

### Caledonia Turns On to Jaguars!

In late August, a sad event occurred in the Corozal District town of Caledonia. A healthy male jaguar was shot and then skinned. Horrifically, it was shown on the news and many people voiced harsh objection to this unfortunate and unnecessary action.

However, in September, Belize Zoo Education Officers, Jamal Andrewin and Celeshia Guy, created a different “Jumpin Jaguar” atmosphere in this placid northern village. Warmly welcomed by principal Augusto Olivarez, they met and gave fun presentations to over 300 students.

Principal Olivarez kindly invited parents and teachers and the “standing room only” audience was keen to learn all they could about the greatest cat in the Americas: our jaguar. Besides discussing jaguars in Belize, our charming “Junior Buddy” got much review, as did the Problem Jaguar Rehabilitation program, and of course, beloved black jaguar “Lucky Boy”.

No need to kill a jaguar who wanders through one’s lands. These big felines are “roamers”, and it has been documented that a jaguar will easily travel 100 miles in a day in search of a juicy gibbon, deer or peccary.

Of course! The vital Central Belize Wildlife Corridor was spoken about with pride. As time passes, these forested lands will play an even more important role in maintaining our remaining jaguar populations. Lots of applause from the crowd on this issue!

A stark display came about when the skin of a jaguar was brought out for all to see. While the dull and unattractive skin was viewed, there was a large photo of gorgeous “Junior Buddy” gleaming in the background. That message was very clear. What is more appealing? The decayed and sad-looking jaguar skin held for all to inspect, or the glowing look at our incredible natural heritage, the nothing-short-of-being-too-beautiful for words, “Junior Buddy” himself!

Justicia the jaguar mascot handed out posters and poems to all and it was a terrific day for everyone. Sure would be nice to have a visit to The Best Little Zoo in the World from the kind and charming people of Caledonia - quite a few happy jaguars would enjoy giving a "high five" to these special kids and their teachers!

