



NAME: Ryan

YEAR: 3rd Year Kinesiology

LOCATION: Dangriga and Belize City, Belize

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF A PEER EDUCATOR

DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR: After hiring, Peer Educators have a lot to do before leaving for initiative. Each initiative has initiative specific meetings once a week where we learned about Belizean culture, as well as doing some practice teaching. In these meetings, we got to hear about the experiences of our Initiative Directors, and their tips and tricks. There is also an education session once a week that all initiatives go to. These sessions were generally made up of interesting guest speakers and practice teaching. The guest speakers covered a wide variety of topics, and often taught very valuable lessons. Peer Educators are also responsible for fundraising during the school year. There is an individual fundraising component, but PE's also get to participate in fun QHO fundraisers, like caroling during the holiday season.



ON INITIATIVE: The Belize initiative is split into two groups; a group of six and a group of four. The entire group travelled to Belize city together, and then the group of four carried on to Dangriga. Halfway through the six week initiative, both groups changed location with the group of four moving to Belize City, and the group of six moving to Belmopan. Typically, each teaching pair works with one or two schools in each location and teaches a full day of classes. The age ranges from students in grade 6 to grade 11. The lessons, which we had practiced throughout the school year, typically involved mental health, bullying, sexual health, nutrition, communication, and self-esteem to name a few. While in Dangriga, we got invited to many exciting events at the school including their banquet for the arts and parents night for the graduating class. While not in class, we explored the community and learned about the culture. Dangriga is known as the culture capital of Belize, so there was lots of interesting things to see and hear. In our down time, we planned our lessons for the coming days and spent some time at the local beach. In addition to our usual teaching schedule, we also had the opportunity to run some lunchtime activities at one of our schools.



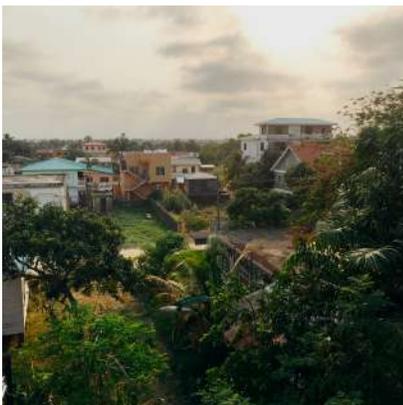


WHAT WE TEACH:

We work with the Belize Ministry of Education to ensure that our curriculum aligns with their curriculum in a complimentary way. Typically, we teach a lot of lessons on mental health. These lessons can include an introduction to what mental health is, an introduction to mental illnesses, self-esteem, and self-care. We also do some lessons on sexual health, bullying, effective communication, substance abuse, nutrition, and puberty. We had lots of opportunity to practice these lessons in the education sessions during the school year, and tried to teach them in a culturally sensitive way. For example, in our nutrition lesson we taught about the six Caribbean food groups rather than the food groups we usually learn ourselves.

AN IDEAL PE:

A PE should also be enthusiastic and approachable. As we interact with the students on a peer to peer level, it is important to be approachable, as students will often approach us with questions they may be uncomfortable asking their normal teachers. Additionally, PE's should be adaptable as a day in the life of initiative is not predictable, and it is important to be comfortable adapting to whatever may come your way.



WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN QHO:

Queen's Health Outreach provides a very unique opportunity to learn more about health topics, global development, and new cultures. Going on initiative was a very special experience to me that I will never forget. I got to meet so many amazing people along the way, from fellow PE's to community members in Belize. It was truly amazing to be so welcomed into a community, and to get immersed in a beautiful new culture. After my time on initiative, I not only have amazing memories and experiences, but feel I learned a lot along the way.