

BCAP Business Spotlight



Arana's Kitchen

Meet Ms Elaine Linda Leonie Arana Ortiz, entrepreneur and one of Belize's fastest runners. In 1985 Ms. Ortiz was one of the athletes who represented the Jewel in Mexico in the 1985 regional games and sporting event sponsored by the Sports Council of Belize. Today, she is now the proud owner of Arana's Kitchen.

Arana's Kitchen is an authentic Belizean fast food business, located at the corner of Mahogany and Jasmin Streets in the Lake Independence area. Ms. Ortiz takes pride in providing delicious burritos, granaches, gacho, tostadas, great dog, lobster and fish panades (best sellers) and salbutes, to her community on a daily basis. She also serves the traditional Belizean rice and beans, potato salad, fry plantain with your choice of stew chicken, beef, pork or fish on occasions.

As successful as Ms. Ortiz's business has become, it has not always been an easy road for her. Only after one year of opening her business in 2017, Ms. Ortiz experienced financial hardship that did not allow her to remain in business for too long. She was heartbroken and felt discouraged when she didn't have the resources to keep her business going.

Down but not out, Ms. Ortiz looked for other opportunities over the next year to get her business back up. With much determination and encouragement and support from her daughter and the rest of her family, Ms. Ortiz visited the Belize City Council on a whim in early 2020 to see the Local Economic Development Manager. Her intention was to try and jumpstart the reopening of her business one step at a time.

That meeting changed Ms. Ortiz's life and gave her hope that her small business will be back up and running sooner rather than later. Ms. Ortiz was encouraged by the late Hubert Pipersburgh to sign up for the Belize City Accelerator Program

and was introduced to the officer who guided her through the process.

Ms. Ortiz shared, "the BCAP was the best thing that ever happen for me. Through this program I have learned so much and can now confidently go into and continue to grow my business with the knowledge and skills I've taken away from the training provided through the program. Learning how to market my business simply through social media, how to price my products and most importantly, how to manage my business are all important elements that were lacking the first time around for me. I have learned so much and am so grateful for the opportunities afforded to me through this program".

Due to the ongoing challenges brought on by Covid-19 it is certainly not "business as usual" for Arana's Kitchen. Thanks to the invaluable information received through training, Ms. Ortiz is able to manage and maintain her business even with school closures, curfews and limited movement of people. To-date, Ms. Ortiz is doing fantastic and her business has been seeing slow but steady growth. She has even expanded enough to hire an assistant cook and a kitchen aide, providing jobs for two community members.

Ms. Ortiz added, "Words cannot express how much this opportunity has blessed me. Now, the only thing I can do to show my appreciation is to keep going and build on what I have learned to help my community and lift someone else up as I have been lifted up through this program. This is a great help for small businesses".



For more information on Ms. Ortiz's delicious foods feel free to call her at [+501-629-2323](tel:+501-629-2323) or visit her at the corner of Mahogany and Jasmine Street.