



# Takitaki

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## THE FRIEND SHOP

FRIEND'S FIJI STYLE is a unique community-based specialty shop that provides an outlet to rural communities to showcase, promote, and sell their products. It is a place where they can develop and enhance enterprise skills and earn regular incomes to support their families and loved ones.

FRIEND'S FIJI STYLE fulfills the FRIEND vision and mission to alleviate poverty.

The shop product range includes a wide variety of foods, clothes, hand-craft and stationery. These products are made using available local resources and traditional skills. Each of the FRIEND'S FIJI STYLE products has a unique story—and community—behind it.

At the shop you can purchase signature food products like Chutneys, Pickles, Jams, and Pure Honey; favorites from our clothing line including sarees, sarongs, scarves, and calico bags; and handmade cards available in quill, masi, and sand designs for all occasions!

Please visit us today and be a part of FRIEND'S latest poverty alleviation initiative. Vinaka!

FRIEND'S FIJI STYLE is located at 154 Toorak Road, Suva, Fiji. Phone: 3318060. For general, wholesale, and distribution inquiries contact FRIEND. Phone: 6663181 or email [friend@connect.com.fj](mailto:friend@connect.com.fj).



## FROM THE VISITORS' BOOK



*We always enjoy visitors at FRIEND. Recently, we had the opportunity to host a visit from the United States Ambassador to Fiji, Larry Dinger. On his latest trip to the West, Ambassador Dinger made a point of stopping in to see the FRIEND office, learn more about our programs, and purchase some of our chutneys. He is pictured above with U.S. Peace Corps volunteer, Lori Banks, and FRIEND Director, Sashi Kiran.*

## DENNIS NALATU: WEAVING HER MAGIC



*Dennis Nalatu holds one of her baskets*

Dennis Nalatu hails from Nailaga village in Ba. Though she lived away from the village for several years after marrying and while starting a family, Dennis never forgot the weaving she learned from her mother as a child.

After the death of her first husband she remarried and moved back to the Nailaga. The first thing she did upon her return was plant voi so she would have material for her weaving. Even before her voi crop matured, she had orders to fill for baskets. Dennis borrowed voi to complete her first order for FRIEND in November 2005. The baskets were used for holiday gift packs of chutneys.

Dennis continues to produce baskets for packaging of FRIEND products. She recently delivered an order of small baskets to the office. With a busy family life, she has difficulty finding enough time to devote to her weaving. In order to meet deadlines she often enlists the help of family and other ladies in the village. The money she earns helps to pay school fees for the two school-age children she has at home and contributes to her family's other expenses.

### What's Happening?

- June 12**  
Queen's Birthday
- June 16**  
FRIEND Youth Oratory Contest
- June 20**  
World Refugee Day
- June 23**  
U.N. Public Service Day
- July 11**  
World Population Day

## GIRLS' CLUB NAIKABULA

The FRIEND youth program is acquiring many stretch marks as it grows and takes shape in Lautoka and the surrounding areas. One of the newest and most vibrant additions to the youth program is a weekly meeting with girls in the Naikabula community. Nine girls from 12–16 years of age meet every Tuesday night to learn about each other, learn new skills, play games and laugh lots. The evening is quite a highlight in Naikabula as the boys sneak around the hall peering through the windows trying to find out what the girls are actually doing inside. The young children also gather at the front door, eager to know what all the fuss is about.

The girls are an enthusiastic group filled with ideas and an ability to laugh loudly throughout any session no matter what the topic. This week was certainly no exception as we all enjoyed an evening of cultural dancing. The girls competently led us in both Indian and Fijian dances consisting of lots of hand waving and leg pumping.

The dance evening was an invigorating introduction to following sessions on cultural appreciation, not to mention a terrific workout for our bodies after a day at school and work!

*Naikabula girls*



### MORDI FIELD VISIT

Staff from the Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovations (MORDI) program made a pleasant visit to Lautoka this month to share their expertise and trial their materials with FRIEND staff and communities. Peni Sakitora and Vikash Kumar of MORDI dedicated the whole week to Participatory Impact Assessment (PIA) and Financial Literacy. There were two communities, Naikabula in Lautoka and Vatulaulau in Ba who benefited from this visit.

The PIA was a follow-up to the training which FRIEND and MORDI staff attended earlier this year. The communities particularly enjoyed the training on Financial Literacy. It gave the participants the opportunity to learn about financial wellbeing, household budgeting and savings.

Financial wellbeing is an assessment of whether a family can pay for their needs. Positive financial wellbeing is a state where the family can meet their daily needs, whereas negative financial wellbeing occurs when the family cannot meet their basic needs. The section on household budgeting looked at household income and household expenses. The communities understood from the presentation that they should look at household income before household expenses. They also learned that they should prioritize their goals as well as their needs and wants. It was explained that saving regularly can make life easier and improve your financial wellbeing. Tips on saving were also shared with participants. Both of the communities are part of FRIEND Save Scheme and enjoyed this session because it encouraged them to take a big picture view of their saving. Many thanks to the MORDI staff for coming and sharing their expertise with our staff and communities.

### ONE MINUTE WITH FRIEND

On one Friday last month there was so much happening in our office that we decided to take a minute to document it! The following pictures were all taken at the FRIEND office on 26 May 2006 at 10:32 a.m. **1.** Program staff meets with community members from Naikabula. **2.** Savers learn more about Save Scheme. **3.** Our Art Coordinator ponders her next move at reception. **4.** Deaf youths produce handmade cards. **5.** The accounts team hard at work. **6.** Discussing youth issues in the program room.



### GETTING SMART ABOUT FAMILY LAW



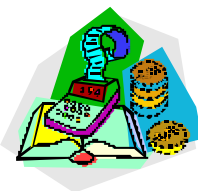
Working in the rural areas as a community worker is interesting. In some cases, I have ended up listening to stories of what people are facing daily.

Often I get questions about where they can go to get help from family assistance, how women can get their husbands to pay maintenance, and how can they pay their children's school fees. I didn't always have the answers, but last month all of these questions were answered in a week long training I was able to attend. Fiji Family Law Act (FLA) training was held at the Pacific Theological Centre in Nasese, Suva. The program was facilitated by the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) and Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT). The week of training was interesting and lively. Topics covered in the training included Marriage, Counseling & Conciliation, and Best Interests of the Child.

On the last day of training we visited the Family Law Court. While there we managed to talk to Mere Pulea, the presiding judge at the Family High Court. That visit and the training made me more comfortable with the FLA and understanding its processes and procedures.

—Mereani Lomavere

### MYOB & ME: ANJANI SHANKAR REPORTS THE LATEST FROM ACCOUNTS



Our Accounts Department is now implementing the MYOB system, which is a very user friendly accounting software, allowing us to move from a time consuming manual system to a computerized accounting system. It was long overdue.

In the past, I have had good working experiences with MYOB in profit-making organizations. However, for a non-government organization like FRIEND I faced challenges, such as tracking each program's expenses against the funding for it. Where I was unsure of how to proceed, I was assisted by John Palmer, Finance Manager from Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific International (FSPI), who has extensive working knowledge of MYOB for a NGO. John spent half a day with me explaining and working with MYOB. His expertise was instrumental to our being able to move forward with this project.

The end result of our work was the completion of the first phase of set up, allowing me to begin the second phase of entering FRIEND account data. Currently, I am working on the data entry from our last financial year beginning 1 August 2005. Much hard work and a great deal of effort is required, but once it is done the results will be very favorable. My aim is to finish the project by month's end. Surely, it will be a time-saving new system for the Accounts Department, making our work and all work at FRIEND simpler and more efficient.

Anjani is the Accounts Assistant at FRIEND