



FRIEND in

dish

“What do you do with an abundance of tropical fruit and people in poverty after a military coup?”

If you are Sashi Kiran, you seek out local women with serious cooking skills and get them making condiments. Then you get the products to commercial food safety standards and market them so those women can make a living from it.”



Thus begins the write up on FRIEND in an award winning, bi-monthly ‘dish’ magazine, for people who enjoy good food.

Cover page of the current issue of Dish. .



FRIEND team perusing the article published in the prestigious magazine.

The article follows FRIEND’s successful trip to the True Pacific Tradeshow in Auckland in September earlier this year.

The True Pacific is a new project taking Pacific flavors to the world. FRIEND Director Sashi Kiran says it is indeed an honor to be selected by the Dish as one of the two enterprises out of

the 25 businesses that has featured at the Tradeshow. Friend’s Fiji Style® Food products were one of the faster selling items at the Foodshow. FRIEND continues to work with distributors to make the full product range available in the wider NZ market and has continued to participate in food shows through the support of the Pacific Development Cooperation.

Development thrives with governance graduates of 2010

A trip to inform three of our Governance communities of 2010— Nasoata, Navutu and Vunato of a stakeholder field visit this month, led to many pleasant surprises.

In Nasoata, two of the governance Graduates took me to the beach to show 75 flourishing mangrove trees that they had planted earlier this year to protect their shorelines.

They also showed me the clean and dear drains around their village. This was a result of an active village Disaster Management Committee working in line with the climatic calendar and preparing themselves for the current Cyclone season.

At Navutu the sea walls are kept, neat and dean. I could not see any dumping of rubbish in the sea as the villagers are now making use of the rubbish collection service to dispose their household wastes.

In Vunato, the newly built kindergarten resulting from the Governance Group Action Plan was well kept. This was also being used as a venue for PRISM Health visit.

These three communities demonstrate their own commitment to better livelihood.

By Vive Liutaki



Voivoi/Masi Making Workshop in Tuvu

"It is just amazing how a thin piece of wood has been expanded into such a long stretch of material." says Naaz

Naaz came all the way from Ba to attend the two day Skills training workshop.

She says while the process of masi making is long and involving, it is also rewarding when one looks at the final product.

Masi is a bark cloth made in the islands of the Pacific Ocean, primarily in Tonga, Samoa and Fiji.

It is a highly valued material used in traditional ceremonies, home decorations and artwork

The participants came from communities around Ba and Lautoka to look into the traditional way of processing voivoi and making masi from scratch.

This was the first of the Skills Training involving the traditional Fijian craft at FRIEND. There have been similar workshops held in villages also encouraging planting of valuable voivoi and masi.



Naaz (in orange) with her fellow workshop participants



Dr Sinha with UN Resident Representative Knut Ostby

announced earlier this year.

At a ceremony at Suva Civic Centre organized by the UN Volunteer Day Committee, Dr Sinha shared his personal mission statement he wrote at the age of 21 as an idealist that has continued to guide him in his journey.

Dr Sinha is a general practitioner from the United States, and has been volunteering in the underserved communities of Fiji since 2007. In 2009 he approached FRIEND to pilot a program to manage NCDs in Fiji and has been serving the underserved in the western division without taking any monetary compensation. The program currently manages non communicable diseases in 30 communities.

Motivating Volunteers

PRISM Medical Director/ Founder Dr Animesh Sinha shared his message on passion for volunteerism at the event to mark the UN Volunteers Day this month.

Dr Sinha is the recipient of the 2011 UN International Volunteer Award

WHO Visit

On December 13th WHO Nutrition and Physical Activity Officer Dr Temo Waqanivalu accompanied senior officials from the Ministry of Health to a field visit into communities being served by PRISM in the Western Division.

Dr Temo said he was amazed by the positive feedback received from the communities. He asked FRIEND Director what was different with this model as medical outreach is nothing new in our context, however he said he was pleasantly surprised how well the program was received by the communities.

Director Sashi Kiran says, "The holistic model has made all the difference and has yielded results that has exceeded expectations". She says backyard garden, exercise modules together with compassionate care by consistent follow up has given an edge to the services provided by PRISM Health.



Dr Temo Waqanivalu, Sashi & Dr Animesh take a moment for the camera during the field visit & Animesh

Basket Weaving Continues



The enthusiastic faces were eager to get started with their skills training session. A group of women from the Ba communities gathered at the appointed house in Vatulaulau.

This was the second go at facilitating a basket weaving training by Roselyn Sangeeta of Qalitu.

Sitting amongst the raffia tangles, with a heap of broken sasa sticks growing bigger, the women initially struggled to grasp the basics of the technique.

The first participant to master the weave proved to be 80 year old "Amma", who smiled serenely as others around her seemed to be ready to give up.

However each participant got encouraged by others around them and persisted till they all managed to weave.

The ladies are already producing colorful baskets to be used as gifts as well as for sales to add to their household incomes.

By Aarti Mala

Women learn the art of presentation



The women finished their 'prasad' following their weekly Raman recital and regrouped to begin their FRIEND Governance session.

This was my first session in this particular community in the North, which saw mothers and grandmothers coming together with young women.

The group was full of energy as they got down to using their creative skills to prepare colorful presentations in talking about their dreams of an ideal community.

A general feedback from the session was that it was hard for the women to 'draw' out their thoughts as it was not something they had ever done before.

But at the same time the group said it was a new experience for them and something different from their daily chores.

The program in the community is to continue in the new year..

By Mereani Lomavere

Recipe Corner: Pumpkin Pasta

Ingredients

2 Tsp's Friend's Fiji Style Chilli Chutney
Salt
1 onion
4 cloves of garlic
2 tablespoons olive oil
pumpkin peeled and cut into small cubes
Freshly grated nutmeg
1 pkt penne pasta
1/2 cup grated cheese

Method

Heat a heavy-based saucepan, add 1 tbsp olive oil and the onion. Cook for 5 mins, until the onion softens. Tip in the pumpkin. Sprinkle in finely cut basil. Mix well to combine, then season. Cover and cook for 6-8 mins, stirring occasionally until the pumpkin is soft, but not falling apart.

Meanwhile, cook the pasta according to pack instructions. Drain and add to the pumpkin mixture. Stir in the pamesan and serve.



ADULT Literacy

often come across people as part of our work who have not had a chance at proper education.

So when I met Kaliaamma I took as a personal challenge to get her started on her patch to literacy.

Sharing her story Kalimma says, "Growing up in a poor household, I had never thought much about going to school. I got married at a very young age and had children.

Then a few years ago I lost my husband. After he was gone I was left with my four children. Life was a new set of struggles. I would work in various households to keep my family fed.

One day I found myself at FRIEND. Now I am a production assistant in the kitchen and am also learning to read and sign my name with assistance from Mereani. I feel I have a lot to learn."

Mereani Lomavere

Card Workshop Update



The roof of the new card workshop is now on following the laying of the foundation a little more than four weeks ago.

The facility is to cater for space needs of the card and craftmakers at FRIEND.

The workshop, partly funded by Canada Fund, is to be finished by the next issue of Takitaki.

Communities In Action

I felt honored and humbled as a facilitator as I was invited by Natalecake Village in Ba to be part of their Activity Day to mark 16 Days of Activism on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children.

Although the issue of domestic violence is still a taboo topic in most homes and villages around the country, I believe this campaign should impact on Fiji's rating on MDG No 3 that promotes gender equality and empowerment of women.

Chief Guest of the Day, Interim Minister for Women Dr Jiko Luveni is impressed with the commitment shown by some communities in the Western Division who have declared a zero tolerance against domestic violence against women.

In line with the Domestic Violence Decree now in force throughout Fiji, Dr. Luveni said the government is "working hard with other stakeholders on domestic violence awareness campaigns and to educate members of the community the significance of zero tolerance.



By Jone Nawaikula

FRIEND is core funded by AUSAID and NZ AID
Questions or comments? E-mail us at friend@comect.com.fj



Eating a fruit a day, keeps the doctor way".

With their wonderfully sweet firm and creamy flesh, bananas come pre-packaged with their own yellow jackets and are available throughout the year.

It is enjoyed by everyone from infants to elders.

Some health benefits they have for us :-

- 1.) The best source of potassium - an essential mineral for maintaining blood pressure and heart function
- 2.) Have antacid effects that protect against stomach ulcers and ulcer damage.
- 3.) Help improve elimination problems like constipation;
- 4.) Protect your eyesight - lower the risk of age-related muscular degeneration (ARMD);
- 5.) Build better bone by body's ability to absorb calcium;
- 6.) Promotes kidney health/ reduces the risks of having kidney diseases.

Health Corner



Going Bananas

By Merelesita Rainima-Qaniuci