

## **BELIZE CITY EXPERIENCED WITH MITCH**

**Prepared by: Marilyn Young  
Deputy Mayor  
Belize City Council  
1999**

Belize City is the most populated area within the country of Belize, with a population of approximately 55,000 people and an estimated 20,000 more within the rural areas. It is the old capital but the Industrial Capital of the Country. The international airport is only 20 minutes away, the biggest port is within the city limits, the major hotels and conference facilities are located here, well, this is where everything happens in Belize. The district include Belize City, and 15 small villages, San Pedro Town on Ambergris Caye, and Caye Caulker which are nearby surrounding islands. Belize City is approximately one foot below sea level with two main rivers flowing within the district and other creeks within the villages in the rural area.

The former government in 1998, had a disaster plan called the National Emergency Management Plan for Hurricane Preparedness. This plan never incorporated the Belize City Council or any of the municipalities within the country of Belize. Persons responsible for the implementation and activation of the relevant committees were Permanent Secretaries assigned to various government ministries.

National elections were held on August 27<sup>th</sup> 1998. The government lost and the People's United Party won 26 seats. During the month of September, various celebrations and activities are held from the 1 to the 21 which is our independence day. So, a lot of parting was going on in the City. The country of Belize, within the past 30 years, never experienced a hurricane in late October. The worst was in 1961 with Hurricane Hatti and only three of the then Councillors had experienced a category 4 hurricane. No one was expecting a hurricane of a Category 5 status such as Mitch.