



Takitaki

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TUVU

Nestled in the lap of Tuvu, a picturesque settlement situated along the King's Road, almost halfway between Lautoka and Ba, FRIEND has a new home. Its still a long way away from being the complete village that is planned for the site, but for now, it is enough to house its core operations in its aim for poverty alleviation through social and economic empowerment of the underserved and marginalised communities.

The current facility will house the main office, the food production center, card/craft workshop and space for the medics of the community health initiative under one roof.

With much excitement over the move, the staff meticulously packed up boxes and boxes of accumulated tools and materials, while trying to ensure minimal disruption to the community outreach work. The production teams boosted their productions to cover up on the downtime between the impending move and the set up at the new center.

In midst of the move regular board meeting was held at the site for the first time. The board expressed their excitement and congratulations to the staff on the achievement despite many hurdles and challenges

The move to Tuvu heralds a new era in the life of FRIEND, with a piece of earth to call its own.

The official opening of the new home is planned to coincide with FRIEND's eighth birthday at the end of this month.

The main building



Window view to the northeast



Building gardens



FRIEND Board meets at Tuvu



Looking out to the east

One Year in Labasa

This July marks the 1st anniversary of the official opening of the FRIEND Office in Labasa. Although groundwork had begun earlier, the branch in the north officially opened its doors just a month before its 7th Birthday on the 22 July 2009. Happy Anniversary FRIEND Labasa!!!

Then Australian High Commissioner H E James Batley at the opening





Creative Gardens

Peoples creativity in gardening is a constant source of joy for the programs team as they move around.

Programs team leader, Mereani Lomavere says people are finding use for almost anything that is a throwaway like old trays, boxes, bottles and even umbrellas to add character to their gardens.

Lomavere says those who were previously lamenting the lack of land space for planting are now motivated to utilize whatever space they have to develop their gardens and neighbors are keen to share and exchange what they grow with others to add variety to their tables.

She says it is also encouraging to see little children taking interest in gardening as they work with their mothers in tending to the plants.

The backyard gardening project encourage communities to plant at home to ensure they can have healthy meals for their families instead of relying on over processed supermarket goods like noodles and canned foods that have adverse effects on health and stretch the limited resources to buy these.

An old umbrella is used to give shade to the seedlings from the harsh western sunlight.

Gardens of the North

(Excerpt from a report from Labasa by Sunita Sundar)

In this week's training, we had a look at the gardens and were really pleased to see a lot of garden plots with healthy vegetables growing in them. Sereana started off with only one garden, but now she has a total of nine garden plots. Nikolau and Dimere have moved away from the community but they still come around and do gardening in this community because their son and his family are occupying their flat. According to Maria, she was not doing any gardening in the past 8 years, since she started living there, but now she has her own garden with fresh vegetables. She said that she really got inspired by our governance training and they share seeds and seedlings with each other. The participants here use only one compost.



Made to Order Cards!!!

Big brother is looking for a special birthday card for his younger sibling.

FRIEND: "So what does he like?"

A: "Well he likes Ganeshji (Lord Ganesha) and he is very much into surfing these days."

FRIEND: "Okay, so how about we make Ganeshji on a surfboard?"

A: "Hmmm..., I like the idea. I think that should work."

The idea gets handed over to the creative team in the card making workshop. And what they produced is, as described by the big brother, "INCREDIBLE!"



This card was constructed using Banyan leaves for the body and crown of Lord Ganesha.

Banyan leaves are considered auspicious in Hindu culture

The leaves are treated and sundried before being coloured using paints and dyes.

Contact FRIEND for any occasion special order cards and make your special occasion even more special.



Fresh over Processed—34 year old Saniana Learns Healthy ways

"I had no idea about gardening or starting a small business, or how to prepare or plan before a disaster and even the importance of having a healthy life. My compound is big but I did not plant anything until FRIEND visited. I could say that FRIEND came to show us the direction and awaken us from the deep sleep we were in. Now, I learnt to plant our own food, control my diet like if I add noodles into our soup I will not add the flavor as I am aware that the MSG in it is known to contribute to ill health. I use to buy our vegetables but now I have it at home. Now I sell my vegetables and the money I get from selling my produce within the community is saved for my children's education. I have learnt the importance of saving. I have planted cabbage, capsicum, tomatoes, lettuce, dhaniya, egg plant, pumpkin, onion, chili, long and cucumber.

FRIEND has been a great help and has opened my eyes to live a healthy life, to feed my family with fresh vegetables from my garden. I now manage my family's daily routine like where to put our rubbish

whether it's for compost, recycle or reuse. My husband and children love to see the changes taking place in the garden from seed to fruiting." I would like to thank FRIEND for the great work and without them I may not have started to control my diet, my family's hygiene, budgeting, planning and preserving of foods for later use.

What is MSG and Why it is Bad for Health? *(from www.hubpages.com)*

There is much controversy over the food additive known as monosodium glutamate (MSG). It is used to enhance flavor in many foods. Next to salt and pepper, it is the most commonly used flavor enhancer today. MSG works by making your brain believe the food you are eating tastes good. Most processed foods contain MSG. Regular MSG consumption has been linked to many health conditions which include hormone changes, memory loss, obesity, asthma attacks, mood swings, depression etc

NCDs in Fiji and the current management strategies implemented by the PRISM Health Initiative

"There is no shortage in this world, theres only misdistribution."

There have been two public sharing's of the pilot results of the PRISM Health Initiative this month. The first opportunity was presented at the FRIEND/USP Lecture Series held at the USP Lautoka Campus while the second one was at the Fiji Economic Update in the West. Current findings reveal that 81% of the people undergoing initial tests with the PRISM team are victims of one or the other type of Non Communicable Diseases. These include diabetes, high blood pressure and heart diseases.

Dr Sinha is a US Based General Practitioner who has been volunteering in Fiji since 2007 with a primary focus on non communicable diseases (NCDs). After witnessing the need in Fiji he decided to create an NCD management program and established the PRISM Health Initiative in partnership with FRIEND. He has been tirelessly working in 20 communities around the Western division, screening and assisting patients better manage their NCDs. Dr Sinha has dedicated the next three years in Fiji and is working totally free of charge in an attempt to "restore the balance." He lives the life of a minimalist and derives his compensation from "creating enduring positive change."



Mohinesh takes a break to pose with Tony on his recent visit to the FRIEND office.

Tony Visits FRIEND

Many remembered the name while a few recalled the face, a one time world number one athlete of the surfing world Tony Phillips. The now 'retired' athlete is delving into other ventures which includes the concept of Vuda Nite Markets at the Vuda Marina.

FRIEND's Fiji Style products also feature prominently at the Nite Market as the FRIEND team takes advantage of the opportunity to promote and market the locally produced goods from various marginalised and underserved communities it works with. The Nite Market is a fortnightly event held every

other Saturday from 12 noon to Midnight. Your purchase of any of our products contribute in fighting poverty alleviation in the country. Take advantage of special discounted prices on selected Friend's Fiji Style products at the Nite Market



Malikesa Teaches Working with Voivoi

"Its never too late to learn". Malikesa is the only woman in one of the squatter settlement we work in who has been planting voivoi and knows how to work with it. And she is willing to share it with the other ladies in her com-

munity who turn up for her voivoi processing workshop. The women turned up in long sleeve shirts, armed with their cane knives for harvesting. They worked together in removing the thorns and were ready to start sunning the leaves. The voivoi is woven into mats and sold by the women to supplement



Recipe Corner Healthy 5-Cup Cake

Ingredients

1 cup Friend's Fiji Style
Desiccated Coconut
1cup liquid milk
1 cup sugar
1 cup Self Rising flour
1 cup minced chopped fruits and
nuts (dates, sultanas etc)



Method

Place all the ingredients in a mixing bowl and mix thoroughly.
Put the mixture into a hot oven or an electric frying pan and cook through.
Bake 45-55 mins at 180 degrees C.
Use a fork or a skewer to check if the cake is done.

Serve with a smile.

Take 5 cups of five
Ingredients in the ratio
of 1:1:1:1:1
And your cake is ready
A simple
recipe that is easy on
the budget and great on
the taste buds.

"I like this cake recipe because it has no eggs or oil/butter so is fairly low in fat. I learnt it from a very dear friend of mine who has since passed away. I don't eat much sweets myself but I have people around me who love sweets and the cake normally disappears in no time."

New Product

Friend's Fiji Style® Vermicelli

I still remember when 'samai' making used to be an occasion for fun get-togethers at home. The word would be sent out to aunties, cousins and neighbors. And all would come prepared to lend a hand at dough making, putting the dough through the machine, and then hanging the noodle lengths on cleaned and dried 'arhar' branches in the hot sun, with grandmother supervising the worker.

The kids will play "sitia" while keeping an eye on chasing away any flies that may dare fly by while the adults would enjoy the chat and laughter over cups of hot tea. Now while those days may not come back, it is still a relief to know that taste of the homemade 'samai' can still be found in a pack of Friend's Fiji Style Vermicelli. Its is prepared using the age old recipe used by rural folk from the west.

"samai"— vermicelli "arhar"—cowpeas
"sitia"— a game of chase



By Sandhya Narayan



Caleb Cunningham & Skyler Harris of HELP

Economical Stove Project

Our organization, Help International, has partnered with the FRIEND to further our goals of empowering impoverished people and helping to eliminate poverty. The two of us, are project leads over an idea called Adobe Stoves. These stoves are smokeless, as they funnel heat and smoke through the stove and out of a chimney. They do not require kerosene or gasoline to run, and use only a third of the firewood

and a fraction of the time needed to cook a meal. These benefits, and the simple structure of the stove (using materials such as clay, sand, and coconut husk) make the stove project a very useful. Our experience with FRIEND has been exceptional. FRIEND has introduced us to many villages who they had already prepared for our project. Our experience has been that these villages are eager to improve their communities, learn new ideas, and promote the general welfare of their community. FRIEND's teaching style and insistence on sustainability have transformed their communities into hard working and well-organized villages. We have been more than happy to work with and learn from FRIEND.



YEN (2) 2010 Participants going through theory

YEN (2) 2010 Lautoka

An assorted group of 14 enthusiastic youths turned up at FRIEND to participate in the second YEN training session in Lautoka for this year.

Youth Employment Network was piloted at FRIEND in 2006 winning international recognition in the form of CIVICUS Nelson Mandela Graca Machel Award for innovation.

The program upskills unemployed youths, creating a database of their skills and finds them job attachments for experience in the employment market. The sessions include team building exercises, writing letters, recognizing individual strengths and weaknesses, building communication skills, body language and personal grooming.

A number of youths have found themselves permanent positions after successfully serving their attachments through YEN.

YEN partners with corporate, other ngos and statutory bodies to find attachment placements for the trainees. The next session of YEN for Lautoka is scheduled for November this year.



Graduating musicians take time out for a photo with HELP volunteers

Music for Youths

FRIEND has been working with HELP (Help Eliminate Poverty) International volunteers, based in Tavua, on various projects over the last few months. One group of volunteers had been teaching music theory classes every Wednesday to eighteen interested youths from FRIEND communities. The music classes include such concepts as learn-

ing about rhythm, notes on the keyboard, and reading music. To round off the music project the students have taken a test, earning their certificates of completion. With the music lessons officially over, the youths continue to meet every week, having formed a choir to keep themselves motivated in further learning.



Dr Eric Gomer helping out at a PRISM community visit

US Honeymooners Volunteer

Eric and Jenn Gomer arrived in Fiji in early July and spent two weeks helping out the PRISM Health Initiative in communities around Lautoka.

Dr Eric Gomer is a registered Medical Practitioner in the USA who worked alongside Dr Animesh Sinha, the Founder/Director PRISM Health Initiative for many years.

The couple got married in April this year and have been touring various countries as part of their honeymoon trip. "We were influenced by Dr Sinha and what he is doing here to stop awhile and do what we could." says Eric. Dr Sinha says it is indeed an honour to have an 'esteemed colleague' work alongside him in his venture.



The girl from US

"I had never planned to visit Fiji as such, but when

inquiring for a volunteer opportunity abroad, I decided to come here when Dr. Animesh Sinha described to me his project of providing sustainable alleviation to the non-communicable disease problem in this beautiful country. I was intrigued by the idea of sustainability in a health initiative and decided to see what this would entail. I have learned so much working with PRISM in understanding what it takes to maintain a non-profit front porch project while observing the passion of all who take part in FRIEND. I lived in this country for two and a half months which has taught me countless things while providing me memories that are engraved in my heart forever. FRIEND and PRISM have

helped me expand on who I am and who I wish to become. My time in Fiji has helped me broaden my understanding of my aspirations while taking advantage of the simple things in life such as buying fresh fruits and vegetables. I hope I have been able to give back to FRIEND and PRISM what they have taught me. I wish all the success to FRIEND and PRISM in their new Tuvu home."

Parminder Singh alias Pommy arrived from US almost three months ago to volunteer with the PRISM program. She is a 21 year old pre-med student who aspires to be a doctor in time. She now goes back to US to pursue her studies.



Gayaneshni & Nitesh

A Month of Weddings at FRIEND

FRIEND saw three wedding celebrations this month.

Former Miss FRIEND Sugar Festival 2007 Priya Prasad, who made history as the first Deaf youth to contest such a beauty pageant got married to Rajiv Mani. The couple will reside in Lovu.

Our card workshop coordinator Gayaneshni Lata married her fiancé Nitesh Mani and will be moving to Sigatoka to join her husband.

The third wedding was held at Sister Prakash's (of PRISM) place in which her son got married to his fiancé.



Priya & Rajiv