



Takitaki

KIND GESTURE



FRIEND again has had blessings from Australia Law and Justice Program last month as Jock Gillespie and his team donated office equipment and furniture. FRIEND has been grateful for such an amount of equipment needed for our programs and the office as a whole. From laptops to chairs FRIEND has added to their pool of equipment and resources that will help facilitate Program's department that are directly involved in communities when disseminating information . Friend salutes Australia and Justice Program for being an occasional donor to most of its needed facilities. Many Thanks to Jock and his Team.

TRAINING FACE WITH WAC

Peni Moore, Director of WAC, did a 2 week workshop with 8 FACE (FRIEND Art and Cultural Enterprise) youths at Natokowaqa Community Hall. The workshop started on the 28th of July and ended on the 8th of August. This training was mainly on acquiring theatre skills. The 8 days of training was filled with vigor and fanaticism. The youths shared their real life stories based on conflicts. Out of all the stories, one was chosen based on the theme 'honesty' and was enacted. At the end of the 8 day training, most of the youths were empowered enough to talk about the issues that they otherwise would not have.- Swastika Singh



HIBISCUS FEVER



What can one say!!.... Mother of all festivals-Hibiscus festival was an intriguing experience for FRIEND. Desdemona Rosanitoba contested for the Vodafone Hibiscus 2008. She vied as Miss FRIEND and the message was to alleviate poverty through social and economic empowerment. All staff and volunteers amazingly pulled through to put together the running of the stall, the Float, the beautiful outfits and accessories for Desdemona. The week long festive season was a learning experience and what enthused the most was the sheer determination of staff and management to showcase FRIEND all the way from the burning West- Lautoka.

The mission and vision of FRIEND to alleviate poverty was staged via our Float, our stall display-which saw many people stop by to buy our products and also this was an opportune time to disseminate information about FRIEND and the work we all do. Many thanks to Woman's Action for Change (WAC) coordinator-Peni Moore & her staff for preparing and braving the hot sun to march along the Float as tamarind, chillies, mango, lime and not forgetting the cumquat depicting the natural resources used for our Friends Fiji Style pickles and chutneys. We earnestly believe that Vodafone Hibiscus 2008 has promoted much needed awareness on Poverty issues and what FRIEND as a whole. Ashna.



Chris, our fijian warrior and Zoey, our girl in the yellow sari with FRIEND Banner leading the float procession

FRASER MACDONALD STRAT PLAN

Developmental Psychologist Frazer McDonald, revisited FRIEND on 20th August. His visits are always much appreciated and one can definitely say that he is a 'true friend of FRIEND'. Six weeks prior to this particular visit, Frazer and senior staff discussed 5 year STRAT PLAN for the organization. This was followed up with what each team had come up with. He was rather impressed with the outcome that came out from the discussions. What was also equally impressive was the cohesiveness of staff involvement in planning the vision and mission that FRIEND truly is unique for! - Ashna

**What's Happening?**

1st Sept.
50 days of Action
against Poverty.
Launch

3rd September
French Students
Visit

4th -16th
Medical Visit

25th Sept.
International Literacy
Day

**Happy 6th Birth-
day FRIEND!!**

COUNSELING

The basic and advanced counseling trainings began on the 13th and 19th of August respectively. Our course presenter, Ms Selina Kuru-leca, had a sound knowledge of counseling techniques both in Fiji and abroad which added to an advantage. We could put into practice some of the western techniques into our very own society. With Counseling guidelines and an accepted standard of approach, the training started with a high note of 14 participants. As the training continued, I learnt that in Fiji particularly, the counseling method was a form of direct and forced advice rather than hearing the issue proper. We did a variety of role plays to better identify the different counseling processes that could be made use to meet the clients needs. In the course of Advance Counseling Skills, we visited Suva Prison and St Giles Hospital. I was pleased to know that St Giles Hospital has now put counseling into practice but sad at the same time because some families have disowned their loved ones. Hearing the peoples problems in today's world, from glue sniffing to mental disorders, counseling should be encouraged because it is all about listening to 'their' story.—Swastika.

LOOK BACK

I was introduced to FRIEND by a brother-in-law of mine. He was the one who exposed my talent of painting to FRIEND back in 2005 and since then I have been engaged with them through the FACE and REAL program. I was supplying them with my original art work for more than a year, eventually realizing what other capabilities that I possessed they decided to put me in their prison program as an art trainer. After 3 months of probation I became a staff of FRIEND until to date, gradually working in other areas such as in youth.

When I first joined FRIEND, I was a very shy, reserved person with an extremely low self esteem. FRIEND has helped me to conquer those weaknesses and mould me into a confident and outspoken individual, thus aiming high for opportunities. FRIEND also opened the door for me to attend trainings, workshops and other courses around the country which has empowered me more to learn and keep an open door on all possibilities that come my way. I have managed to work on confidence building, time management and decision making at work, family and the community at large. —Kini.

Takitaki

Page 3

UK VOLUNTEER ON A VISIT—Natasha De-Freitas



I first heard about FRIEND through meeting Devina on the Ship for World Youth last year. Working myself in the NGO sector in the UK and being passionate about social entrepreneurship and poverty alleviation, I was instantly interested in the many ways that FRIEND manages to facilitate social and economic empowerment. Therefore when an opportunity came for me to see for myself the programs in action, I immediately headed to Fiji to volunteer! My first task was to help set up and run the stall at the Hibiscus Festival. Being surrounded by the delicious chutneys and beautiful cards and handmade items, and more importantly, hearing the great reviews from consumers of the products, proved to be the best introduction to the DESI program I could imagine. I also helped out FRIEND's aptly-named Miss Hibiscus contestant, Desi. I was impressed at the creative way FRIEND managed to leverage its brand by using the popular contest as a marketing channel to bring the importance of poverty alleviation to a new audience. This is an innovative and effective approach that many other NGO's would be wise to learn from. It was so successful that many of the other Queens mentioned the issue in their judging answers or victory speeches. My experience in Suva was that everyone I spoke to knew the organization and what it did – this level of brand recognition amongst ordinary citizens (i.e. not just the target group that FRIEND works with) is extremely rare for an NGO and should be highly commended. Arriving in the Lautoka office further impressed me as FRIEND operates to an extremely professional, dedicated and organized level. The staff are all very passionate and knowledgeable about what they do which is reflected in the amazing work and projects that they implement. Many of the organizations that I've worked with have struggled to grow and scale in wake of their success but FRIEND seems to have effectively expanded its operations whilst still retaining their culture and the crucial personal and 'on the ground' feel. I look forward to hearing more about their next phase of development and projects.

One of the highlights of my trip was visiting Natabua prison to see an offender rehabilitation workshop (REAL) in action, and witnessing the genuine feelings of hope and increased self-esteem that the offenders had gained from participating in the program. REAL is ground-breaking in holistically collaborating with the offender and their families and communities to ensure there is support and understanding on all sides which encourages the cycle of crime to be broken for good. The benefit and future impact of REAL to the individuals involved, society and Fiji as a nation is so great that I believe it is only a matter of time before developed countries seek to engage FRIEND to run this pioneering program overseas.

LEONIE—Canada Fund

Leonie's visit to FRIEND was a great help to us since she was the one who taught us on how to make notebooks using recycled paper and old newspapers. It was the first time we got to know how to make a notebook and now we can say that "Nothing is Impossible". This is a new product for our organization. It's really cool and amazing to learn new and different things. –Ananta.

WALKATHON

2nd August saw friends of FRIEND walk for the fundraiser charity chest for our Hibiscus contestant Desdemona Rosanitoba. It was a fun filled event and friends and staff pitched in to make it a successful and a pleasurable day. For many an early start, particular on a Saturday was refreshing, and the kitchen was busy ensuring that the early morning tea was prepared well in advance for the early birds!