

# On Campus

PwC's student newsletter

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## Beyond your typical summer intern experience



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# *Beyond your typical summer intern experience*

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Summer internships ideally provide exposure to the working environment, new skills, new connections and the opportunity to gain valuable experiences to help shape the next phase of a student's career. For 150 interns at PwC, participation in Project Belize also meant spending five days in Belize City, Belize—changing lives by teaching financial literacy to nearly 1,500 students.

*Cover photo / PwC volunteers building a playground  
Back / Teaching a lesson in the classroom*

## ***PwC sends 150 interns to change lives in Belize***

“When I first heard that I would be attending Project Belize, I was excited to be a part of something this big,” said PwC intern Margaret Kennedy. “There are many opportunities to be involved in community service these days, but rarely with an entire national firm behind you, and this much time to learn from your colleagues outside the office.”

Joining a group of 238 partners, retired partners, principals and staff, the Project Belize interns continued PwC's commitment to build a better future for Belize's youth, providing continuing education to Belizean educators and, for the first time in the project's history, to parents. Similar to the past four years of the Project Belize program, the focus of this trip was to teach students financial literacy, work with teachers and principals on skill development and build learning landscape playgrounds. The PwC team taught lessons on entrepreneurship, career planning, money management and budgeting at 28 schools throughout Belize City, worked with 90 local teachers, and 90 local parents. In addition, they built landscape design playgrounds at six schools for the children to enjoy throughout the year.

Each of the students who participated in the financial literacy camps developed a business plan based on their interests and the needs they perceived in their community. Margaret shares her favorite experience: “I served as the ‘loan

officer,' sitting in front of our class of 16, where I gave my approval to each student's budget and business plan. It was amazing to see the sense of accomplishment on their faces when I finished questioning them and finally stamped 'approved' on their workbooks." For Margaret, critically approaching the techniques she and her PwC team used in the classroom was an important lesson. "The experience challenged me to rethink how I approached the students—we couldn't simply drill concepts into their minds. Instead we had to connect with the students in a way that would inspire them to develop the attitudes that would allow them to be successful."

"I watched these students go from being unable to distinguish between a 'need' or a 'want' to developing their own business plans. Knowing that my teaching assisted in this development was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life," said fellow intern Stephanie Garrison. She also talks about building the students' confidence as a highpoint: "During our first day in Belize, the students were very soft spoken, often avoided eye contact and lacked confidence in their ideas. Throughout our lessons, we encouraged them to constantly answer questions and give presentations in front of the class. I saw them gain confidence, to the point where they presented their business ideas to family and friends—loudly and proudly—on the last day of the program. Knowing that I helped children in a different country develop

a skill that they will carry for the rest of their lives is an amazing feeling." Interns participating in Project Belize invested prep-time before the trip (including studying lesson plans), and took action once they got back—for example, hosting supply drives in local offices, sharing information about their experiences, and seeking additional opportunities to apply their skills to help students in the United States. Those who return to PwC as Associates can continue to support the firm's commitment to youth education through Earn Your Future, a \$160 million investment by PwC—composed of \$60 million in cash donations and one million service hours, worth \$100 million—to address youth education with a focus on financial literacy. This commitment will reach more than two and a half million students and educators in the United States over the next five years.

"The impact PwC had on the students, teachers and families in Belize City far exceeded my expectations," said Stephanie. "And by providing these experiences, the firm is not only developing community but is also developing professional skills in the PwC participants. Project Belize taught me so many skills that I will carry with me throughout my career, namely, I learned how to communicate across cultural barriers and the importance of adapting how you communicate around your audience. I also learned the enormous impact that corporate responsibility programs can truly have."

What skills can you build to help you succeed in the early stages of your career? Based on what they learned in Belize, Margaret and Stephanie share their top recommendations:

- *Public speaking* / comfort in addressing a group helps your overall confidence, whether it's colleagues or a group of students in Belize.
- *Adaptability* / knowing how to set aside the plans you've made to address an unexpected situation or a shift in priorities.
- *Communication* / whether it's creating lesson plans or a summary of your project, the ability to create clear, concise messages comes with practice.
- *Creating engaging presentations* / content should support your speaking points and drive the audience through a logical flow of information.
- *Networking* / no matter what the circumstances, knowing how to strike up a conversation and take advantage of the opportunity to meet new people is a key skill.

**Learn more about Project Belize, visit [www.pwc.com/campus](http://www.pwc.com/campus)**

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