

Reaching the Islands!



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Dear friends,

We arrived back in Fiji in August & found we were just in time for Suva's annual Hibiscus festival: a week-long time of festivities, but also a platform for organizations, companies & government ministries to promote their activities. The week finishes with a carnival march all through the centre of the capital & the crowning of the new Hibiscus Queen. As with last year, we were very fortunate to be able to march in the parade with our long-time friends Analesi & Milika from Kindy at the Park. A professional photographer was on hand & he passed on to us the photo below on the left!

We decided to follow up on an invitation we received last year to bring library books & textbooks to Chevalier Vocational Training Centre. Situated some 20 kms outside of Suva, the centre was set up a few years ago by a Catholic order in order to help students that dropped out of the normal educational system or that were not so academically inclined in the first place! There are useful courses in mechanics & welding, among other subjects, so that students can start their adult life with a practical skill. We donated 4 boxes of library & text books, along with toothpaste & stationary, see below right photo.

Another memorable distribution was travelling with the director of secondary education, Mr Jay Narayan, to donate books to a secondary school not far from Suva, but with a student population mainly from informal settlements. Mr Narayan gave us a list of all the secondary schools in Fiji, along with his personal recommendations of where the biggest needs are for future distributions. As a result, we've now set aside 75 boxes of books for 15 schools in & around Vanua Levu, Taveuni & other islands.

In other news, we decided that we'd try to reach out & get to know more of our neighbors. Each weekend we knocked on one or 2 doors & suggested that we have a cup of tea at their place or at our place, (continued on next page)....



Above left: marching through the capital in the annual Hibiscus festival. Right: donating books, stationary & toothpaste to Chevalier Vocational Training Centre near Suva.



Above: receiving 4 large bales of clothes!

In the course of our meet-and-greet initiative, we met with a very nice Samoan couple, living 2 houses down. Being very active in charity & mission work themselves, they were interested in our work & took one of our flyers asking for donations of books & clothes.

A week or so later, they invited us to do a presentation for their 30 or so staff at the Fiji branch of a well-known regional organisation. They also asked a second hand clothing company, Value City, if they could buy some discounted clothes to give to us. The manageress replied that they already know about Pacific Outreach & said they could donate 4 large bales of clothes, amounting to about 600 kgs!!

If you imagine that your check-in luggage at the airport might come to 15 or 20 kgs, then you get an idea of the kind of quantity this represents! Sure enough, the clothes were brought to our house a few days later & so now our terrace is covered in clothes, as well as boxes of books.

Around the time of receiving all these clothes, we heard of a nearby Fijian village house burning down & the family losing a lot of their possessions: they became the first beneficiaries of the donated clothes, but there will be many more in the coming weeks.....



Above: sorting clothes into piles for men, women & children for better distribution.



Above: giving clothes to family whose house burned down; below: donating clothes at a centre for young offenders.



For more news, please see our website www.pacificoutreach.com that normally gets updated every 2 weeks,

Yours, Peter & Susan Kingston

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