax incentive for those who wish to donate publicly traded securities (traded on a prescribed stock exchange). These securities would include stocks, rights, mutual funds, interest in related segregated funds, or bonds donated to charitable organizations such as SHARE. Effective May 2 2006, capital gains triggered on the dispositions of donated securities have been eliminated. The elimination of capital gains results in lower income taxes. For more information, contact Steve Robinson, Vice President and Director, RBC Securities at 905-450-5946 or steve.robinson@rbs.com, or visit www.steverobinson.ca



left to right, Steve Robinson, Vilas Kurban, Ian Mena