

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 4<sup>th</sup> 2017

Golden Stream Village



## **Ya'axché supports fire victim with traditional building materials**

Our deepest sympathy goes to a family of five from Golden Stream village who lost their home to a fire on Monday May 1<sup>st</sup> 2017. Cruz Tzalam, who is a subsistence farmer of Golden Stream village, has five children: two are in highschool, two are in primary school and one is a toddler. Tzalam, while sitting outside of his home around 1:00 p.m., was alerted by smoke coming out of his cohune-thatched kitchen. The community joined in the efforts in extinguishing the fire but were unsuccessful. The fire quickly spread, partially burning a second house, a wooden bungalow also owned by Tzalam. The cause of the fire is unknown. According to Tzalam, nothing was being cooked and the fire began outside of the house. Electrical cause has been ruled out as Golden Stream is a community without access to electricity.

Ya'axché Conservation Trust is supporting the family of seven by providing 700 cohune leaves, sticks and other building materials from the Golden Stream Corridor Preserve to help rebuild their home. The 15,441 acre Golden Stream Corridor Preserve (GSCP), bought by Ya'axché in 1998 with support from international partners and donors, was placed under protection because of its important role of connecting the forests of the Maya Mountains to those of the coastal lowland plains in southern Belize. GSCP not only provides a home to many endangered animal species, but under proper management, its sustainable extraction zones provide building materials to community members. This is one way how protected areas in southern Belize are benefiting people living nearby.

We applaud the community leaders and members of Golden Stream village who are supporting Tzalam to rebuild his home and regain his life.

**END.**