



MOU with Health Ministry

After four years of discussions with the Ministry of Health, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry and FRIEND in the month of July.

The MOU will now enable FRIEND to refer patients from the communities to be served at the hospitals without being treated as private patients. The agreement will also enable FRIEND staff to attend training programs organized by the Ministry.

FRIEND started its Health outreach program to assist communities better manage the NCD crisis, in particular diabetes and hypertension, two leading causes for disability and deaths in Fiji.

FRIEND doctors and nurses screen entire villages and settlements and those diagnosed

receive medical care every six weeks that include medication, advise on diet and implementation of backyard garden and exercise program.

FRIEND SMILE program is a free public health program yet it is seen as a Private service provider. Often medical team finds chronic cases in the communities needing hospital care and this MOU will finally enable them to be treated as hospital patients and not private patients.

Under the MOU FRIEND can hire specialists from the Ministry to provide specialized care in the communities in particular eye and foot care since the focus of FRIEND remain heavily on diabetes. FRIEND has been providing regular briefs to the MOH since the inception of its health program.



The Minister hands over signed documents to Dr Jone Vuli Hawea.

As FRIEND works in the communities the disabilities due to diabetes is very evident and it was felt that the work on nutrition, exercise and medical care was needed to arrest the crisis however over the years it has not been able to secure sustainable grants for the program which has been funded by the profits from the sale of our products.

The program had to be reduced in size from 40 to around 30 communities as FRIEND struggled with resources after FRIEND HQ was destroyed by Tropical Cyclone Evan.

Some of the profits had to be redirected to secure loan for reconstruction of the headquarters ...

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FRIEND Marks 5 years of service in Labasa



FRIEND Labasa celebrated its 5th Anniversary with a community event this year

The day's celebration included a yam competition; backyard garden competition; poultry-guessing of the weight; sack race; pani and marble race.

The activities reflect the holistic programs by the Labasa office.

"It was a fun day for all involved as communities participated heartily in the various activities," says Team Leader Labasa, Makareta Tawa.

Anniversary Cake cut by the Chief Guest and Makareta Tawa



EU Projects on the last leg for finishing line

The focus for European Union funded GROW project at FRIEND is now on sustainability of ventures started over the last two and half years.

The EU Project Management Unit based in Lautoka visited a range of initiatives in the West and the North this month meeting with project holders and ascertaining the impact of the outreach through FRIEND.

“All the targets have been met and in some activities like Cash Crop and Food Processing we have been able to stretch the dollar to surpass the initial target numbers we had anticipated,” says FRIEND Founder/Director Sashi

Kiran.

“We are seeing a number of really promising project holders that are serving to motivate others. We will be capturing their stories in the coming months to share their lessons with those who may wish to start similar projects.” says Sashi. The GROW project funded by the European Union was initiated in 2012 to promote livelihoods in Sugar Belt Areas.

The project targets 500 Cash Crop Farmers, 500 Women and Youth for Food Processing, 200 Poultry Projects, 60 Apiary Projects and 200 Youths getting upskilled for the labour market in three years of the project period.

PMU's Mohd Habib with Amna Bibi in Labasa

Organic Hopes for better Prices

“We are hopeful of getting the first of the Organic Certificates for Labasa Farmers as early as October,” says FRIEND Organic Officer, Makareta Tawa.

Macuata on getting organic certification for the last two years.

“For the next 2 months; the team should be able to pull off all paper work required and monitor farmers,” says Makareta. “We have also started the process with a group of farmers in Sigatoka.

FRIEND has been working with farmers in

Around 50 farmers attended a workshop in Labasa this month with Mr Stephen Hazelman from POETcom facilitating the day's session.



Participants and staff at the Organic Workshop in Labasa with Guest of Honor Mohammed Habib and Facilitator Stephen Hazelman

Questions or comments? E-mail us at friend@connect.com.fj

Product of the Month—
Friend's Fiji Style®
Dried Pawpaw



A tropical dried fruit, very tasty. Some say dried papaya can act like an aphrodisiac. You'll never know until you try it!

Pawpaw is useful in aiding digestion because the enzymes of the fruit help to digest proteins, fats, and starches.

The fiber of the fruit is helpful in streamlining the digestive tract. Pawpaw is a very alkaline fruit, and this is one reason that it is often useful in soothing an upset stomach.

So, if you know somebody suffering from the effects of cooked food, or feeling off center after consuming sugar or meat, advise them to eat a papaya.

Dried papaya is especially effective in ridding the digestive tract of constipation. IT could be eaten as snack or as an add on in your breakfast :-)

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as our Insurer, The Sun Insurance is still delaying pay out for the damaged office building.

However various fund raising efforts have ensured that the health program continue to serve the communities and further fund raising program are being planned to ensure more grassroots communities are screened for diabetes and hypertension to catch the diseases before it causes death and disabilities. Dr Jone Hawea, the medical director of the program says by the time most patients reach hospital it is too late to save their limbs from amputations.

Dr Hawea who was a surgeon at the hospital before joining FRIEND says its important that all citizens above the age of 25 years get screened atleast once a year for diabetes. He is urging community members to pay particular attention to their diet and exercise adding that traditional diets did not use artificial additives.

A learning festival with the focus on traditional foods has been organized at FRIEND on 29th August and Mela Na Waqe, the festival of sports for all ages has been organized on 30th as FRIEND continue its awareness programs on health.

New Partnerships for Livelihoods Projects

FRIEND has started the set up of income generation programs in the Central Division to assist communities financially sustain community pre-school set ups.

Save the Children Fund has facilitated teacher and committee training on running of these pre-schools run by the communities and those already recognized by the Ministry of Education receive part of the pre-school teacher salaries.

The other part has to be paid by the committee as well as meet other costs of running of these schools.

All the Committees met indicated that Parents find it difficult to pay school fees and they did not wish for children to be penalized by lack of fee paying as parents struggle to meet their family needs.

FRIEND had several meetings in five communities around Suva of which three communities have been able to identify their skills and resources to set up income generation for the schools.

“FRIEND was approached by Save the Children Fund to assist in their livelihood program.



Save the Children®



FRIEND tries to develop income generation using existing skills and market availability,” says Founder Director Sashi Kiran. “There is no magic formula to make the projects work, it requires a lot of effort and energy.”

“We have seen a lot of enthusiasm in the communities we have met so far. A lot of creative ideas are being explored and we are hopeful of creating sustainable income sources for the participating communities to help them run their program successfully. The committees we have met are very committed in ensuring free education for pre schoolers and regular cash income will ensure that parents are not burdened. ”

Recipe Corner—Pawpaw Coconut Muffin



Ingredients:

- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 cup milk
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup *Friend's Fiji Style®* Desiccated Coconut
- 1 Cup *Friend's Fiji Style®* Dried Fiji Pawpaw
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 Tbsp butter

Directions:

Preheat oven to 180 C.

Combine flour, sugar, baking soda, cinnamon and salt in a large bowl. Mix well. Add coconut and pawpaw and mix to combine.

In a medium bowl, mix eggs, melted butter, vanilla and milk. Add to the flour mixture and stir until just blended.

Pour batter into a prepared muffin tins and bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

“Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Like Slavery and Apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. YOU can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom.”

Nelson Mandela



\$\$\$ Scented Lemon Grass

“So far I have planted more than 300 Lemon Grass plots on my farm and am planning to plant more on land that is still unused,” says Pita

Pita is one of the farmers who is working on obtaining Organic Certification of his land in Vanua Levu

“Most of the land where I am now planting Lemon Grass had been lying idle for years. Then FRIEND came to our village. We heard of various things that we could plant and earn some money. Previously we had some Lemon Grass around the village but no one was planting it for income. As a group we decided to start planting Lemon Grass and since then have had a reliable market with FRIEND for whatev-

er we have been producing.”

“We have received trainings from officers at FRIEND on how to harvest and prepare Lemon Grass Tea. This has to be done carefully as we have to ensure that the final product is not contaminated with other weeds in anyway.”

Pita’s community is one of the key suppliers for Friend’s Fiji style Lemon Grass Tea. The tea is now available in various selected supermarkets and shops including MH, Prouds, Tappoos and Jacks.

There are four more communities in the North who are engaging in large scale planting of Lemon Grass.



A Labasa farmer on his way to the fields.

Employee Motivation Awards—July

The employee Motivation Awards this month saw the Team Trophy taken by the Card Team.

The team was commended for rising to the challenge of delivering new designs, surpassing expected targets in production of kava paper.

The card team led by Mere Adibuli and assisted by Minesh Naickar. Sekaia Batucicilia has taken charge of papermaking and is producing beautiful paper from kava kosa.

FRIEND Health program—SMILE Nurse Lavenia Lee_Raganivatu has been awarded the Employee of the Month Award.

She has been commended for her ability to promote and initiate herb and backyard gardens in medical communities alongside medical duties.

The medical team adopts an integrated approach of food security, health and exercise in target communities.

L- R Mere Adibuli, Minesh Naikar, Sakaia Batucicila , Lavenia Lee_Raganivatu

