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The Lodge at Chaa Creek
A Green Globe Case Study – Category:Hotel



The Environment and the Community

The goal of Chaa Creek is to establish a model of low-impact, sustainable development. By stimulating interest in the environment, natural history and local culture we hope to demonstrate the long term benefits of ecotourism over other environmentally damaging options for development.

This statement is and has been the guiding principal behind the development and day-to-day operations of Chaa Creek. Our product is the lush tropical environment and natural wonders of Belize, its ancient Maya civilization and the harmonious multicultural society that encompasses Belize today. These assets provide Chaa Creek and Belize's tourism industry with a wealth of ingredients to empower the industry and the people of Belize that reap its benefits. The challenge that we face now is how to sustain the wise use of these assets and insure that they remain intact and viable for the benefit of future generations.

Chaa Creek subscribes to the guiding principals of ecotourism. We understand that in order to survive and prosper we must work harmoniously with the natural environment and the indigenous people of the local communities. Our staff, which numbers over 120 full-time employees, is totally comprised of Belizeans from the local towns and villages who make up the backbone and heart of our operation. In this regard we strive to continually provide our staff with both local and international training opportunities. This in turn has resulted in many of our staff being able to progress up the employment ladder into management positions here at Chaa Creek and other resorts as well as branching out on their own to become tourism entrepreneurs within their own right.

The design and construction of Chaa Creek has evolved around vernacular architecture using local materials and craftsmen combined with modern technology to improve efficiency and sustainability. For one example, the roofs of our guest cottages, restaurant, bar and guest reception building are thatched in a traditional manner using the indigenous bay leaf palm leaves gathered from the local forests. To compensate for this extraction of natural resources we maintain an on-going reforestation project which has replanted thousands of bay palm seedlings and served as an environmental education opportunity that we have shared with both local and international students.

The 365 acre Chaa Creek Nature Reserve and the flora and fauna that it nourishes, is the life giving force that sustains Chaa Creek and ultimately the well-being of our staff and their families. It is a resource that must be protected, conserved and utilized in only the wisest manner. It is this principal that encourages Chaa Creek to continually strive to improve and promote environmental education programs within the local school systems. On many occasions we have partnered with local and international organizations and institutions in order to acquire the professional expertise necessary to promote sustainable use of our natural resources and provide our local educators with the tools that are necessary to broaden their abilities and achieve this goal.



Corporate Social Responsibility

Throughout the years Chaa Creek has continually provided support to the local community; recognizing full well that it is the local hard working Belizeans who have contributed so much to the success of Chaa Creek. Without their dedicated assistance, none of what we and our guests enjoy today could have been possible. Sustainable tourism must be firmly rooted within the local community and must provide true and lasting benefits to all. This is the fundamental reason why Chaa Creek supports many community projects and social welfare programs every year. We continuously offer assistance to local schools and training centers, sporting events and teams, youth groups, conservation projects and much more.

Chaa Creek believes that the education of the children of Belize is the key to the preservation of our natural environment which in turn supports the sustainability of our tourism industry and thusly the economic well-being and social advancement of the people of Belize. We are committed to this vision and continually strive to provide the financial and physical assistance required to achieve this goal. Our Education Scholarship Program provides full scholarships to twelve Belizean secondary level students each year.

The health of the people of our surrounding towns and villages is of key importance to Chaa Creek. It is essential to us that all Belizeans have the benefits of good health care. Over the years we have financially assisted and supported many of our staff members and their families as well as other members of the local communities when medical emergencies arise. We have secured specialized international medical treatment, facilitated medical evacuations and provided health care equipment and medicines in their time of need.

Recognizing the negative impact of crime against the welfare of our people and communities, Chaa Creek has taken a hands-on approach to helping alleviate this repressive and debilitating problem. In addition to direct financial and material donations and support to the Belize Police Department, six of our staff members serve as voluntary Special Constables and our Loss Prevention Manager represents the tourism industry on the National Crime Control Council and the Police Department Reform Committee. He also assists local communities with the establishment of Neighborhood Watch Programs.

Chaa Creek has and continues to actively contribute to the support and advancement of Belize's tourism industry. Over the years, members of our management team have voluntarily held leadership positions within industry associations and have served on and chaired numerous action committees and groups. We take our commitment to the tourism industry and the people of Belize seriously and will continue to serve and support in the future.





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CHAA CREEK

Wildly Civilized

www.chaacreek.com

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