

10 Years



On the 10th anniversary the Founder, Sashi Kiran acknowledged all the support she had received over the years ...



A DECADE OF HOPE

Ten years have passed and it seems we are still such a long way from our goal.... But I am very very thankful to all those who have made our journey happen so far... I had the idea that the work needed to happen in this direction but events of 2000 prompted me to take action. I am very thankful that when I discussed with my friends they stood by me and were willing to support... what seemed like a crazy idea at the time.

First I would like to thank Marie Chan, a dear friend who was also embarking on her own journey to start her own Law practice. But when I asked she happily gave me a \$1000 loan to start... I did ask her for subsequent loan and paid her back but that support at the time was timely. Not only that, every time I went back to Suva she made time for me to brainstorm. While heavily pregnant with her second child she travelled into the interior areas with me as we explored possibilities.

Mr & Mrs Sashi and Saroj Singh, very special people, dear friends again who were willing to support a crazy idea. We had free courier services for 3 years..... and even now we have a very special rates. At a time when marketing and delivery seemed an impossible task- you facilitated our journey. Please accept a small token of appreciation from us. We cant thank you enough.



A select group of near and dear friends of FRIEND gathered at Tuvu on 29th August to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises & Development.

FRIEND was a concept borne of a Vision of the Founder, Sashi Kiran, to enable the poor, marginalized and under-served step out of the circumstances in which they lived.

Guest of honour, the Roko Tui Bau Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi said that, "what is unique about FRIEND was the holistic approach it brought to alleviating the plight of those in the rural areas who were disadvantaged. It was not only about livelihoods, but also about life styles, harmonizing gender roles, health issues, waste disposal, caring about the environment and mediating conflict".

"The challenge of changing attitudes was enormous and remains incomplete. Sashi and her colleagues have much to share with us in that regard. More importantly, maintaining the delicate, even fraught balance between serving these communities and empowering them with particular skills and knowledge, all the while resisting the urge to patronise or look down upon them. It remains a consistent

struggle because human nature is given to self indulgence and the qualification of the ego".

Rau Joni says, "I think the success that FRIEND has achieved over the last ten years is because it has consistently attempted to relate to reality and on their terms. It is a lesson you must not forget as FRIEND looks to the future. The process has often been discouraging and frustrating because engaging people in the community requires patience, tact, compassion and a genuine regard for others. To be able to look beyond the facilities of appearance, ethnic background, personality and individual situation to appreciate the need and having recognized to some to help in a way what preserves their dignity and self worth".

The Roko Tui Bau also inaugurated the Na Tatadra Bure at FRIEND. The Bure is a 21x70m facility that is to serve as a venue for numerous trainings of rural communities by FRIEND.



Mr William Parkinson from Communications Fiji Ltd. I asked him once for off peak advertisements to help us market our products in 2005- he gave us a pot of gold, we still have the freed ads on all radio stations, on their news website and all the village cinemas. We cannot thank him enough for bringing about the product awareness through his generosity.

In 2004-5 when we were struggling to find market we used to put up our stall at large corporate organizations. We went to sell our products at Air Pacific and decided to stop and see Mr Mahendra Motibhai Patel- when he saw our products he agreed to put our products at his duty free outlets and the company still gives us prime location to display our products. Our sincere gratitude to him and the management of Motibhai and Co Ltd.

Mr Kuna Sabaratnam, the general manager of MH also we are very thankful to. We met him once, explained our products and he gave us prominent space in all his stores. I cant explain how much all these meant for us as we struggled to market our products at a time when few were willing to trust local products..... Having the support of such people helped put



faith in our products for it to journey to most high end retail stores today.

I would like to give recognition to late Sr Satya Bali, an amazing mentor and absolutely beautiful soul who supported me every step of the way in early journey and was president of FRIEND until her untimely passing away late 2005.

Fiji Gas was another of those companies who came forward and supported us and for the first few years we used to get a free gas cylinder at a purchase of one. This early support was so important as we were struggling financially.

I would like to invite Mr & Mrs Shiu Narayan, my uncle and auntie who did not know or understand why I had left a job and moved into their home in this village. They did not understand what I was upto wandering in the communities, still provided me shelter, support and still ensure that I am well fed.

I would like to acknowledge the support of Philip Gock, our treasurer for last five years who stood by us and supported us through hard decisions.

Dr Pramila Devi, our President for last five years who stood by me in very hard times, brain storming ideas, trying to walk out of sticky situations - very sincere thank you...



and now we have formalized partnership with USP for our youth and governance programs.

Dr Mridula Prasad, our current trustee. Trustee is a role having to take accountability, thank you for being part of the

team. I would like to acknowledge Nagan Engineering, I never had a corporate sponsor walking up to us and asking do you want a gate done when we moved here, and without asking giving us a stove, cobbing machine, peanut sheller etc thank you.

The dream would have been impossible without the support of donors even though the support was slow in coming until we had our credibility established. In 2004 when we were struggling we received the support of Vodafone Foundation. This year Air Pacific Wings of Hope came forward to support our scholarship program worth \$100,000. Canada Fund supported us with small grants in early days when we could not access large grants.

AUSAID has supported us since 2006 with core funds- made the various programs happen and also provided grants for flood rehabilitation. I would like to acknowledge the presence of acting high commissioner of NZ High Commission – Mr Philip Taula thank you for being with us today.

NZAID has supported us through core funds, and many discussions have happened that has been of great value to us .



A donor that put such a large trust in us is the European Union which gave us a multi million dollar grant last year to ensure that we reach the maximum number of people. Andrew Winter Taylor is here to represent the EU, please convey our since gratitude to the European Union.

I would tell you one thing that the initial journey was very lonely when I only had a concept. I had volunteers and staff who had not even heard of an NGO, but they were with me.... There were many morning trainings, discussions, etc as we grew together. and I would like to acknowledge a staff who has been with us for ten years exact today- Mereani Lomavere who started with us on 29th August 2002 as a

field officer and is now a senior manager with the team. Hasn't been easy but thank you for being part of the journey. Nileshni Sekar, another long serving staff member who has been with us for nine years. She is leaving us now and we wish her the very best.



I would like to acknowledge and thank a very special person who has stood by me from day one of the dreaming. A sister and friend, a founding trustee, and a staff, Sandhya Narayan. She used to support me financially when I was out of job, I don't think she understood what I was on about but for some reason trusted in me and supported me, she left her job in the media eventually to be part of the dream– Sandy I may not ever have said this to you but I am very thankful to you for all your support and most of all believing in my crazy dream when most did not. Now that the dream is no longer abstract, its easier to talk about it and visualize it...but not easy to understand if you don't have the heart and basic value of humanity and I am filled with gratitude that the organization has attracted many good hearts that are so focused on the task ahead. I am very proud to say we have a great team now and I am convinced we will achieve much more together that we have not been able to in the last ten years- it feels the journey has just begun and I know this dream is now our dream... and we can achieve it together!

Talking to Farmers



“Did you really bring us the water pump you had talked about ?” A group of farmers asked about 70 km from Labasa town. The farmers have been trying to plant cash crop yet struggling with recent drought in the area. These farmers are among many in far to reach places struggling with dwindling sugar incomes and have shown

keen interest in FRIEND’s proposal to plant a range of selected supplementary crops for which markets are guaranteed.

The proposal is part of the European Union funded GROW program which provides support to interested groups of farmers willing to work as part of a cluster.

Working with Youths



The issue hovers like dark clouds all around us in our families and communities, but for some reason we choose not to talk about it in hopes that it will not affect us.

A weeklong long workshop was conducted by WAC that gave us a platform to open up on what causes these killer diseases and how it can be prevented.

However we first of all have to admit that by not talking about diabetes, blood pressure and heart diseases, we cannot avoid it.

I loved the drama part the best in which we could act out our messages.

By Lanieta Caucau

Two New Products Launched

Friend's Fiji Style® Dessicated Coconut and a range of herbal teas have been launched by Chef Brendon Coffey of Sofitel for the market this month.

The launch was held as part of the celebrations marking the 10th anniversary of FRIEND on 29th August 2012.

Launching the teas the multi award winning Chef talked about how the range is winning the hearts of his customers in Denerau.

Chef Brendon Coffey has played a key role in promoting *Friend's Fiji Style*® products in the hotel industry in Fiji and continues to do so.

“I must admit that initially when some one presented samples to me of the range, I did not pay much attention to it. But later on I trialed a few products and am willing to vouch for its quality anytime,” he said at the launch.

Coffey also presented FRIEND with the invitation to be the first ever “Community Member” of Fiji Chefs Association in recognition of the local products churned out of FRIEND kitchen.



Recipe Corner: Green Mango Juice

Ingredients:

Raw mangos
Sugar
Salt (According to taste)
Mint leaves
Ground black pepper
Crushed ice: As required
Water: As required

Method:

Serving For Two:
Put a handful of peeled and cubed raw mango into the blender.

Add black salt, black pepper, 2-3 mint leaves, crushed ice and 2 cups of water.

Blend it well,

Pour in the glasses and garnish with fresh mint leaves. Enjoy!





Jyoti

Ranbeer

Samisoni

A GLIMPSE OF HOPE

It all began 14 years ago when Mr. Jone (not his real name) suffered from a very severe disease that got him bed ridden.

His wife and daughter in law were the only ones to take care of Jone and he had to rely on them for his everyday movement.

To go to the washroom, Jone would sit on a Sulu than be dragged across the room.

Not long ago, PRISM Medical team from FRIEND discovered Jone at his home in a village where we hold PRISM clinic and have started backyard garden and exercise. Jone was then offered a chance to have exercises done in his home by a trained physiotherapist.

FRIEND Physiotherapist, Preeti Maria Lal says, “It was a fast remarkable improvement by Jone. He was able to walk around his home on his knees with the help of his walker, in just 3 weeks. His wife and daughter in law were very pleased.”

“We rely on the cooperation of our patients to make positive changes in their lives and it is especially rewarding giving back hope to those who had more or less given up on life,” says Maria.

Natural Water Source

FRIEND Water Project was inaugurated with a play of water and sweets as staff celebrated the provision of new water source at the FRIEND Village.

Director Sashi Kiran says, “With expanding staff numbers and operations, we needed to look for a new source of water as the older boreholes were running dry almost every week.”

The new borehole is located at the foothill of the FRIEND property in Tuvu.



Community Commendation Awards

“Be the change you want to see in this world.”

- Backyard Garden Award
- Exercise for Health Award
- Food Security and Sustainability Award
- Community Service Award
- Best Community or Village Award
- Reforestation Award

How to apply :

Send in your nominations with a CV detailing your activity with the names of ten others you have been assisting with their personal details including address and their phone numbers, references that could be your advisory councilor, Turaga Ni Koro, shop keeper, anyone who could verify your activity and involvement in ‘bringing about change in the community’. Please send in pictures of the activity if available. Applications must be sent to FRIEND by

5th October, 2012.

FRIEND will visit your community to see the ‘change’ before the award ceremony in October so there is plenty time to start...and win.

For more information contact FRIEND on 6663181



O what a celebration! It was another chance to bond as a team and honor those who have supported us in our journey so far.

The morning dawned clear and perfect.

While staff had stayed up late to spruce up the venue of the function late into the previous night, friends from Suva woke up as early as 3am to be present at the function on time.

There were others who made their way to Lautoka a day earlier so as to not to miss any part of the function.

A day that rolled out as planned... err maybe even better :)

And when all was over and done, the hosts and the guests all spoke of what a fitting celebration to mark the first ten years of FRIEND’s journey.

And for the food lovers, the cake was flavoured fresh lemon while the feast was a lovo and puri/curry option/combined.

