



# Takitaki

## ONE YEAR OF TAKITAKI



The pictures to the left represent a blast from our (recent) past at FRIEND. They are snapshots of the very first issue of Takitaki. Fast forward to this current edition, and we have an official milestone in the history of our newsletter. This is our twelfth consecutive issue. Takitaki is one year old!

The last year has been an eventful one that has provided a lot of newsworthy material. We are happy to have had the opportunity to share it with so many of our partners, friends and supporters. We look forward to bringing you more stories of interest about the work we do at FRIEND and the communities we serve in our efforts to alleviate poverty. Thanks for reading!

## FRIEND'S 4TH BIRTHDAY: CELEBRATED IN STYLE

Dr Roberto Ridolfi, Head of Delegation of the European Commission for the Pacific Region, officially hosted and kicked off our 4<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration with a grand speech championing the work NGOs do. Dr Ridolfi explained that governments desperately need NGOs, even though they may not say so, to help carry out service delivery to the public. He said the Cotonou agreement opened the way for a vibrant civil society, bound together with Government, to achieve developmental goals. A healthy process of dialogue and exchange of views can trigger development. He spoke briefly on the process of submitting proposals for funding. He encouraged NGOs to develop niche markets for their products. Finally, he said he looked forward to taking a field tour to see FRIEND's work. Our aid donors then joined hands in cutting the 4th birthday cake (with a 5th candle for longevity!), while the trustees blew out the candles. Coordinator Sashi Kiran presented the work we do in pictures and graphs. FRIEND staff gave each invitee a small gift to thank them for their partnership. Overall, guests were pleased that we have achieved so much in such a short time. May we have many more birthdays to come!



Friends and donors Celebrate FRIEND's birthday with cake!

## BIRTHDAY WISHES

Dear FRIEND,

Thanks for the interesting newsletter. It is very attractively set out and is a well presented report on the good work you are doing. Thanks for keeping me on your distribution list.

Congratulations on your fourth birthday.

—Suliana Siwatibau, Suva

Happy Birthday and I simply wish to say that its friends like you who make the difference and you are certainly making an impact in people's lives and giving HOPE to the hopeless and opening a window to a future!! Thank you all.

—Dr Taoti, Western Health Service, Lautoka

Bula FRIEND!

Best greetings and thanks for the newsletter. We deeply and commend your efforts and endeavours on informing everybody the best things that are happening in Fiji. Vinaka vakalevu and best regards. More power to FRIEND and GOD BLESS ALWAYS!

—Raul B Alamban, Suva

Happy Birthday indeed! May FRIEND enjoy many more years to come.

—Paulo Bale, Suva

Great newsletter - HAPPY BIRTHDAY

—Shirley Rao

Congrats on the 4th birthday of FRIEND. You have done a terrific amount in such a short time.

—Fr Frank Hoare, Ireland

Dear Friends

All the best on turning 4. We are inspired by your work and trust that you will grow from strength to strength.

—Ramon Singh, Durban, South Africa

Congratulations for your birthday. Happy Birthday.

The work you have done is brilliant, you must be so proud and happy. Your newsletter is excellent. Congratulations, you are an inspiration, your fund raising, your projects and your achievements are a tremendous credit to you and those that you assist.

—Ros Daveny, Australia

Happy Birthday Month FRIEND! Good things have happened since / despite 2000!!! Loloma levu.

—The femLINKPACIFIC Team, Suva

Thank you thank you. Vinaka vakalevu for a great newsletter but more, for the work you are doing. I had only just heard about your organisation from Danny Hunter (SPC) and how you were working with the DSAP project. So it's good to get this newsletter. Soifua.

—Peggy, Samoa



**WORLD YOUTH DAY DEBATE**

by Matthew Vunivalu, FRIEND Youth Advisory Council



*Youth debating the issues.*

Many marked this year's World Youth Day with various activities around the country. In Lautoka, a debate was held at Natabua High School Hall which was organized by FRIEND in partnership with USP Lautoka Campus.

The topic chosen was: "Young people have adequate opportunities to be leaders in the community". Two teams from various backgrounds shared their views based on this topic. The debate was indeed an eye-opener, as these future leaders raised issues faced by today's youths. The affirmative side stressed ideas such as access to education and scholarships and God-given talents that can help youths have adequate opportunities to be leaders. The negative side rebuked their opponent's claims stating that education is not entirely free and many young people can not access higher

education due to a lack of finances and limited scholarships. Low self esteem and peer pressure were also raised as preventing young people from taking on leadership positions. At the end of the debate the negative team proved to everyone that they had done their homework and were awarded the winning prize.

After the debate, an open floor discussion was conducted and many participated. The coordinator of the FRIEND Youth Advisory Council, Trish Hedt, was so eager to learn the barriers youth faced in achieving leadership. The debate was a success despite a small turnout by members of the public. At the end of the day, everyone was happy that their voices had been heard.

**PROGRAM MONITORING & EVALUATION**

FRIEND is currently in the process of monitoring and evaluating two of their Programs. Monitoring and evaluation of programs is best practice, however it is often difficult to achieve, especially in non-government organizations. FRIEND has made a commitment to reviewing their work and learning from their experiences.


The Community Re-entry Program (Prison Program) is mid term. FRIEND has taken the opportunity to systematically collect and analyze information to review the program's progress. This process aims to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the program. A baseline was established at the commencement of the program and has been used to assist in monitoring it. Information has been gathered from participants, staff, communities, Prison and other stakeholders. A strength identified is the capacity of staff to develop their skills to meet the needs of this new program. They have developed excellent rapport with participants and have demonstrated a strong commitment to the Program. They will be meeting to develop a work plan for the next six months to address issues identified in the report.

The Governance Program has been operating for approximately 3 years. It has worked with a variety of communities and has achieved numerous outcomes. FRIEND is in the process of evaluating the work they have done with communities. The report will be focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of the Program and lessons learnt. This report will enable FRIEND to develop a model of Governance they think best suits the communities they serve.

**What's Happening?**

**September**  
**16** Launch of "Stand Up Against Poverty" Campaign  
**16** Coastal Cleanup Day  
**21** International Day of Peace

**October**  
**3** World Habitat Day  
**5** World Teachers' Day  
**10** World Mental Health Day



**LECTURE SERIES: FAMILY LAW ACT**

A seminar on the Family Law Act, the latest in the FRIEND/USP Lecture Series, was held last month. Magistrate Lisa Gowing, who was the guest speaker, talked about the new Act that has been recently released by parliament. Women from all walks of life as well as some concerned men attended the event. Ms. Gowing shared some very useful information with the participants and stressed the importance of knowing the details of this version of the Act. Issues such as women paying maintenance and how divorce cases are now handled were topics raised during the discussion period.



*Magistrate Lisa Gowing speaks at USP Lautoka.*

The need for the community to be aware of programs like this, that provide worthwhile information for the public, also generated discussion. A member of the audience mentioned that the community lacks interest in these opportunities until there is a crisis in the family. This leaves a lot for organizations to consider as they work to motivate the public to attend this type of event.

**NAIKABULA GIRLS AT ABACA**

The Koroipita Girls Club recently went for an excursion at Abaca National Park. The girls' excitement in anticipation of the outing was apparent from the time the transport arrived to start them on their way. The trip was a novelty for many of the girls, being their first time away from family.

The girls all enjoyed the day: laughing, swimming and sharing stories with each other. They also went through some teambuilding exercises and games and had a picnic lunch in the park. On the hike, the girls were quick in identifying the plants that are used for herbal medicines. It was very interesting to observe that their parents and grandparents are continuing to pass traditional knowledge to the younger generation.

At day's end, new friendships were made, new ideas were learned and most importantly, the girls enjoyed their adventure.