

United Belizeans of Northern Illinois Distributes \$17K in Scholarships



Photo Credit: UBNI

August 19, 2019. On August 8th, 2019, United Belizeans of Northern Illinois celebrated their 9th anniversary. The members of this organization work tirelessly throughout the year to raise funds for sponsorship of scholarships and outfitting schools in Belize with backpacks and footwear.

The night was infused with elegance, laughter and dance. Master of Ceremonies Dr. Wade masterfully steered the ceremonies. Keynote Speaker, Mrs. Debra Baptist-Estrada, Deputy Director of Immigration in Belize advised the scholarship recipients that they must measure their success by the contributions they make to their fellow man rather than by the material things they have acquired. Motivational Speaker Leo Bradley, challenged the students to dream big. The Hon. Michael Peyrefitte, Attorney General of Belize also addressed the scholarship recipients and encouraged them to work hard in college and to make the people who is making this journey possible proud. He also asked that they remember that they are being assisted through this journey and that they must do the same when they have completed their studies and are in a position to help others. He told them that he hopes that they will return and help others in Belize who needs it.

The night proceeded with the issuance of 17 (\$1,000) scholarship awards to various universities throughout the United States as well as renewal of 6 High School scholarship one in each district in Belize. Special awards of appreciation were given to individuals and organizations who have supported UBNI and Belize. The awardees were Roman A. Palma - Distinguished Person of the Year Award, Lake Forest Bank, a Wintrust Bank, accepting on behalf of the bank was Lisa Meggs, Vice President - Distinguished Partner Award and You Can Missions accepting the award was Julie Boelter - Distinguished Service Award. "We work hard and take great pride in giving" shared President Wayne Bowen.

Even though the focus of the night was about recognizing the scholarship recipients and donors, UBNI made sure that the attendees had a great time. We were treated to a three-course meal and entertainment by Benque Marimba Los Hijos Del West, which is a Marimba ensemble comprised of young men and women from Benque Viejo. These young adults were phenomenal; they carried themselves with great dignity and discipline and displayed great talent in their performance. They regaled us with every genre of music imaginable and the dance floor was never empty.

United Belizeans of Northern Illinois have been in existence for nine years and through the assistance of major corporations, private donors, fundraisers and elected officials in Northern Illinois they have remained constant in their yearly scholarships and other donations to schools in Belize. "Our charge is to inspire the future and make a difference here and in our beloved Belize" said Vice President Letty Castellanos and H.C of Belize in Chicago. UBNI has made Belize proud and we know they will continue to work selflessly and tirelessly to continue to assist with the growth of our young people through education.

This event is a must do, place it on your calendars for next year, the second weekend in August.