



## Re Building ...

Work has begun on construction of our new Food Production Facility in Tuvu. The two storey facility will provide 800sq meters of space for processing and packaging.

The European Union grant toward the GROW program had a contingency funds allocation that was approved to start the project.

Since then a further allocation has been made to cover the cost of construction expected to be completed by August.

Five months since the near total wipe out of the FRIEND HQ in Tuvu in the Tropical Cyclone Evan, renovations to the main building are still far from complete, however excitement grows as the front portion of the building is on the verge of being handed over for occupation early next month.

“We have not allowed the destruction to the headquarters affect our service to communities in need



*New Food Production center—Construction in progress*

..“A lot of work still remains to be done, but the move will mean more space for staff who have been operating from, very cramped conditions since the cyclone, says Sashi Kiran, Founder.

“When the cyclone hit, we had two choices. Either to shut the place down, or re - gather resources and push on. For the main office we have not been able to access insurance or any grant and it’s a struggle to raise fi-

nances. We have initiated a number of fund-raising drives to raise the required funds to complete our rebuilding.”

These include the sales of the D Book , selling of FRIEND calendars as well as our latest attempt to generate sales through our newly launched organisational T- shirts.

We are hopeful that by August end we will have both the buildings completed.

## Cash Crops through GROW

“We once had flourishing cane fields, however that is now history and we can never hope for those days to come back,” said a farmer in the hills of Sigatoka.

Households in the area who were reportedly earning incomes of more than 15, 000 dollars from their farms are now barely making 2, 000 dollars a year.

GROW CASH CROP projects provides farmers with a list of crops that can easily be grown in Fiji without much technical inputs and has locally available market.

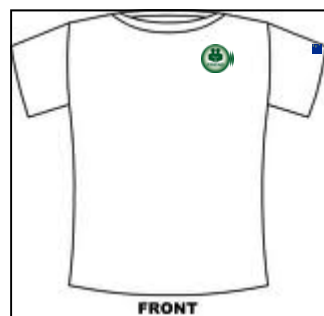
“This was one of the best cane producing areas in its time, but then the rail system got destroyed and the farmers could not bear the rising transportation costs.”

45 farmers gathered at the village school to explore possibilities of supplementary livelihoods.



*Farmers in Sigatoka*

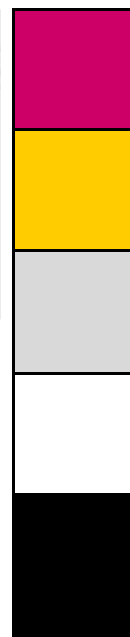
## GROW T Shirts for Sale @ \$25.00 each



FRONT



BACK



Contact: [admin@friendfiji.com](mailto:admin@friendfiji.com) or phone 6663181 for orders



Roundtable at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat in Suva.

## Sharing stories of community work with funders

FRIEND participated in the AUSAID PIFS Regional Design Workshop held at the Forum Secretariat in Suva this month.

The two day meet saw FRIEND presenting on a panel on Livelihoods, Skills, Co-operatives and Enterprise sharing stories of its work directly with communities.

The two day event also saw a display of ever increasing range of *Friend's Fiji Style*® goods that included jams,

pickles, chutneys, herbal teas, spices and handmade cards.

FRIEND Income Generation Programs are hailed as one of the few community based initiatives that have proved sustainable in the Pacific in the last decade.

The workshop was attended by around 80 AUSAID workers and ngo representatives from around the Pacific

## Food Drying for Food Security

Attractive dried fruits as a healthy snack are the new experiments in our communities as women are taking advantage of Food Processing trainings being organised by FRIEND.

Two workshops were held in Lautoka and Labasa this month and two more are planned for Rakiraki and Sigatoka in the coming month.

The participants from the 2 centers were taught the tricks of fruit processing using solar

drying, packaging and labeling.

They also learnt how to make flour from the root crops and vudi.

They were also trained in building their own simple solar dryers using available timber for posts and flooring.

FRIEND conducted the workshop with assistance of a consultant trainer, Ms Rupantri Raju, who is a food scientist at the Fiji National University.



Hygiene first—women at a workshop in Lautoka



Yen Tavua students with USP Staff at the training venue

## YEN on Track

GROW YEN programme has completed four out of the target 10 set of trainings this month.

“The progress is on target as per the workplan for the three year project signed with the European Union,” says GROW Manager Sandhya Narayan.

“We are working with groups of 20 students at a time to upskill them for the labour market.”

“Most of the youths are realiz-

ing the importance of the opportunity and are participating actively in the various initiatives to boost their self esteem.”

“We are hopeful of at least 85% of the participants securing permanent work positions on completion of the program.”

“The support from the corporate sector is much appreciated in providing work attachment opportunities for the youths,” says Sandhya.

## Our Journey Together



Poems, songs and art work narrated stories of hardships, and tears as community members identified traumas and conflicts that had left a mark on their lives. Participants shared meaningfully at a series of workshops organized to help create a space for processing of past pains so future development plans could be

sustainable.

These workshops were led by a local peace facilitator, Adi Vasu Levu Chute who has conducted many similar workshops around the country.

The process of "Our Journey Together" encouraged participants to explore actions that could be under taken to prevent, reduce and transform deep-seated violent conflicts.

Violence in this context was inclusive of domestic violence, community conflicts including leadership disagreements, criminal acts - wounds and traumatic experiences that is seldom shared in the culture of silence.



The workshops were facilitated in local languages in Ba, Lautoka and Tavua.



## A Lunch to Remember

The table was laid out with a gentle sea breeze blowing it's welcoming kisses.

As guests sat back and relaxed, tantalizing blends were placed one after the other before them.

"It is what I have always eaten at home, but it somehow tastes different," was exclaimed by more than one guest as they gave their verdicts on various dishes before them.

We would all agree that the foods served to visitors to our shores is hardly what is eaten in homes in the islands.

Using local ingredients to churn out meals suitable for resort style service celebrity chef Robert Oliver amazed with his unusual blends.

His approach seem to be fresh, simple and delicious.

One of his star ingredients remains *Friend's Fiji Style®* Tamarind Chutney.

And is part of his new cooking show that is soon to be broadcast in over 100 countries to promote pacific and its cuisines worldwide.



## Recipe Corner - Fruit Lote—A Fiji Dessert

### Ingredients

3 Cups water	1 cup diced pawpaw
1 cup diced watermelon	1/4 cup lemon juice
3/4 cup grated cassava	1/2 cup sugar
1 cup sliced banana	

### Method

Mix water, sugar, and grated cassava. Bring mixture to the boil, stirring well. Add the sliced banana and cook for 2-3 minutes. Remove from heat, and allow to cool. Stir in lemon juice. Set out the layers in a cocktail glass.

### Serving suggestions

Serve chilled with thick coconut cream in top.

*The photo of the fruit lote is from the lunch hosted by Chef Robert Oliver at The Pearl Resort this month.*



**May  
BIRTHDAY**



**New Product—POP UP CARDS**

The cardmakers at FRIEND are continually on a lookout for new product ideas and trying out new techniques to keep the novelty alive.

The range has now adopted a fresh looking card for all the lovers of *Friend's Fiji Style®* Handmade Cards.



At first glance the new cards may look like any other of our high quality card but it opens up as a pop out card to delight whoever receives it.

The artistes are challenged to bring to the market new designs so card lovers look forward to new cards all the time.

All genuine *Friend's Fiji Style®* carry the brand-name at the back of the card with a signature of the card maker.

The new range also has creative new hand drawn Fijian designs.



**Reaching out for freshest**

As part of FRIEND's integrated approach to development, FRIEND Medical Team is advocating for all its communities to plant their own backyard gardens and eat as fresh as possible.

FRIEND community Nurse Vatiseva Delai says while most of us know that eating more vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet is likely to reduce risk of some chronic diseases and have better control of lifestyle diseases like diabetes and high blood pressure, our communities are still highly dependent of processed foods when it comes to our own meals .

“One of the ways to ensure that people are eating fresh is to see that they have what they need in their backyards.”

Patients are encouraged to have basic start up gardens of the following plants eggplants, bele , tomatoes, bean, cucumber and herbs like chillies/coriander/mint to add taste to the meals as we discourage the use of salts. FRIEND staff helps set up a model garden in the community and community members are provided with seeds. Where there is land availability fruit orchards are also being set up.

“We are finding that people are planting other varieties of fruits and vegetables once they have cultivated the start up,” says Vatiseva. Each village is also being encouraged to have a wide range of traditional root crops for food security.



**FRIEND Scholarship Applications Closes for 2013**

A total of \$106, 557 have been distributed amongst 2552 students through scholarship assistance in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Evan this year.

Most of these were partial scholarships ranging from 50-80% of total costs of fees and was paid from Wings of Hope grant by Air Pacific.

Children from broken homes and widowed parents were provided with full assistance.

\$100, 000 of this money was made available through the Air Pacific's Wings of Hope.

Other donors included NZAID, Vodafone Foun-

dation and individual donations to the fund through friends of FRIEND.

The scholarship assistance has been in existence for the last 10 years, operating with funds received through friends of FRIEND.

FRIEND doesnot charge any administration costs from scholarship grant and dollar for dollar donation is awarded to students paid directly to the schools.

Around 3000 applications have been processed in the last few months.

**May Visitors— A Diplomat, Chiefs, A permanent Secretary & a Government Minister**



Acting Australian High Commissioner Glen Miles looks at construction



Tui Vitogo & Radini Vitogo on a casual visit.



Minister for Social Welfare Jiko Luveni follows up with a visit of her own.

Tui Tavua, Ratu Jale Bokini expresses his interest in work done by FRIEND



Permanent Secretary Social Welfare, Dr Josefa Koroivueta visits first.

