



Spectators to Spect-actors

A group of 20 people explored creative techniques of engagement at a weeklong workshop at FRIEND this month.

The group comprised youths, community leaders and FRIEND staff who are training to use performing arts to promote sustainable development.

Facilitators, Babu Ayindo, a peace builder from Kenya and Penelope Moore, a theatre trainer from Suva explored various arts based approaches that could be used in communities.

These approaches were welcomed by village elders who were invited to provide feedback.

“These techniques allow audience to become more than spectators, they become active and as "spect-actors" they explore, show, analyze and transform the reality in which they are living into a positive change,” said Ayindo. “

“FRIEND has been working in communities for the last 12 years experimenting with innovative ideas and approaches. Communication can be quite a



Reshma (in blue) with other Playback Theatre actors in action

challenge and we have delved into theatre to reach out to communities in the past. The results of this workshop is encouraging so we plan to take these skills into the wider community.” says FRIEND Director Sashi Kiran.

“My favorite part of the workshop was the technique of playing with colors,” said Reshma Sharma, “Often people find it difficult to explain their thoughts. What we have realized is that even the simplest of drawings can tell a story of a thousand words.”

International Women's Day 2015



A group of FRIEND delegates joined more than 120 women to mark International Women's Day celebrations in Lautoka this year.

Globally, International Women's Day celebrates the achievements of women while calling for greater gender equality.

The theme for this year's celebration was “Make It Happen”, encouraging effective action for advancing and recognizing women.

Fiji Association of Women Graduates (FAWG) organized the

FRIEND delegates at IWD celebrations at USP Lautoka Campus L-R Melaia, Shoko, Laisa, Kalisiana, Nileszni & Yuri

event to encourage the sharing of stories and motivations by selected speakers.

“We are lucky to be in Fiji where women command the respect of the society, have a right to education and can speak freely on their issues and concerns. There are lots of opportunities for us to reach whatever heights we wish to aspire to and there should be no barriers to prevent us from doing so,” said FRIEND youth delegate Kalisiana Tuamo as she recapped her evening after the outing.

Income Projects for Kindergartens in the North

Ten rural communities in the North now have their own Income Generation Projects to help in the running of their kindergartens.

Set up by the communities, the kindergartens school committee has been assisted by Save the Children Fund with capacity building and training. However, there had been difficulties in maintaining the schools and their programs because of lack of funds.

Save the Children Fund then approached FRIEND to look into potential assistance with sustainable income generation projects.

FRIEND consulted schools in Suva, Lautoka and the Northern Division trying to establish

sustainable models. The NGO worked with communities to identify suitable projects before engaging them in relevant training and project set up assistance.

Communities in Navakasobu, Korovuli, Wailevu, Doguru and Dogotuki now have their own beekeeping projects, while communities with a healthy resource of coconuts are now processing desiccated coconut. These include Tabia, Namoli, Nakama, Mataniwai, and Nabukadogo.

“It’s still early but we’re already seeing good results. We’ve also assured them of steady markets for their produce.,” says Viloki Parmar, FRIEND Labasa Team Leader.



A Change of a Lifetime

“I am standing and walking on my own today.”

Those are the words of the very brave and very excited 56 year old Mererai Sese, of Yalava in the northern division.

In 2007, because of diabetes, Mererai lost her ability to walk unassisted as her lower limbs began to weaken.

Six years later, in 2013, upon meeting FRIEND’s SMILE team, the house wife took on the challenge to start walking again on her own.

With advice and consultation from the team at FRIEND, Mererai changed her diet and took up an exercise routine. From then onwards, she has never looked back.

SMILE Nurse Eva Tavabulabula said they started Mererai with simple exercises as well as weights, using water bottles.

“Mererai is a delight to work with because we know she is keen and her efforts are genuine. She follows through on her diet and exercise plan,” said Eva.

“I’m excited and I know one day I will be able to do all the household chores by myself as the woman of the house,” said Mererai.



Mererai Sese of Yalava

In Search of Local Tastes

“Food plays an important role in helping tourists decide if they’re to return, no matter which country they’re visiting,” says New Zealand based Chef/Resorts Consultant Colin Chung.

Chung made the comment while visiting the FRIEND office this month. He was referred by a friend who had already experienced some of the NGO’s many recipes.

The renowned chef was keen to find out for himself just what FRIEND had to offer after hearing of its stance on promoting local products and healthy cooking.

“When tourists come to Fiji they are looking for real local experiences, and the food plays a very important role. This is why I’m glad that FRIEND uses all these local ingredients and style of cooking. It’s not just healthy and very tasty, it’s also very local and very Fijian,” says Chung.

“We all know that the food served in resorts are very different from what would be served in local homes. Our challenge is to take the taste of home kitchens to the plates of the resort diners.”

Chef Chung also observed while some FRIEND staff cooked local dishes. He was impressed.

“We want to cook with the ladies, learn with them, define the recipes and see how we can refine it for the western tastes,” he added.



**Product of the Month—
Friend's Fiji Style®
Pawpaw Jam**



Simple and sweet, made with pure fruit pulp for an authentic pawpaw taste, this decadent jam is a beautiful breakfast treat.

Friend's Fiji Style® Pawpaw Jam is also versatile enough to make a cake glaze or as an accompaniment to cheese and crackers.

After thorough product testing, Friend's Fiji Style® Pawpaw Jam now joins the range of available local jams, pickles and chutneys brought to you by FRIEND.

What makes our jams different from the rest?

FRIEND Jams are made from fresh local fruits using traditional recipes without using any artificial preservatives or additives, supporting rural livelihoods in Fiji.

Recipe Corner — Spinach Omelet in Coconut Oil



Ingredients:

- Egg – 3
- Tomato – 1, finely chopped
- Virgin Coconut Oil – 1 tblsp + extra
- Spring Onion – 1, chopped
- Spinach – 1/2 cup, finely chopped
- Salt as per taste
- Pepper Powder as per taste

Method:

1. Heat oil in a nonstick pan over medium flame.
2. Add the tomatoes, spinach and spring onions.
3. Sauté for a minute.



Taste Fiji Stocks on Friend's Fiji Style®

Taste Fiji Kitchen's relocated outlet is now sporting its own Friend's Fiji Style® stocked up with assorted selected products from the range.

The stock range includes teas, honey, infused oils, jams, pickles and chutneys, spices, dried fruits and flours.

The restaurant provides a wide range of cuisine to choose from with all their ingredients proudly sourced locally.

The increase in demand for

quality and affordable restaurants saw the relocation of Taste Fiji Kitchen in Martintar, Nadi, to a larger space on Lot 1, Cawa Road, three times the size of its previous property.

Taste Fiji, a hotspot for tourists and locals was established in 2010, born out of Lee and Louise Acreman's desire for fine food and a passion to utilize the best of local products.

The restaurant supports local farmers and utilizes fresh home grown produce to help boost the economy.



FRIEND crew assists with plot preparation

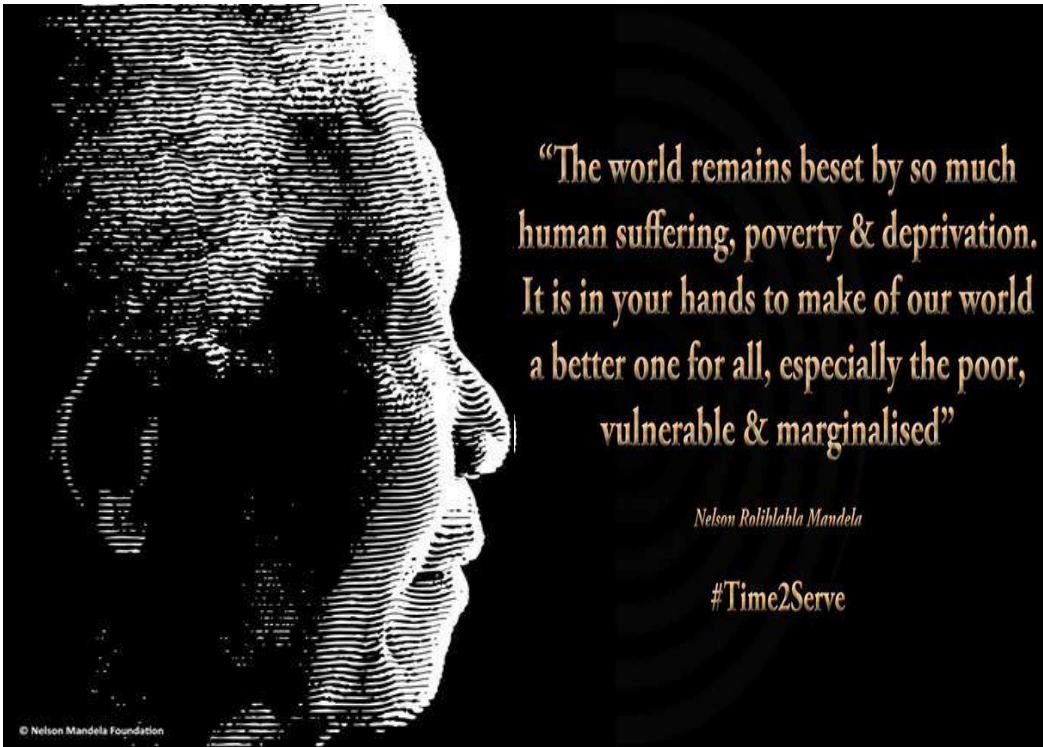
Lending a Hand

“Sometimes it's needed, and we literally have to roll up our sleeves and dig,” says Shalvin Chand, FRIEND Transport Officer.

He is talking about the setting up of backyard gardening, an initiative towards tackling lifestyle diseases like Diabetes and Hypertension.

Startup garden plots are planted with poi, cowpeas, cucumber, eggplants and tomatoes. Aside from providing healthy meals, the gardens also help save money for our communities.

4. Sprinkle salt and pepper powder.
5. Remove from flame and keep aside.
6. Whisk the egg with 1 or 2 tsp water until frothy.
7. Heat a nonstick pan over medium flame.
8. Apply some oil and spread.
9. Pour some of the egg mixture and spread. Cook for a minute or until set.
10. Add some of the spinach/tomato mixture and cook for 30 seconds.
11. Fold the omelet in half and transfer to a serving plate.
12. Serve at once.



“The world remains beset by so much human suffering, poverty & deprivation. It is in your hands to make of our world a better one for all, especially the poor, vulnerable & marginalised”

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela

#Time2Serve



Take A Pledge

Eat Right, Exercise and Say NO to Smoking

“I saved a total of \$280.00 just by cutting out on my weekend drinking over the last 7 months. I was looking at my budget recently to see where I can find money to buy some material for extending my house and I realized I already have it in my bank.”

“I remember the day last September when I was all excited at the thought of a drinking party with my work colleagues as we finished our week. Sashi sensed what we were planning threw a question at us as a group as to why we

were drinking and compromising our health. Something happened to make me take a hard look at what I was doing. I pledged to myself that day that I will not drink mindlessly anymore.”

“From the money I used to allocate for drinking every week, I resolved to save \$10.00 per pay to my pledge account. I cannot explain my feeling, I was amazed at what I had managed to achieve financially. Plus I also feel better and in control of myself.”



To eat or not to eat—Instant Noodles



Instant noodles—the ultimate convenience food! Pop open a packet, break it into a cup, pour hot water and its ready to eat. Hunger pangs are gone. Babies eat it, moms eat it, dads eat it and

even grandparents eat it. But do we know what all it takes to make instant noodles?

The Codex Standards allow the use of 10,000 mg/kg of the chemical Propylene Glycol, an anti-freeze ingredient as humectants (help to retain moisture to prevent noodles from dry-

ing) in instant noodles.

Propylene Glycol is readily absorbed and it accumulates in the heart, liver and kidneys causing abnormalities and damage. The chemical is also capable of weakening the immune system.

Instant noodles and the flavoring soup base also contain high amounts of monosodium glutamate (MSG). It is a flavor enhancer used by instant noodle makers to make their shrimp flavors “shrimpier” and chicken flavors “even more chicken like” MSG can trigger an allergic reaction in 1 to 2 % of the population. Individuals who are allergic to MSG can get burning sensations, chest and facial flushing or pain and headaches from it.

High sodium consumption is linked to stroke or kidney damage.

Some of the chemicals found in instant noodles are also capable of causing cancer. For example, dioxin and plasticizers leached from the containers in the presence of hot water.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), at least 30 percent of all cancers could be prevented through simple measures such as adopting a healthy diet. Instant noodles are definitely an unhealthy diet which consumers should avoid.

Source: <http://www.consumer.org.my/index.php/food/nutrition/132-stay-away-from-instant-noodles-to-keep-healthy>