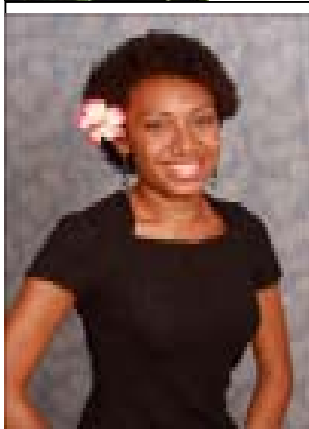


Takitaki

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 7, JULY 2009



*Miss FRIEND/Bank of Baroda
Vodafone Hibiscus 2009
Kelera T Domonikbau*



*Vote for Miss FRIEND/Bank
of Baroda for Miss Peoples
Choice 2009*

FRIEND is a prime non government organization that I am so privileged to be a part of. This year's Vodafone Miss Fiji Hibiscus Contest will see my association with The Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises 'N' Development. In the time we live in, where it's a basic challenge to get by with the daily demands of life, an NGO as such becomes increasingly appropriate as well

as significant. Between the market available for small community products and handmade crafts there lies a gap, FRIEND in my belief bridges this gap.

With the vision of the founder, FRIEND has become a hand extended to the community this in its efforts to minimise unemployment and poverty. The NGO has numerous activities established to aid its members. The YEN program, Youth Employment Network is one initiative of FRIEND that as a youth I am highly keen about. This week (27 July 2009) three youths were put in placement programs at Windham Worldmark Resort in Denarau for work experience. It is programs as such that is often rare to come by and the opportunity it brings is not only beneficial to the individual youth but also for his/her family. In addition to that the NGO is very interactive in its task rather than being coercive where everything is done their way, staff enter communities and inclusively discuss methods that best suit their needs. Issues are not solved in the tailored too fit all technique. Staff help communities address concerns and, collectively identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for their income generating ideas.

FRIEND depicts the spirit of Hibiscus and its chief purpose, charity and community work. In my one day of being at the FRIEND office I was firstly in awe of the extent of the work they do regardless of financial and personnel constraints and secondly proud to be connected with an organisation that has a passion for addressing the real life issues.

A Milestone- an office in Labasa July 2009



*Australian High Commissioner H E
James Batley unties the bow watched on
by Sashi and Jane*

A long anticipated and much talked about event for FRIEND—an office base in Labasa to facilitate work in yet another underserved region of the country. Although the groundwork for FRIEND's arrival in the North had began some years back, with part time workers and volunteers it has taken us this long to stake our physical presence with an office base, three full time staff and a Peace Corp volunteer.

FRIEND celebrates its seventh birthday on the 29th of August. This is the date the first office was set up in 2002—a one room affair, little bigger than a cubicle in the middle of Lautoka City. Since then with expansion of its services and staff and volunteer numbers FRIEND Headquarters now sits in its third office, has a quality controlled kitchen production facility, a retail outlet Friend's Fiji Style Shop at Garden City in Suva and now an office in Labasa. This office has been made possible with the support of AUSAID and we were blessed that the High Commissioner H E Mr James Batley and his team graced the occasion. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have contributed in any way in our journey.

(cont'd page 3)





Takitaki

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 7, JULY 2009

Vive's Experience



Taraivini Cama's backyard

I joined FRIEND's program department recently and am amazed at what difference a little helping hand can make in the lives of those in need. I have been working intensively with two squatter settlements for the last 3 months. Both these communities fall in the Lautoka City Area yet their lifestyles are far from that of city dwellers who have access to basic services. Rising to the challenge to raise living standards and alleviate poverty we embarked on the first step of creating a healthier environment by encouraging backyard gardening, composting and clean up campaigns. We had to organise clean up days as squatter communities do not have access to rubbish disposal services and end up throwing their rubbish in the creeks. Clean up campaigns created awareness on hygiene and health and both the communities are maintaining cleanliness of their surroundings. I also organized backyard farming and a handicraft competition which saw a number of families actively participating. On the judgement day at the end of this month 17 gardens were inspected and three prizes were awarded. 65 year old Taraivini Cama won the first prize as she planted multiple crops including carrots, capsicums, long beans, chillies, bananas and 6 plots of cabbage. When our team arrived to judge she had left instructions to her husband to show us the gardens while she had gone to deliver 100 bundles of her cabbage for an order.

Two second prize getters, Karalaini Wati and Marica Nanewa also had a variety of cash crops growing in their small backyards. Each of the prize getters received farming implements to further encourage them. Those who were adopting the wait and watch stance are now also showing initiatives of getting involved. The communities are now gearing up to participate in FRIEND's annual IDEA competition in November.

By Vive Liutaki

PEACECORP Volunteer for FRIEND Labasa

I am Rahim Samji, a new staff member for FRIEND provided by the United States Peace Corps. Originally I am from Florida, the Sunshine State; although I think the sun shine's brighter in Fiji.

I have spent the first eight weeks of my trip to Fiji living in a Fijian village learning the culture, customs and most importantly the language. We were also given a brief on the services provided by the Fijian government and non government agencies.

During my training, the Peace Corps found me a new home in Labasa and a wonderful host agency FRIEND. FRIEND office in Labasa officially opened on July 22, 2009, but unfortunately the memo never made it to Mr. Obama's desk and as we had our volunteer graduation the very next day, I was unable to attend the opening of FRIEND.



But now I am here. I take a strong interest in working with youth and education of life skills, and I hope to have a permanent impact on the youth development program here. In addition, I would like to see capacity built within the different communities to improve the economic conditions of Fiji by producing their own crops and marketing it to the local people. I look forward to working with FRIEND and I hope to leave a positive impression of what the United States can offer.

Join US

YES! I want to support the
*Foundation for Rural Integrated
Enterprises N Development*



Annual Fee

Individual \$5.00 Corporate \$50
Families \$10.00 Community Groups \$20.00

Name
Address.....
Phone Number.....
Email.....

Takitaki

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Con't from page 1

FRIEND Labasa Staff, Victor, Rashida and Jane with the Commissioner Northern, the Australian High Commissioner and FRIEND founder Sashi at the opening

Recollections of the Day

63 guests from around the North including the Commissioner Northern, heads of government departments and communities members cramped into our small front yard to witness the official opening of FRIEND Labasa office by the Australian High Commissioner HE Mr James Batley. During his opening remarks he said that the FRIEND's plans and action discussed by Director and Founder Sashi Kiran indicated that all was not doom and gloom and that there are exciting opportunities for those who wanted to benefit from these. Sashi discussed the activities of FRIEND around the country and indicated that FRIEND Labasa will be focused on community building and sustainable livelihood projects as a strategy to deal with rural poverty. She also promised that a fruit dryer donated by SPC-FACT will be installed in Labasa over the next few weeks and will provide the opportunities for farmers to sell their fruits. I thank all the supporters and volunteers who made it such a successful event and we look forward to serving the community in the North.

By Victor Kissun



Good Manufacturing Practices

A two day training was conducted by Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) FACT Team this month at FRIEND. It was attended by production staff and suppliers of DESI (Developing Enterprises for Sustainable Livelihood) program.

Issues such as good manufacturing practices, HACCP, food safety, post harvest handling, food preparation, food preservation and product development was discussed at length.

In this day and age where food poisoning is common food safety is essential. Safety standards such as HACCP not only ensure food safety but also make a product very marketable. The training was timely as FRIEND works towards a HACCP certified state of the art production facility to be located at our new home at the FRIEND Village in Tuvu.

By Aarti Mala

Recipe Corner

Bread & Cheese Pakora

Ingredients: 8-10 Bread slices, 100g Cheese grated, 1 tbsp. Coriander leaves chopped, 2 Green chilies, 1 tsp. Ginger, 4-5 Garlic cloves, Water as required, Salt according to taste, Oil for frying

Method

1. Grind the green chilies, ginger and garlic to a fine paste.
2. Dip the bread slices in water, remove them immediately and squeeze them.
3. Mix the ground masala paste, bread slices, salt and coriander leaves. Mix well.
4. Divide the mixture into small portions and shape into small medium sized balls. Flatten each ball slightly, put a little cheese in the center and roll into a ball again.
5. Deep fry in hot oil till done.

*Serve with
Friend's Fiji Style
Tomato Chutney
or Relish*



With Sandhya Narayan

Turtles and Birds: An exhibition by the Fiji Arts Council



FRIEND youths represented the burning west in a Fiji Arts Council exhibition during the Pacific Youth Festival in Suva this July.

Five young people laden with bags, fruits and artworks took the bus to Suva on the 13th of July to represent the burning west in an exhibition titled 'Turtles and Birds'. This was organized by the Fiji Arts Council and funded by the French Embassy. Mosese Vakatale (17) and Sokoveti Talei (19) were the two Lautoka artists chosen to exhibit their fine artwork alongside over 35 other emerging artists from Suva and Nadi. Both youths became involved with FRIEND by joining the mural art group at Lautoka Hospital this May.

Joana Kaira, a youth on work attachment at FRIEND and two international volunteers: Jessica Stalenberg-AYAD and Sarah Taylor- PCV accompanied the young artists to Suva for the week of the activities. The whole group participated in a drawing workshop held by internationally recognized Fijian Artist- Anare Somumu.

Sokoveti Talei started out as a sketch artist and realized her passion for creativity whilst painting her *Sekoula* mural on the 1st floor of the hospital. For the exhibition, Soko submitted two bright enamel paintings depicting a turtle and a native bird that has become extinct in Fiji, the 'secret kingfisher'. Sokoveti was also chosen to deliver a speech on the opening night of the art exhibition to over 200 stakeholders. In the speech, Soko said hello in every pacific island language, thanking other exhibiting artists and highlighting the message of conservation and protection of Fiji's natural heritage.



Mosese was also a sketch artist turned mural painter and his marigold mural at Lautoka Hospital is highly commendable. For the *turtles and birds* exhibition artwork he depicted an underwater landscape in the oceans around Korolevu. Mosese was one of the youngest artists to exhibit and he benefitted greatly from the art workshop held by Anare Somumu.

These artists were supported financially by the Fiji Arts Council and continue to be supported by FRIEND's Youth Development Program in their arts development. It is an initiative of FRIEND to encourage youths to develop their creative skills for income generation in their future.

By Jessica Stalenberg AYAD