

**PAUL HARRIS FELLOWSHIP**  
**TRIBUTE TO MR. LUIS CARBALLO**  
**MARCH 31, 2016.**

Awarded at the Rotary Rainforest Reading and Adventure Camp Celebration of Excellence Banquet (Aquada Hotel San Ignacio, Belize ) by Rotary Club of Red Deer Rotarian Lynne Paradis.

Indeed it is an honor to be here this evening representing the Rotary Club of Red Deer, Alberta Canada to bestow a Paul Harris Fellowship to a local strong supporter of Rotary initiatives. The most worthy recipient is Mr. Luis Carballo.

I have been the project lead for the past six years on the Rotary International Literacy Alive project. This project has the primary purpose of improving the literacy achievement of primary school aged children in the Cayo district. Mr. Carballo (Luis) has been a catalyst for the significant success factors that are part of the project history. His leadership as the Director of Education for the Cayo Ministry of Education District has been exemplary. The progress in achieving many of the Literacy Alive goals could not have happened without the relentless and generous commitment provided by Luis. He led his staff and educators in the Cayo district in development of project goals and in the implementation of support strategies for the project. His work with the local Rotary Club of San Ignacio and the Rotary Club of Red Deer provided the critical support to move the project forward --and improving it in each of the three dimensions of the project (Literacy Alive I, and II preceded the present project). Rotary Global projects require local commitment to operate and the intended long term goal of building the capacity of local community leaders for long term Belize led sustainability cannot be achieved without 'on the ground' ongoing local support. Luis was the educational leader that we came to depend on to move literacy support initiatives forward for the benefit of Cayo students and teachers. Luis's vocational priority of improving education in Belize has been reflected in his personal drive to take the opportunities and risks to provide quality support for Belize teachers and students, to engage local school leaders in literacy priorities and to build the instructional capacity of

classroom teachers. The notable success in student improvements in literacy in the past four years is evidence of his exemplary leadership. His support for Rotary has been an essential element in our Rotary Club continuing to develop Rotary Global projects in the Cayo district. Over 400,000 BZ dollars has been contributed to operationalize literacy improvement projects and six Canadian literacy expert teams have visited Cayo schools to strengthen Belize literacy improvement strategies in schools. Participants in the past six years from both Belize and Canada believe that the investment has contributed to literacy improvements in Cayo schools

Luis has been six years as the Director of the Cayo District education office. Previously, he worked in Stann Creek and Orange Walk and that was where I was first involved with him in Rotary literacy activities. From my first meeting with him it was clear that he had the best interests of children in school as a priority in his work. He knew that the instrument to assist student success in literacy would have long term benefits for the future prosperity of the children, the communities in which they lived and Belize as a country. He also knew that strong teacher development was needed to move literacy success forward. From our first meeting many hours of discussion resulted in many professional development activities for teachers, involvement of local community supporters (parents, librarians) , purchase of resources, classroom visits and instructional coaching and mentorship of local educational leaders and classroom teachers.

Luis has a strong educational background. He holds a Bachelor of Education degree and a Master of Education degree from Florida State University. He has completed all of his courses and is presently working on completing his dissertation as the final step in completing his Doctorate of Education. He has served, and continues to serve on numerous, volunteer college boards, his Catholic church community and other community service organizations using his leadership skills to improve communities.

Married to Rocio (President of Sacred Heart College) Luis is one of six children of Irma and Belizario (here with us tonight to honor their son) He is the youngest of five boys and one sister, originally from Orange Walk. He comes from a family with a strong background in education including his father who was a teacher and principal for years. Luis has an interest in

specialty knives and a personal passion for dogs --- recently celebrating the addition of nine puppies to home in the past few weeks. He has a terrific sense of humor and his warm and gentle demeanor wins the hearts of people who meet him. Over the years his sense of humor and ability to poke fun at friends has had me laughing many times and has contributed to his reputation as a true friend of education and of Rotary. The Canadian teams I have led to Cayo have many positive things to say about Luis, always feeling listened to and supported in the work they do as visitors to Belize.

Some of the accomplishments that contributed to the nomination of Luis for a Paul Harris fellowship include:

- Enthusiastic support for Rotary literacy initiatives
- Leadership of local staff and teachers to engage fully in literacy projects
- Mobilization of district leadership staff to support literacy action and to follow up with sustainability strategies to move literacy success forward
- Prompt intervention and assistance when requested
- Assisting in program planning including identification of relevant priorities for Cayo schools
- Collection and interpretation of data and evidence to inform new project needs and expansion of literacy improvement strategies
- Work in improving the sanitation in schools such that students absenteeism decreased (healthy children attend school and learn, ill children miss important learning opportunities, fall behind and become discouraged. For example, improvement in washrooms at Howard Smith school resulted in significant decreases in students with UTI's and Dengue fever, and increases in literacy progress). I am told that some schools in Cayo had deplorable washroom conditions prior to Luis moving to the Cayo office and these are now significantly improved positively impacting student health.
- Support for school librarians, addition of relevant reading resources in schools and quality teacher support materials, playgrounds on school sites.
- **STRONG** beliefs in supporting teachers in professional learning about effective literacy instruction

- Support for the concept of school parent reading coaches to assist teachers and students and to engage community members in literacy awareness.
- Insistence of extra support targeted for small village schools (the first phase of this project involved a team of Canadians working directly with five small village schools (most recently including a dimension of this program targeted to support schools in Duck Run 1, 2, 3, and Billy White and La Grassie).
- Willingness to take some risks in trying educational innovations (eg. Rainforest Reading and Adventure Camp)
- Encouraging Belize teachers to assume leadership roles in Rotary projects and to serve as trained literacy coaches.
- Introduction of bus transportation to village schools to bring students to high schools.
- Installation of water filters in various communities
- Development of a system for educators to use laminators and special classroom resources (Rotary donated).

A testament to Luis's strengths is well described by the following comments provided to me by the staff he leads:

- He loves children and is always acting with the best interests of students
- We learn from him all the time --- he pushes us to achieve more and excel
- He treats us very well and in turn we work hard to help meet the goals he sets
- He has high standards for us all and we strive to meet them
- He is a champion for the disenfranchised students; children who have serious challenges in learning
- A most generous and unselfish leader
- An advocate of 'pitching in' and the idea that it takes teamwork to make a difference
- He is a wealth of knowledge
- Luis has a genuine sensitivity to the needs of different culture and faith communities
- We feel supported and loved by him --- Luis is the best boss ever!

The presentation of the Paul Harris Fellow recognition is the Rotary Foundation's way of expressing its appreciation for a substantial contribution to humanitarian and education programs. The tribute is made to a person whose life demonstrates a shared purpose with the objectives of the Rotary Foundation. Luis was designated to receive this fellow as a genuine appreciation from the Rotary Club of Red Deer, Canada for supporting the Literacy Alive global project over the last six years. A world of peace and goodwill comes closer to reality today as Luis becomes a Paul Harris Fellow. Contributions made to the Rotary Foundation as part of the fellowship program provide Rotary with funds to support worthy global projects such as this one which focuses on improving literacy which has benefits in long term improvement to individual and community progress. The investment in the ideal of goodwill, peace and understanding is held by Rotarians the world over and is one ideal that Luis clearly shares.

It gives me great pleasure, Luis , to present to you two emblems of appreciation tonight as a Paul Harris Fellow --- a certificate and pin. Please accept our congratulation and sincere thanks, for your commitment to our common goals of world understanding and peace.

Please join me in saluting, a terrific citizen and dear friend, Luis Carballo.

L. Paradis  
March 2016.