

Reaching the Islands!



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Happy Christmas & New Year! Throughout the second half of 2011, we succeeded in keeping up to date our weekly blog page on our website www.pacificoutreach.com Our last newsletter was back in October though, so here's a quick summary of our news from both Fiji & the Caribbean these past few months.

One major breakthrough was working with the charity Children of Fiji to secure the safe arrival & customs clearance of 5,500 library books to donate in village schools, along with other educational equipment! Fiji recently changed many of its customs regulations so that basically only food & clothes can be imported without paying charges. Convincing the authorities that bringing these books was a worthy exception to the above guidelines was monumentally difficult, but we finally succeeded after months of paperwork! The highlight of our visit to Fiji next year will be taking these books to needy outer islands & donating them in village schools where such materials are in very short supply.

After Fiji, we visited friends in the USA before travelling on to the Bahamas in order to conduct anti-smoking & drug-awareness programs in the schools.

The Caribbean drug problem!!

For those outside the Caribbean, it might seem like we're visiting paradise, but in fact the Bahamas have a long history of smuggling & piracy! The area's proximity to the Latin American drug cartels & the big US drug market has also encouraged illicit drugs to take root. Crime in the islands—often drug-related—is also surprisingly high with the per capita murder rate surpassing Jamaica.



Above left: introducing our program at Catholic High School in Freeport. Above right: students at Heritage School, Nassau enjoying a light moment during our program.

Our basic program consists of quickly introducing our missionary work & then recounting some of our experiences as teenagers with heavy smoking, marijuana, alcohol & LSD. Depending on the time available, we then show parts of either 1 or 2 DVDs about smoking & drug abuse. 'The A-Z of drugs' is excellent for giving an overview of the dangers associated with alcohol, cannabis, crack & cocaine, while 'Smoking: Truth or Dare' shows quite dramatic shots of lung cancer, emphysema & other diseases directly linked to smoking. What makes both DVDs very effective is that they are full of real life testimonies & examples that young people can relate to.

At the end of each session we have questions & answers.



Above: Gems Radio, Nassau, invited to talk about our work & life of faith.



Above: we donated sets of DVDs to 2 children's homes in Nassau & Freeport.



Above: Because of the excellent projectors & sound systems in most Bahamian schools, we were able to reach larger audiences than usual.



Above: 2 Bahamas newspapers published articles on our work that we uploaded to our website: the above one from Nassau & another one in the Freeport News entitled 'Couple spreading positive message to youth.' Both links can be found on the left side of the opening page of our website www.pacificoutreach.com

Yours,

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