



Anniversary marked with focus on traditional foods

FRIEND Labasa celebrated its 6th anniversary this month with a focus on the theme of Food, Health and Sustainability.

FRIEND office was opened in Labasa on 29th of July in 2009 with the primary aim of reaching out and supporting communities in Vanua Levu through social and economic empowerment programs.

The office currently has a team of nine staff delivering holistic and integrated programs which include health and livelihoods.

Team leader, Makareta Tawa says: "The day's celebration was marked with an event organised with communities of Yalava and Korotubu competing in events such as basket weaving, coconut husking and scraping, cooking of traditional dishes and volleyball. It was a fun day for all involved as the two communities participated heartily in the various activities."

"We saw mostly the elderly taking lead roles in activities with the younger ones watching keenly and learning", says Makareta.



Basket weaving competition in progress

"I believe one of the highlights of the day was the Food Preparation. The range included Fijian deserts like "vakalolo" and "bolobo."

"One of the key messages that FRIEND has is to cut back on the use of processed foods and sugars. Communities are urged to look at healthier alternatives that are natural and local for sustained health and food security." says Makareta Tawa.



Words in Action

Staff at Lautoka office participated in a fun budgeting workshop as they formulated their personal savings plans.

Founder/Director Sashi Kiran says Financial Literacy in communities is one of key programs at FRIEND and before staff try to impress on communities the importance of savings and invest-

ments, it is important for them to practice it for themselves.

"We all know there is no dearth of resources in communities, what is lacking is our failure to budget and stick to our budgets. And ideally one should start on a personal level before we can hope to see it translated onto other levels for good governance." say Sashi.



Product Development Training in Cicia

A four member team from FRIEND headed out to the maritime zone in an effort to boost economic opportunities for Cicia Island in the Lau Group.

This followed a request by Cicia for support in product development and marketing.

The team included Founder /Director Sashi Kiran, Associate Director Dr Jone Hawea Organic Officer Makareta Tawa and Food Production officer Kiristina Dimitai.

The trip was funded by the PAPP (Pacific Agriculture Policy Project) and POETCom (Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community)

The team met with elders, women and youth on potential for various product development and value chain linkages for sustainable livelihood. The team visited 5 villages on the

island to discuss and explore potential income generation projects.

“Cicia proved potential for many potential product development ,” says Organic Officer Makareta Tawa.

“With the island being already certified organic through POETCom’s work, potential of developing root crops like kumala, yams and nuts like tavola, vutu, etc. for markets were considered,” says Makareta.

Food Production officer Kiristina Dimatai also conducted food processing workshops on making desiccated coconut.

“The work was easy as women, men and youths got to work in expanding their skills and experience on making VCO. Now they are able to make two products of value using the same amount of coconuts,” says Kiristina.



Campfire of Motivation

Lautoka Girls Guides Association Green Gold District campfire night was a trip down memory lane as a former girl guide and an honour indeed to be the camp chief for the night.

minds and pass on the message of mindful actions for sustainability of health and environment.

The camp night focussed on the theme of “Together We Can Change the World”and included girl guides from Raviravi Sangam, Tavarau Primary, Tuvu Primary, Satya Sai, Drasa Primary and Lovu Sangam School.

Standing in for Founder/Director Sashi Kiran who was away on duty, the night provided a chance to connect with young

By Sandhya Narayan



YEN Follow-ups

This month saw a follow-up of YEN participants engaged in the program over the last three years of EU funding.

“This meant contacting each of the 200 individuals and finding out what they were doing at present,” says Sandhya Narayan, YEN Coordinator, ‘It was pleasing to note majority of the students reporting positively on their progress since they were involved in YEN.’

“Three boys from different cohorts have gone through the Police Training Academy, others are with law firms, tax agents, insurance companies, business houses and other NGOs,” says Sandhya. “Some have gone back to studies.”

The program saw 85% of students from cane farming communities in the west enrolled in the program graduating through the University of the South Pacific.

“YEN helped me a lot in terms of seeking an employment, because I had obtained lot of knowledge and skills during this training . It increased my confidence and self-esteem and I am certain this played a crucial role in assisting me to secure a job. Now I earn around \$6.50 an hour which is approximately \$243 weekly,” tells a Nadi youth.



Camp Chief Speaks



Lighting the Campfire



Campfire Burns Bright

Questions or comments? E-mail us at friend@connect.com.fj

Product of the Month—

Friend's Fiji Style®

Cassava Flour

Friends Fiji Style®

CASSAVA FLOUR

A TASTE OF TRADITION

Gluten Free flour made from
Fiji Cassava



It will be no understatement to say that Cassava is one of the world's most highly wielded super foods.

As a crop plant, cassava provides the highest yield of food energy per cultivated area per day. It is the third most imperative source of calories in the tropics, after rice and maize. Along with rubber and rice, cassava is one of the top essential cash crops as it is the main source of income for some of the world's poorest farmers.

Today, cassava is more than just a food - it has many diverse and medicinal uses. Indigenous tribes were the first to use cassava's compound extract, saponin, in soap. It is still being used today to produce soap as well as shampoo.

In learning about this food, one understands what the ancients have always known, that cassava truly is, and always has been, a gift and an impact to its people.

Learn more: <http://tinyurl.com/nwpgxj6>

By Sandhya Narayan



Women utilize food drying training for income

A range of gluten free flours are being produced in a remote village nestled in the hills of Sabeto. These include breadfruit, plantain and cassava flours. Healthy, local and cheap!

The women's group in Korobebe were provided with training and assisted with the set up of a food dryer through funding provided by Save the Children Fund as a means for income for their community kindergarten.

The group led by Seimili Tiloko says the ladies started with using their local flour for family meals and believe that the taste and nutrition is far better than processed flours from the shops.

Tiko says their group is now selling these in craft fairs and at \$3.00 a packet made from readily available root crops in their village, they make good sales and also receive lots of guests who are interested in the project and its process.



Recipe Corner — Cassava Herb Breakfast



Ingredients

- 1 cup finely chopped bele (or any other green leafy vegetables of your choice)
- 1 small onion
- 1-2 cups *Friend's Fiji Style®* Cassava Flour
- 6 Cherry Tomatoes
- 2 teaspoons of fresh herbs (basil/coriander/dill)
- Salt

Oil for the pan

Method

1. Put all the ingredients in a bowl and mix well.

2. Add enough water for a pancake like consistency.

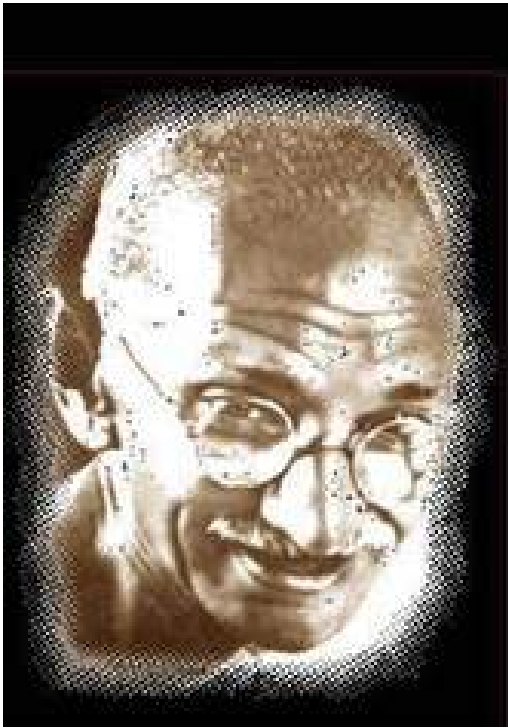
3. Heat up a frying pan and lightly brush with oil.

4. Pour the batter in the hot pan and spread it out with the back of the spoon.

5. Flip once to cook through the top side.

6. Shape your cassava herb breakfast in a roll and serve hot.

By Sandhya Narayan



You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.



Take A Pledge—Eat Right, Exercise and Say NO to Smoking



“Your body is made to move, not sit still or stand quietly,” says Dr Josefine Sprenger, FRIEND Biostatistician and a qualified fitness instructor.

community groups to encourage a healthier lifestyle.

“I look forward to these weekly sessions. Being a mother of two little girls does not give me much time for myself, but my family understands and supports me to ensure that I don’t miss any. They can see my mood is better and I have more energy than before.” says Ms N.

Can this be put in any simpler words?

FRIEND has initiated and is conducting exercise sessions in a number of communities on a weekly basis. Community exercise programs work with



Tuvu ladies stretching it out

Time for Harvests

