



Takitaki

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3, DECEMBER 2006

FDB AWARDS

FRIEND was the overall winner for the Small Business Awards 2006 organized by Fiji Development Bank in Suva. FRIEND was nominated for three products, tamarind chutney, sweet mango chutney and handmade cards.

The awards presentation was held at the Holiday Inn on the 23rd of November and FRIEND was declared the overall winner for the projects that are part of the Income Generation Program. The handmade cards project was given the outstanding project award with \$1500 prize money while Vijay Latchmi was awarded \$250 prize money for her sweet mango chutney project in the commercial manufacturing category. The Senior Citizens Centre was awarded \$250 prize money for tamarind chutney. FRIEND received \$5000 for the overall award.

Back in 2003, Tamarind Chutney made by Ba Senior Citizens Centre was the first IGP product launched by FRIEND. The Handmade cards project was started in 2004 and has been very successful. Vijay Latchmi began making her Sweet Mango Chutney in 2004. She has been successful in running the project for the last two years and has benefited greatly from it. She believes that it is just a matter of using people's skills and the available resources to earn an income, and she has learnt a lot about decision-making and how small businesses are run through this project. She says that there are times when there are struggles in the project but it's just a matter of self determination and proper decision making to get everything back on track.



Vijay Latchmi displays her FDB Award

A NEW SPOT FOR CARDS



Our garage has had an overhaul and an upgrade. The former catch-all area now has a purpose. The space is the new home for the handmade card team and the center for card production.

UNESCO VISIT

A group of 20 regional participants were visitors at FRIEND on the 7th of November. These participants were members of a group from UNESCO, United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. USP Lautoka Campus has been guiding them throughout their tour of the West, and the FRIEND office was scheduled as one of their stops.

Staff at FRIEND hosted the afternoon visit and staged a play on the theme of "Pollution in the Sea". Following the well-received performance, the staff presented the guests with small gifts and everyone enjoyed refreshments. The Program staff also took the opportunity to explain our programs, as the UNESCO group was eager to know how FRIEND operates within the community.

The group then had a tour of our offices and were so impressed by the IGP products that they made many purchases, leading to a significant increase in sales for the day! Thanks to the UNESCO group for their support, and to USP Lautoka Campus for including FRIEND in their schedule of activities.

HOLIDAY CLOSING

The FRIEND office and kitchen facilities will close for the holidays from 23 December, opening again on 2 January 2007. FRIEND wishes everyone a peaceful, safe, happy holiday season. See you in the new year!



HEALING OF MEMORIES



A Healing of Memories workshop was organized by the Ministry of National Reconciliation and Multi-Ethnic Affairs. The FRIEND staff was very privileged and honored to participate, as it was mainly for the disciplined forces of the country (Military, Police and Prison Officers).

On an individual level, participation in a Healing of Memories workshop provides an experiential way to overcome feelings of anger, hatred, prejudice and guilt and create a more positive meaning for suffering. It can therefore be considered as one step on the journey to psychological, emotional, and spiritual healing and wholeness. Emotional scars are carried for a long time, hindering the individual's emotions and psychological and spiritual development. Attitudes and prejudices that have developed out of anger and hatred between groups can lead to ongoing conflict and spiritual violence.

The power of the workshop lies in the experiential, interactive nature, and the emphasis on the emotional and spiritual rather than intellectual understanding and interpretation of the past. Through an exploration of their personal histories, participants find emotional release and as a group gain insight and empathy for the experiences of others. These processes prepare the ground for forgiveness and reconciliation between people of diverse background, races, cultures and religions.

WORLD AIDS DAY: “STOP AIDS! KEEP THE PROMISE”

The Ministry of Health, the Reproductive and Family Health Association of Fiji, with local NGOs and businesses planned activities for World AIDS Day, December 1st 2006, to raise awareness of the spread of HIV/AIDS in our communities. FRIEND was honored to be involved.

The two-day event for World AIDS Day with the theme, “Stop AIDS! Keep the Promise”, started the night of November 30th with a candlelight vigil at Shirley Park. It was encouraging to see people still turning up at the venue in large numbers despite rain. There was a march through Lautoka Town on the morning of World AIDS Day, led by a youth marching band.

Dr Tui Taoti, Director, Western Health Services, was the chief guest for the program on Friday. Paulini Vakacegu, a person living with HIV/AIDS shared her story as well. Everyone at the event was deeply touched by her presentation and moved to speak out about this disease that is impacting so many ordinary, everyday people in this country. She challenged our community to actively face the reality of HIV/AIDS in our country and throughout the world. Each stakeholder present was requested to prepare and read an organizational pledge to keep the promise. The event ended with a volleyball match, which was lots of fun.

AIDS affects all levels of society from adults to young children. The youths’ and community members’ involvement displayed the importance of discussing this issue. It also showed concern and support for those who are suffering from HIV/AIDS & related illnesses in our country and reminds us not to forget those that are working to raise awareness of this important issue.



FRIEND: keeping the promise

What’s Happening?**December**

- 10 Human Rights Day
- 18 International Migrants Day
- 25 Christmas Day
- 26 Boxing Day

January

- 1 New Year’s Day

REPORT: ADB MEETING

Ms. Anne Myongsook Witheford, Governance Specialist, ADB and project officer for regional technical assistance (TA), conducted an hour and a half review of each organization working with the ADB Pro-Poor Budgeting Program under the umbrella of FSPI. At the beginning of the meeting, I introduced FRIEND and the programs and talked a bit about the eight communities that the staff is working with on ADB Pro-Poor Budgeting.

This meeting was held for Anne to introduce herself as a new TA in the Pacific and to get feedback from the NGOs that attended the Pro-Poor Budgeting Training of Trainers workshop in 2005. Father Kevin Barr (ECCREA) and Jina Houng Lee (RRRT) reported on the training. The feedback was that the manual had too much information and should be simplified and tailored for local communities. Also, there were not many responses from the trainees during the training, making it difficult to get constructive feedback.

Anne will follow up on these issues and advise on results to the NGOs involved in the training. The meeting ended on a good note as Anne was happy with the contributions from the organizations (FRIEND, RRRT & ACCREA) represented in the meeting. Vinaka.

—Nai Cokanasiga

DENARAU ADVENTURE

As part of the GOAL program, FRIEND is empowering communities to do income generating projects. A group of women from Koroipta have started making angels and other creative crafts from traditional Fijian material for the Christmas season. FRIEND arranged for Lorraine Cairns from Denarau to teach the women how to make the crafts. She is an amazing person who came to the

community and taught the women how to make the angels and other crafts despite her busy schedule. She also organized some orders for the angels.

Lorraine invited the group to her villa in Denarau where the ladies learned more crafts. It was an exiting trip for them. The women expressed that going to Lorraine’s house and Denarau was like visiting Australia. This whole process has really boosted their self-esteem. Once a week the group goes to Denarau to make more pieces to sell at a craft stall organized by the Western Handicraft Association. Our thanks to Lorraine for the materials and time she devoted to help this group earn a living.

NEW YEAR’S CLEANING

Instead of a Holiday party this year, the FRIEND staff decided to spend a day cleaning the workplace—inside and out. Some of us took a pause during the hard work to take the photo above.

There was a lot to do, but a lot was accomplished. Everyone did their part by tidying their workspace, then turned their attention to the common areas in the office and the compound. Morning tea was organized for a break and to reenergize for work in the afternoon. It was a good effort by all.