



Takitaki

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SPREADING XMAS JOY

On Saturday the 22nd of December, sixteen underprivileged families around Ba and Lautoka got a surprise visit from a group of youths representing Lautoka Business House Association. In partnership with FRIEND, who had earlier identified needy families in communities they work in, the association distributed food packs and other Christmas goodies donated by various Lautoka business houses.

Joe Anthony, President of Lautoka Business House Association said that this was their first charity project for the year 2008 and that they plan to have a few more in the coming year and with other charitable organizations. He added that business organizations have to realize the situation of poverty in our communities and should lend a helping hand where ever needed.



Lautoka Business Houses Association representatives and FRIEND Youths at a home in Saru Back Rd, Lautoka.

For these families, the hampers came as a Christmas blessing and they expressed freely their joy and heartfelt emotions thanking the association for their generosity.

EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN COURSE, JAPAN 2007



Participants of the Empowerment of Rural Women Course, Japan 2007



Nileshni and fellow course participants in their kimono attire



Nileshni harvesting rice in Tsukuba

The land of rising sun is absolutely magnificent and the beauty and generosity of the people was best compared to baskets full of knowledge ready to be shared with anyone. This was my first impression of Japan when I arrived in Tsukuba. The first week was orientation and from the second week we had lectures on Development Process of Life Improvement in Japan. We had four study trips where we got to visit four prefectures, Yamaguchi, Saitama, Nagano and Kagoshima. On our way to Yamaguchi we had a chance to visit Hiroshima Museum. This was the most emotional moment for me as I remembered those innocent people who lost their lives in 1947. In Yamaguchi we learnt how the extension system worked and the support they provide to the communities. We also had an experience of home stay where we experienced Japanese culture and food. Though the trips were long they were very informative and we had a chance to interact with the rural women. In the Saitama prefecture, we saw how the rural women worked together and managed their business efficiently. In Nagano prefecture, we had the opportunity to use some PLA tools giving us a better understanding for their utilization in our own countries. One aspect that intrigued me was how the Japanese elderly cared for the future generation. The elderly were very visionary and this is something that we lack in Fiji. It was a great learning process because we came from places with completely different cultures but somehow the works we do are similar. The success stories of Japanese people motivated us to be creative and adapt some of techniques used in the development in local context to enhance our productivity This training was not only very informative and educational but also a life changing experience for me. We had the opportunity to foster new friendship with participants from all around the world. Finally, I will cherish the opportunity given by JICA to be part of such a memorable experience which has contributed to my personal development and also build the capacity to uplift the knowledge gained to benefit my organization.

Nileshni Shekar

FRIEND'S ART CLUB WORKSHOP

Seven high school students from around the Lautoka area attended FRIEND's Art Pilot Project Workshop held in early December at FRIEND headquarters. The main aim of the two week workshop was to build self esteem, encourage peace building and goal setting through art. For the facilitators, the sole purpose of this pilot project was to identify a workable framework for FRIEND's Art Club, a project planned for 2008. Facilitators were Shalesh Raj,



Budding artists Krishan and Shanil



Sivtveni painting at the exhibition



Art Pilot Project Workshop facilitators and participants

Lomani Gaunavinaka and Kini. The workshop ended with an exhibition of the participants' artwork outside the main entrance of the Lautoka Sugar City Mall. During the exhibition, three participants painted and this attracted a lot of interest from the public. Although there were no sales made that day, our primary purpose of building confidence in the boys by exposing their artistic talent was achieved. We now look forward to the continuation of the project in 2008.



Students hard at work at Shirley Park

What's Happening?**22nd January**

School year begins

27th January

International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust

Last week January
FRIEND Suva shop re-opens at Garden City, Raiwaqa.**MEET FRIEND'S QUALITY CONTROL OFFICER**

FRIEND's kitchen is a far cry from the sterile world of laboratories our new quality control officer had worked in. Aarti Mala, an FIT graduate in Industrial Laboratory Technology, joined FRIEND after a year as a laboratory analyst at the Lautoka Sugar Mill. Eager to pursue her interest in community development, she chose to apply for her current post having heard of FRIEND's poverty alleviation programs. FRIEND's initiative of making use of readily available resources and age old recipes passed down by mothers and grandmothers appealed to Aarti's social responsible nature. That and her wanting experience outside of the laboratory. Aarti joined FRIEND in June 2007 and has found it particularly "challenging having to think outside the box." She says that though the position has required all her past experience and more, her perseverance in problem solving daily challenges has paid off. She feels more confident now in her abilities and has learnt a lot through quiet determination. An added bonus is the FRIEND family. That is the staff and friends of FRIEND that have been supportive throughout.



Aarti Mala

FRIEND RECEIVES FASW AWARD

"What? Are you sure? Doesn't make sense! We did not enter for any awards I mean we are not even members of FASW... so why would FASW be giving us the NGO of the YEAR award?"

That was the initial reaction in the office when Jone put down the phone and excitedly relayed the message. Later we all did realize that it was no joke and that the FASW award was for real. We were told that the FASW members felt that FRIEND was indeed the NGO of the year with the work that we do out in the community. To be venerated so by colleagues in the field of community development was indeed an honor. We really enjoyed the hospitality at the award night. Thank you FASW.



Nisleshmi, Sandhya and Anita receiving FASW award for NGO of the Year on behalf of FRIEND