

PUNTA GORDA, BELIZE

JULIAN CHO HOUSE

JV Presence in Belize since 1984

Mailing Address

Jesuit Volunteers
[JV's Name]
St. Peter Claver Rectory
PO Box 25
Punta Gorda, Belize

Volunteer Accompaniment

JVC Coordinator

William Poling (Maryknoll, 2005-06,'08,'09; Peace Corps, 2010-13)
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Local Formation Team

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Overview

Formerly British Honduras, Belize gained its independence as a country in 1981. The government of Belize is a parliamentary democracy and is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. Though not a violent government, like other countries in Central America, the Belizean government does experience high levels of corruption that affects the people on both national and individual levels. With a population of about 359,000, Belize has the lowest population density in Central America. Belize is also the only country in Central America with the official language of English, though Kriol continues to be the most commonly spoken language of the country. An incredibly diverse country, Belize celebrates seven main ethnic groups including Garifuna, Creole, Mopan Maya, Q'eqchi' Maya, Mestizo, East Indian and Mennonite. Even more diverse, is Belize's natural beauty. From endless rainforests to the second largest barrier reef in the world, Belize's natural resources support its tourism industry, which continues to be the greatest source of income for the country.

History of Service in this Country

Belize was the very first community of JVC, formerly Jesuit International Volunteers (JIV), which opened in 1984. JVs were placed primarily in the northern districts of Belize and eventually started communities in Belize City, Punta Gorda, and Dangriga. In 2005, the site in Dangriga ended after the closing of the primary school run by religious women. JVC has always had a close relationship with the Jesuits within Belize, most of whom are U.S. American. The Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus oversees the Jesuits in Belize. There are also a number of orders of religious women in Belize City and Punta Gorda who have served as great resources for the JVs, both individually and collectively.

JVC Partner Agencies

St. Peter Claver Parish
St. Peter Claver School

Country Specific Resources

Books:

Like Bushfire (2016) Herbert Gayle, Virginia Hampton, Nelma Mortis. A newly released book about Male Social Participation and Violence in Urban Belize

Colonialism and Resistance in Belize, Essays in Historical Sociology (2004), O. Nigel Bolland

Women of Belize: Gender and Change in Central America (1995), Irma McClaurin

Snapshots Of Belize, an anthology of short fiction (1995), Belizean writers series

A History of Belize (1973), *Narda Dobson*. A good paperback history, many libraries have it.

Beka Lamb (1982), *Zee Edgell*. Interesting insights into growing up in Belize.

A Profile of the New Nation of Belize (1981), *William David Setzekorn*. An overview of the cultures, geography, and history of Belize.

The Thirteen Chapters of Belize (2000), *Assad Shoman*. Thorough history of Belize.

The Last Flight of the Scarlet Macaw (2008), *Bruce Barcott*. The story of one woman's crusade against corrupt foreign governments and multinational corporations to save the habitat of an endangered bird.

News & Music Websites: <http://belizenews.com/>; <http://edition.channel5belize.com/>;
<http://www.lovefm.com/> <https://www.breakingbelizenews.com/>

Online Short Videos:

On Mayan Land Rights: <https://vimeo.com/154788888?ref=fb-share>

Belize & environmental issues - Offshore Oil Controversy: <https://vimeo.com/204943538>

Language Websites: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belizean_Creole

Local Art Information: <http://www.imagefactorybelize.com/>

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