

Spaghetti at St. Simon's to help in Belize

February 22, 2012

This Saturday, Feb. 25, Oakville's St. Simon's Anglican Church will once again be lending a hand in Belize.

This time, it will be through a spaghetti dinner fundraiser.

The Oakville church has been sending teams of youths to Belize since 2009 during alternating years.

Last summer, 14 youths travelled with chaperones to the island of Ambergris Caye in Belize, according to church volunteer Janine Maxwell.

Unfortunately, while much of the island of Belize has been developed into luxurious resorts, most of the indigenous people on the island live in poverty, the worst of which is evident in the slums of San Mateo where few have running water or electricity, according to Maxwell, who assists with St. Simon's Sunday school, vacation bible school and is a Belize trip organizer and chaperone.

Those in need are surrounded by crocodile-infested swampland and children cross ramshackle bridges, referred to as London Bridges because they are always falling down, to get to Holy Cross Anglican School.

The school was started about five years ago by Francis and Vernon Wilson, American missionaries working in Belize, who saw a desperate need for a school for the children of San Mateo who had next to nothing.

The school now educates more than 450 students, gives them nutritious meals, dental care and provides what healthcare it can, to help enhance their quality of life.

The whole community has become involved and, since the last visit in 2009, some of the bridges have been replaced with landfilled roads and mothers are learning to sew at the school's new sewing centre, which has renewed a sense of hope among the people.

This Saturday, St. Simon's (across from Sheridan College) is hosting a Spaghetti Dinner with entertainment provided by its youths to raise money for the school's nutrition program.

Tickets cost \$20 for adults and \$10 for children with a \$50 maximum per family.

To purchase tickets, call the church at 905-845-8351.