



# Takitaki

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 11, AUGUST 2006

## A REFLECTION ON FRIEND'S FOURTH BIRTHDAY



Looking back to when I started with FRIEND four years ago, I was surprised by how FRIEND has grown and been acknowledged by the Government, communities, other NGOs and abroad.

Relationships have been built, neglected communities noticed, the voiceless heard and many lives changed by the work FRIEND has done.

Back in 2002 there was no office and everything was done by Sashi Kiran, who carried her laptop in a cloth bag to update our files at the Ba Senior Citizen Centre. Working in the community was a challenge and a struggle. My journeys throughout Ba were tough as I walked around in the hot sun and rain in the early days. Things have

changed now. It's all because of the love and commitment that Ms Kiran and Sr Satya Bali had and the sacrifices they made for the neglected. I still can recall the words of encouragement, faith and trust that these two ladies spoke when we talked about what we could do in the next 5 years.

In my opinion many of FRIEND's dreams have been achieved all because FRIEND has a heart for others.

—Mereani Lomavere, FRIEND Field Officer

## BBQ HELPS FINANCE DREAMS OF DRIVING

As the rain poured down, spirits were still high!

A group of approximately ten young men from the Topline area has been meeting with FRIEND staff every week on the community volleyball court to discuss the concerns that exist for young people in their area. The most notable issue that affects these young men is the lack of employment opportunities available to them. Lacking work experience and with little educational training, they struggle to compete for work with the many other unemployed young people in Lautoka. So, in an effort to gain extra skills, the young men decided they would like to obtain their driver's licenses in the hopes of finding work as truck and taxi drivers.

The Topline BBQ Fundraiser was organized to raise money to pay for LTA Driver's Handbooks so the youth can begin studying for the first test. Although the day was wet, about fifteen young people gathered on the side of Nadovu Park and cooked up a feast for drivers passing by. Truck drivers, passengers in taxis and families pulled over to warm their bellies and support a good cause.

The proceeds from the BBQ have paid for the Driver's Handbooks as planned and the remaining funds have been set aside to support a community project later this year.



Topline Youth in high spirits at their BBQ fundraiser.

## PRISON OFFICER TRAINING

FRIEND has been asked to facilitate training with Prison Officers as well as continuing with the Community Re-entry Program that is available to inmates at Natabua Prison. To date, FRIEND has facilitated three workshops with Prison Officers on restorative justice and communication skills.

The workshops have been very well attended. The Officers have said they found the sessions to be beneficial to themselves personally and professionally. The training has provided another opportunity for the staff to interact and share their experiences and therefore, enhance their teamwork.

FRIEND has been in the position to provide these workshops due to the expertise of its staff and partnership with Family Support and Education Group, who have kindly shared some of their training resources.

## HEALING TRAUMATIC MEMORIES



Last month, a workshop on the healing of memories was facilitated by Father Michael Lapsley, SSM, Director of The Institute for Healing of Memories. He was accompanied by an African associate, Mr. Ndukenikhle. The workshop was funded by The New Zealand High Commission and was coordinated by the Ministry of Multi Ethnic Affairs and National Reconciliation and Unity.

This workshop facilitated the progress of individuals through a collective journey, which explored the effects of past hurt, pain, hatred and struggle. Emphasis was placed on confronting the issues raised at an emotional, psychological and spiritual level.

The workshop provided some unique opportunities to recall and relate personal journeys and share them with others. Common themes that arose, such as anger, hope, hatred, joy, isolation, endurance and a discovery of the depths of common humanity, were shared among the participants and reflected upon by everyone who attended this workshop. What was enjoyed very much were the lively and creative exercises that enabled each participant to engage with the group and benefit from the healing process of the workshop.

**PATAN MEMORIAL CLINIC VISITS BA**

A team from Patan Memorial Clinic, a non-profit organisation established to provide preventative health care, delivered free medical services to the people of lower Tauvegavega some weeks ago. This community is located next to Ba Mission Hospital, but due to financial constraints they can not afford to buy the medicines prescribed by the doctors there. This visit gave people an opportunity to get free check-ups and medicines.

American doctors Troy and Darilyn Falck attended to patients. They are Emergency Room specialists working with the Patan Clinic while visiting Fiji. A retired nurse and a volunteer who organized the Clinic's visit to Tauvegavega worked overtime to assist the doctors because there were so many people to be seen. Those who came included babies, mothers, grandmothers and anyone else who heard about the visit. The community was grateful to the doctors and the Clinic for the service.

Established in 2000, Patan Memorial clinic has worked with other NGOs in Fiji on outreach programs for the past two years. This allows them to see more patients and provide care that they would not get otherwise. They offer testing for diabetes and high blood pressure, run immunization clinics, teach women about the importance of breast exams and pap smears, advise on healthy living, educate on sexually transmitted diseases and help their patients manage ongoing health issues. Patan Memorial Clinic is located on Sonaisali Road in Nadi and is open Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays from 8 am to 12 pm.



*The Drs Falck attend to patients in Ba, above and below left.*



**What's Happening?**

**August**

**12 FRIEND Youth Debate**

**29 FRIEND 4th Birthday**

**September**

**8 International Literacy Day**

**COMMUNITIES AND GOVERNMENT HAVE A CHAT**

The aim of this session was to invite Government officials to participate in discussion with the communities from Ba and Lautoka who were participants of the ADB Pro-Poor Budgeting workshop. The officials were requested to make a presentation about their department and the flow of resources to the communities. The community representatives were informed which government officials would be attending so they could come prepared with issues to discuss.



The Government officers explained their roles as well as how resources are distributed between ministries and their departments. They also explained the procedures that the communities can follow to access resources and why it takes time for these resources to reach the communities. The communities raised issues of concern with the government officers. Even during breaks for tea and lunch, community representatives were taking advantage of the opportunity to speak with the government officials for further assistance. The officials were helpful in their responses and attending to the community representatives queries. The program was well attended by the community, and thirteen Government representatives participated. The communities found this dialogue helpful, as many of their issues were addressed. It was also encouraging to see that many local officials attended this workshop and presented on their departments. At the end of the day, the organizers felt very glad that they achieved their aim.

**SATYA JOINS FRIEND**



*Satya Gounder*

This month FRIEND is welcoming a new addition to our staff. Sat Narayan Gounder, or Satya as we call him, joins us as a Sales Representative/Driver. He will have responsibility for Sales activities in the West and will make occasional trips to Suva as well. He will be a great asset in ensuring

the extensive line of Friend's Fiji Style™ products reach our markets and continue to provide many communities in need with regular income.

**DIWALI CARDS ARE COMING!**



Diwali may be several weeks away, but the anticipation of the holiday has already begun in the FRIEND office. Production has started on this year's Friend's Fiji Style™ Handmade Cards for Diwali. The designs that the Deaf Youths are creating are imaginative and eye-catching. A few of them are on display in the photo above. Our cards are the perfect way to wish family and friends a "Happy Diwali" and will be available soon in retail outlets and at the FRIEND'S FIJI STYLE™ Shop in Suva.