



Takitaki

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REFLECTIONS ON 2005 FROM SASHI KIRAN

2005 started with on-going struggle, but the year brought many blessings, visitors, funds and new products to the market. FRIEND was privileged to host HRH the Prince of Wales in March and Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, the Vice President, who brought blessings from the State to our 3rd anniversary in August. We had visits by long-time supporter, Leonie Smiley, the Canada Fund Coordinator; the High Commissioners from New Zealand, India and Australia; the Director of Peace Corps from Washington D.C.; as well as many NGO leaders, business houses and donor agency representatives. Punjas and CDP continue to support FRIEND with distribution and courier services, in addition to much good will. Many other corporate bodies also lent their support to FRIEND this year. Partnerships with NGOs--ECREA, CCF, WAC, Family Support Education Group--helped us bring many programs to communities. The year saw an increase in communities served, and the trial and release of many new Friend's Fiji Style™ products, including the launch of a much-in-demand, larger package of chutneys and pickles. FRIEND's work got international recognition with Nileshni Sekar winning the GKP Youth award in Tunisia for teaching deaf youths quilling techniques. With the many achievements, we also lost a gem. Board Chair, dear mentor and friend, Ms. Satya Bali passed away, and she will be dearly missed. Peace Corps volunteer, Atasi Das, left for USA in November. A new Peace Corps volunteer, Lori Banks, joined in August and Louise Jeffs, from Australian Volunteers International, joined in November. Looking back, there is a sense of relief that we were able to overcome many hurdles and develop positive partnerships we hope to build on for poverty alleviation. I can see the vision that Marie Chan and I had taking shape. Finally, I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to Marie Chan, volunteers, donors, business houses, staff, and circle of friends who supported us this far by taking action and responsibility for poverty alleviation. Vinaka Vakalevu and we look forward to your ongoing support!

MAKE POVERTY HISTORY

White Band Day III December 10, 2005

Wear a white band and speak out to your leaders and your community in support of the fight against poverty.

Ending poverty is everyone's business.



The theme of the third White Band Day is "Put the Spotlight on Trade Injustice". The timing of this global White Band action coincides with the WTO ministerial meeting in Hong Kong. This effort will highlight the disparity in the rules governing international trade for rich nations and developing ones. Changes in these rules have the potential to lift millions out of poverty by allowing developing nations to compete. Show your support on Dec. 10—wear a white band!

MEET LOUISE: AVI VOLUNTEER

Louise Jeffs has joined the staff of FRIEND. She is an AVI volunteer from Sydney, and comes to us with great experience. She has worked with NGOs for many years and has a background in Community Management. Louise will be working on community development with our Program team, and will also coordinate trainings for our office staff. We are very grateful to have someone with Louise's skills working on our team. Please say hello to her the next time you visit the office, and join us in welcoming her to Fiji and to FRIEND.



IN MY OWN WORDS: FLYING TO TUNIS FOR THE ICT & YOUTH AWARDS



Mala (far left) receives her award in Tunisia.

When I heard that I had won the GKP ICT & Youth Award I couldn't believe it. I knew that we were doing great work on the handmade cards, but did not expect to win an award. To receive this honor, I had to travel to Tunis, Tunisia in Northern Africa. I was really excited to go, but the thought of traveling so far was a little scary. I had never traveled outside of Fiji and didn't even have a passport!

To get to the WSIS event where the award was presented I had to fly for many hours with stops in Sydney, Kuala Lumpur, London, Lyons, finally landing in Tunis. I had a lot of new experiences while traveling—being on a plane, riding an escalator . . . and the size of the airports! When I arrived in Tunis I found out that my luggage was missing. I didn't have many clothes with me, so this was very upsetting. After registering for the conference, I went to my hotel, El Hana, which I liked very much. There were so many people were there to attend WSIS. On my second day there I met the other ICT & Youth award winners and we got to share our stories.

The award function was great and so well-organized. I really felt proud while receiving the award, and was thinking about FRIEND and the card-making team. I also attended the Youth workshop at WSIS which was interesting, as it helped us all see where we are with our projects and think about plans for the future. This experience has not only made me proud, it has made me committed to my work. I'd like to thank FRIEND for nominating me for the award and GKP for this special honor.

WAC DRAMA WORKSHOP



Youths participate in WAC Workshop

Women’s Action For Change (WAC), a social drama group based in Suva, organized a two-week drama workshop for the unemployed youths of Lautoka. The workshop was held at the FRIEND office from 21st November to 2nd December. A total of 25 youths from various communities in the Lautoka area attended.

The workshop was organized with the purpose of involving the young people in a development program which trains them in a craft—acting—that could keep them busy and potentially earn them income in the future.

Everyone is an actor, instilled with their own talents, and these youths are no exception. This workshop gave the youths the opportunity to learn new skills, hear ideas from professional actors and showcase their own talents.

Under the guidance of the WAC members facilitating the workshop, the apprentice actors spent the two weeks preparing to perform a drama based on the myth, “God and Goddess”. Their hard work was successfully completed on 3rd December when they performed the play for Japanese tourists visiting Lautoka from Peace Boat. The performance was very well-received. Bravo to the WAC staff and youths on a job well done!

PEACE BOAT DOCKS AT FRIEND

Peace Boat is an NGO based in Japan that promotes peace, human rights, sustainable development and respect for the environment. It makes three international voyages a year, docking in ports all over the world. On December 3rd, Peace Boat docked in Lautoka and FRIEND coordinated with their staff to provide one of the local activities for the passengers.

FRIEND hosted a market in our compound, where a variety of local products and foods were on sale. The Japanese tourists were able to purchase Friend’s Fiji Style™ products, Naturally Fiji products, and local handicrafts such as lery. Local dishes were also available so the Peace Boat passengers could get a true taste of Fiji. A youths and mural painting was also planned during their visit. Special thanks to Industrial Suppliers for providing paint and supplies for the mural. To all those who participated in the host our international visitors during



Peace Boaters enjoy a taste of Fiji.

handbags, mats and coconut jewelry. Local dishes were also available so the Peace Boat passengers drama was performed by Lautoka Apco Coatings and Automation planned to entertain the passengers paint and supplies for the mural. market, many thanks for helping us their time in the Sugar City.

What’s Happening?	December 1 World AIDS Day	December 10 Human Rights	December 25 Christmas Day	December 26 Boxing Day
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“YOUTH CHALLENGES” SKIT COMPETITION



Skit competition organizers: Karishma and Angelina

FRIEND Youth Club organized a skit competition for youths from the Lautoka area. The theme for this competition was “Youth Challenges”. It was a great opportunity for the young people who participated to express their views and opinions on the challenges they face today.

The competition was held on 26th November at the FRIEND office on Valetia Street along with the first-time FRIEND street market. The event

was open to the public and offered people great products to purchase as well as live performances to watch.

The judges for the skits were Meresaini, a Fiji Times journalist; Aashna, a researcher at FSC; and Paul, a counselor at Family Support and Education Services. They were chosen because they are all youths who are making their mark in Fiji today. The judges chose the Deaf Youths as the grand prize winners of the day, but shields, trophies and gift hampers were awarded to all of the teams who participated.

This was the first project organized by the FRIEND Youth Club, and it was a great success. We look forward to more excellent projects from them in the future.

OUR NEW HOME



The new FRIEND Office

The FRIEND office is now located at 8 Valetia Street, just up the street from our previous office. The new compound is very large and will be the venue for many FRIEND events in the future. We hope to see you at one of them. Or, if you’re in the neighborhood, stop by and see us!