

The Soul of the Water:

News from our Vanua



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Bula and Namaste from Fiji!

This e-newsletter was conceived in an effort to keep all of you informed about our company's outreach efforts on the Fiji home front. We want to let you know some of the ways you can help us... and many of the ways in which you already do.



Vanua • Community News.....

Having survived Cyclone Gene, life is returning to normal in Yaqara, with cyclone season passing into the lovely, temperate weather that makes us forget about cyclones until next year. In our local communities, however, we are working hard to make sure that we are prepared well in advance of dry season this year. Fiji Water hired the same company that drills our own bores to stay on an extra month and drill deep, productive boreholes in the villages of Drauniivi, Togovere, and Rabulu throughout January and into February. With those resources in place, we are now working with village water committees composed of both villagers and employees to develop working plans for water delivery systems in the three villages. These systems will be managed and maintained by the committees, empowering them through ownership and responsibility.

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Fiji, at large, is experiencing an unfortunate crime wave as a result of political instability and building tensions. With this in mind, we have been making more of an effort to support our local police, their community policing efforts, and crime-prevention programs. When we hosted the Tavua Police at a luncheon at the Tavua Hotel last weekend, Vijay, the station manager, told us this was the first time in 31 years of policing that he had been recognized and thanked for his work. Tavua currently has the lowest crime rate in the country, and is one of few urban areas where incidences of crime have decreased since 2007. We will be participating next week in celebrating National Crime Free Day in Tavua with a float in the parade and taking part in judging the school oratory contest following the day's crime-free theme.



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Meanwhile, in the midst of the company's local media firestorm, a heartening message came down to us last week from the highlands of Viti Levu, raising all of our spirits and reminding us of the good here in Fiji. A singing group of six rural farm boys, by the name of ***Delai Vatuvula Jr.*** has composed a catchy Fijian-style ballad about Fiji Water, its history, and intrinsic place in the vanua. The group's name refers to the well-known mountain top in their village and is the second group to hold this name, hence the junior. The current musicians are the sons of the original *Delai Vatuvula* which was a popular string band in the 1950s. They performed the song and many other of their originals to a rapt audience at an evening gathering at the Villas. We look forward to helping them produce their next CD and hope to use this song and their band in some of our public appearances in Fiji.

Tikobulabula • Health News.....



Last weekend a dedicated group of employees, family, and friends gave up their Sunday afternoon to give the *Rakiraki Hospital* a cleaning such as it has never before seen. The hospital has only one cleaner on staff, and she can hardly keep up with the toilet cleaning, let alone running a mop over all the floors in the place once a day. Therefore, water blasters and steam cleaners were hi-jacked from their normal factory duties and put to use on crevices and grouting in restrooms and along baseboards. The entire outpatient waiting room was emptied, and benches were given a good washdown.

The frenzy of activity attracted a group of onlookers including a number of children who spend their weekends hanging out at the hospital waiting for action. In true Tom Sawyeresque fashion, it didn't take long before we recruited heaps more hands to use scrub brushes, rags, brooms, and spritz windex. When the day was through we had thoroughly scrubbed and bleached 5 bathrooms and cleared out and cleaned all the walls, floors, windows, and seats of the main pharmacy and outpatient area. Everyone marveled in the transformation and vowed to make this a regular occurrence.

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Although, as wife to chief engineer Lance Allen, she has long been a part of our Fiji Water family, we are proud to officially welcome *Vicky Allen* to the payroll as Health Coordinator. Vicky is a registered midwife and nurse with many years of experience at the Tavua Hospital. She has already begun the massive task of collecting medical data of all our employees, retesting and updating the data, and liaising with the hospital to expedite treatment for our employees. She also plays the key rolls of health educator and on-site nurse. We look forward to all the health benefits her presence will help to bring to our growing workforce, many of whom would otherwise only go to a hospital if they'd lost a limb.

Drokadroka • Green News.....



As many of you may know, we're stepping up our on-site recycling at the plant. As of last November, all employees- Jim Siplon included- are allocated 1 case of reject water ration. For every case of empty bottles they return, however, they will get another full case of water, with a maximum of 2 cases available per week. Through this incentive program we have managed to retrieve more than 15,500 bottles over the last 4 months. We still have a ways to go before we reach our goal of 50% return rate.

One way we've been augmenting this figure is through recycling drives. At the end of last year, in return for new balls and sponsorship for their awards ceremony, 8 women's netball clubs collected bottles in their villages and brought back more than 2,000 bottles. Following in this vein, next week at Vatukaloko Junior Secondary School we will kick off a week long drive for all variety of recyclables. A successful drive will allow the students to fundraise athletic uniforms for their track team and will also be an educational opportunity for us to start our students recycling in school .

Koronivuli • School News.....

A big *vinaka vakalevu* to all of you who made donations of books, crayons, school supplies, toys, and candies during your stay here in Fiji! We have sorted and given all of these gifts out to our 4 kindergartens in Naseyani, Togovere, Drauniivi, and Rabulu Indian School to the great appreciation of communities, teachers, and students. The playdoh, crayons, cars, and coloring books have been particularly big hits!

At Vatukaloko Junior Secondary School- the school in Drauniivi that Fiji Water funded in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the Vatukaloko community- they have successfully started their second year of classes, now offering two forms (US equivalent of 9th grade and 10th grade) with 40 students enrolled. Since last week we've been working non-stop with local stakeholders to get a pipeline in place that will provide the school with water for their new toilet facility.



In Togovere, where our company spokesman, Sai is kindergarten manager and his wife is the teacher, we recently assisted in replacing the school's cracked water tank and then visited the community hall for our water committee meeting. The kindergarteners assisted by serving grog, dancing, and looking adorable, as usual.

Solisoli • How you can help.....

This week we received the great news that after 3 years with its doors closed for lack of a qualified teacher, the kindergarten in Rabulu Village will reopen in two weeks. Their new teacher, Mrs. Salome Varomusu, will finish her Lautoka Teacher's College early-childhood education course this Friday. She is already hard at work trying to ready the school to receive 20 students and is hoping that some of you in the US might be able to help her in this effort.

The school would greatly appreciate donations, new or kindly used, of the following items:



- Duplos (large interlocking building blocks)
- Puzzles (jumbo and medium size)
- Colorful beads & shoelaces for threading
- Toy cars, buses, & airplanes
- Plastecine/ Playdoh
- Crayons & Chalk
- Tempera powder paint with large brushes
- Wooden blocks with printed letters and numbers
- Story books
- Wall charts depicting animals, alphabets, and numbers

If you have any of these items and would like to make a donation from the US, please forward them to the LA office care of Angela Sarno. It would be greatly appreciated if you could email her asarno@fijiwater.com and cc me mpowers@fijiwater.com to expect your packages.

If you are sending items from overseas, please post them to our Yaqara office, P.O. Box 955 Tavua, Fiji Islands to my attention.

Our Fiji communities thank you so much for generosity. These small things add up to make a big difference in the lives of parents, teachers, and children in our vanua.

Vinaka vakalevu and Bahut Dhaanbaad!



I hope you enjoyed reading about some of the goings on here in Fiji. If you have questions or comments about anything in the newsletter, or suggestions as to improvements for the next volume, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Molly Powers | Culture & Community Affairs Coordinator | [Yaqara, Fiji](#)