



Takitaki

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FRIEND CELEBRATES 5TH BIRTHDAY



Mayor Rohit Kumar, Mr Sada Reddy and Mr Brownjohn



Guests at FRIEND's 5th birthday

On the 29th August 2007, FRIEND commemorated 5 years since it opened its doors to serve the public. The occasion was well attended by the Lautoka communities including members from business houses, prisons, police, civil service and education. Chief guest for the occasion was the Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank, Mr. Sada Reddy who congratulated FRIEND for achieving much in its short life. He was encouraged by

FRIEND's commitment to poverty eradication and pledged support from the Reserve Bank of Fiji. Mr Michael Brownjohn, Director of Australia -Fiji Community Justice Program, also spoke and shared a bit of partnership history over the last three years. The Australia -Fiji Community Justice Program is a partner and project donor for FRIEND's prison rehabilitation program REAL. The birthday celebrations was particularly special as it was an occasion in which FRIEND launched its contestant for the Sugar Festival, Miss Priya Prasad. Introducing Miss Prasad, the Mayor of Lautoka, Rohit Kumar commended FRIEND's initiative in sponsoring a deaf contestant to raise awareness on deaf issues.

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MISS FRIEND, SUGAR FESTIVAL CONTESTANT

FRIEND is sponsoring a contestant for the 2007 Lautoka Sugar Festival. It is believed that this may be a historical first for Fiji as our contestant is profound deaf. She is Ms Priya Prasad. During a training workshop FRIEND Director, Sashi Kiran, found out that Priya has interest in modeling and fashion and thought what better way to have her dream of modeling and awareness of deaf issues be combined than sponsor her as FRIEND contestant for the Sugar festival. We are very thankful to the Sugar festival committee for this opportunity during the poverty month mobilization.

Miss FRIEND 2007, Priya is 18 years of age and a student of Nadi Sangam High School. Her hobbies include art and craft, fashion, modeling and swimming. Priya believes that deaf people are just like you and me. They have great skills and talents. But with no scope for higher education they lose out on equal opportunities. She hopes during the week of the Sugar Festival, people would get to know more about the problems and issues facing deaf. *Sandhya Narayan*



Miss FRIEND 2007, Priya Prasad

PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY JUSTICE FRIEND WALK-A-THON



Director of Australia/Fiji Community Justice, Michael Brownjohn

Mr. Michael Brownjohn, the Director for the Australia/ Fiji Community Justice Program was one of the Guest Speakers at FRIEND's 5th Birthday celebrations. Mr. Brownjohn spoke highly of the REAL Program and highlighted statistics from when the

program began as a pilot in March 2006 up to March 2007 when it was launched as the Restorative Education for Alternative Livelihood Program (REAL). One of the main aims of the program is to stop the cycle of re-offending. The program focuses on Fijian youths who are trained and undergo Restorative Justice Processes. These processes attempt to get them to understand and accept their obligations and responsibilities towards their victims and community at large.

N. Cokanasiga

A fun filled day of **walking** with the theme "STAND UP SPEAK OUT AGAINST POVERTY AND INEQUALITY" was organized by the staff of FRIEND as a fundraiser for the Sugar Festival Charity Event. The participants' included FRIEND staff, family members and friends. The walk started at 6am and there were 5 different checkpoints located around the Lautoka area. After the walk participants were treated to a light breakfast at the FRIEND office.



FRIEND WEB SITE RE-DESIGNED



New FRIEND website

Use of the Internet has increased significantly in the last few years. FRIEND's funding agencies, program participants and the public have come to expect a web site containing information about its programs and achievements. The initial FRIEND web site was designed in 2004 by Ajeet Singh, a volunteer from California. Hosted in the USA, the site continued to be maintained by Ajeet until 2007. Recently Lynn Zelmer, an ABV (Australian Business Volunteer), assisted the FRIEND staff to redesign the web site and acquire the skills for maintaining the site. Lynn

worked in FRIEND's Lautoka office for a month during August-September, providing training in web site design and development, effective web site maintenance, basic photography and image (photo) optimisation. Relocated to Australia for 2007-2008, the new site should be both easier and quicker to view. And, as the staff become more proficient, it may be possible to relocate the site to a local Internet Service Provider in 2008. Visit our updated web site, located at www.fijifriend.com. for more news, photos and program information.

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GLOBAL CALL FOR ACTION AGAINST POVERTY (GCAP)



Staff and friends of FRIEND with the Mayor of Lautoka in front of Poverty monument.

The mayor of Lautoka City Council launched FRIEND's month long poverty eradication campaign called Global Call for Action against Poverty (GCAP) which runs from 16th September to 17 October. GCAP is a worldwide event where people are called upon to stand up and speak out against poverty. Last year 32 million people around the world stood up against poverty during this month long campaign. The mayor commended the work done by FRIEND and appealed

to everyone to work together to eradicate poverty. He launched the month by unveiling a symbolic plaque erected at the corner of Shirley Park, opposite ANZ Bank, Lautoka. This was followed by a cocktail at the City Council Chambers where guests were invited to sign a banner, which will be sent later to Australia for the Banners against Poverty Project.



RACE AGAINST POVERTY

Yes! The Race had begun. Over a hundred youths participated in FRIEND's annual activity called the Race Against Poverty that falls during the GCAP Month of Mobilisation on September 16th to October 17th. Community youths, high school students, business houses and the security forces were invited to participate in this FRIEND version of *Amazing Race*. Participants took to the streets of Lautoka, frantically searching for clues at *pit stops*, answering quiz questions, finding out about statistics and information on poverty issues, and completing challenges. These were carried out at various information centers for social services around Lautoka. While the purpose was to raise awareness of poverty issues on hand, it was also a fun filled day with the youths competing for prizes. A big Vinaka Vakalevu to our sponsors Coca Cola, Fiji Water, Nestle, Mana Island Resort and Eddie Hin Ltd. Many thanks to Team Dollars (ANZ) and Team Colors (APCO) for donating their prizes back to FRIENDS Global Call for Action fund. Finally we hope to see more youths participating in this annual event next year.

Jone Nawaikula



Race Against Poverty 2007 participants

VOICES OF THE YOUTH



FRIEND/USP Youth Forum, 3rd August 2007.



A youth plenary organized by FRIEND and the University of the South Pacific-Lautoka Campus, was held at RSL 2000, Lautoka on the 23rd August. The panel included youths and representatives from the Ministry of Youth, Lautoka City Council and the Consumer Council of Fiji. The youths raised many issues, which were addressed by the representatives of different stakeholders present. Panelist Adi Vika , a single

mother of Ba who won a medal in the 2003 South Pacific Games, shared her story of how a dream of upgrading her skills was shattered when she was refused support from the Fiji Sports Authority. She applied for various jobs but was turned down because she had no experience. She highlighted that life was stressful and not easy for her particularly as she could not access opportunities due to geographical location. The Youths raised many other issues like unemployment and having a safe place to hangout in Lautoka. Representatives from different stakeholders tried to answer the many questions raised. It was amazing though to see positive dialogue between the youths and leaders given the difficulty in initiating dialogue between these two groups. In May this year, at the Civicus World Assembly, a mini plenary on the same theme was organized but the leaders/ adults did not take part in the session. It is was a very informative and exciting plenary enjoyed by the panelists and the audience alike. *Devina Devi*

What's Happening?

1 October
International Day
for Older Persons

5 October
World Teachers
Day

10 October
World Mental
Health Day

16 October
World Food Day

17 October
International Day
for the Eradication
of Poverty

GOOD PRACTICE RECOGNITION

FRIEND's growing international reputation reached yet another milestone when its Income Generating Program (Food Products) for Poverty Alleviation was selected as a **Good Practice** by UN Habitat's latest cycle of its Best Practices Program. Out of the 715 practices entered, 126 were deemed Best Practices, 329 Good Practices, 116 Promising Practices and 144 Non Qualifiers. Within a period of 10 years, over 2,700 good and best practices from 140 countries have been compiled on the Habitat Best Practices database. These are analyzed with a view of extracting lessons that others can learn from and incorporate into their own work. In her congratulatory letter to FRIEND, Wandia Seaforth, acting chief of the Best Practices and Policies Section of UN-Habitat, encouraged FRIEND to submit updates of its program for future consideration in future cycles of the Dubai International Award for Best Practices. FRIEND views this important feedback as verification of the high standards it strives to achieve in both its products and service to the communities .

SOQOSOQO VAKAMARAMA WORKSHOP

Members of the Vitogo Sector of the Soqosoqo Vakamarama were participants of a workshop held at FRIEND headquarters from the 11-13th September. The workshop was delivered in the Fijian vernacular, something the PACE program team was keen to introduce to FRIEND communities. According to the workshop coordinator Eunice Gucake, having materials as well as facilitation in a language participants were comfortable with ensured maximum learning capacity. This was well illustrated in their enthusiastic participation in discussions and the various workshop activities. The development of vernacular materials, both Fijian and Hindi, is seen by FRIEND's PACE team as important for the success of its programs in the communities. Soqosoqo Vakamarama Western Coordinator Adi Laisa Balavu Tora, was pleased about the 2 ½ days and is keen to continue work with FRIEND reaching out to villages and communities interested in community empowerment programs.



Soqosoqo vakamarama workshop, Sept 2007

