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Fiji Deaf Ministry

Gospel School for the Deaf and Harland Hostels

... that those who have not heard about Him will understand. Romans 15:21

November 2020 newsletter

Hello

In spite of the year being an unusual one for most of us, good things have still happened in Fiji, and for that we can be truly thankful. It is such a privilege to be able to work alongside the beautiful people and children of Fiji.



Vanuatu

The **first** major event at the beginning of the year was the arrival of our new Vanuatu children, and the return of Michael and teacher Edikel with her daughter. They became part of our "family" very quickly and have all done amazingly well, considering they had had no formal education before they came to us. They have been separated from their families for ten months, but sadly for us, we will say good bye to them on November 30, when a repatriation flight will take them back to Vanuatu. Next year will see the start of Deaf Education in Vanuatu and we hope to work closely with the school and support them in any way we can.

Defney





Jim



Jones



Lorenzo



Michael



Bola, Gratitude and Precious

The **second** big event was the arrival of Bola and his two daughters, Gratitude and Precious from Nigeria. They too have adapted to life in Fiji very well and the girls, who are hearing, have learned Fiji sign quickly and often translate for Dad. They are enjoying life in Suva, and we enjoy having them as part of our team.

Precious, Bola, Gratitude

COVID-19

Then came Covid..... Like the rest of the world, life here stopped for a few weeks and then slowly began to return to the "new normal". Our teaching staff worked reduced hours, but put those hours to good use and worked on making teaching aids and creating sign language lessons and a "sign bank" on video. After 13 weeks of learning from home, all but two of our children returned and soon settled into routine.

The Gospel School for the Deaf celebrated **Deaf Awareness** during September, and the theme for this year was "**Sign Language Rights For All**". The children prepared items for parents and visitors, which they performed on the last day of term 2. It was a fun filled day with various activities being carried out, such as face painting, Zumba dance, table tennis games, hitting the piñata, and a sack race. **Fiji Table Tennis** provided lunch and refreshments and donated a table for the children's use.



Felicity - the face painter



Walter



Sabia

A team from the Fiji Development Bank joined us for the celebrations that day, and donated a much needed water blaster for the hostels. We were then invited to a lunch hosted by the Fiji Institute of Bankers to celebrate **Fiji Day**, and **50 years of independence**, where the President of Fiji welcomed the children. Our children performed a dance item, with teacher Christine, leading from the front, to keep them in time with the music.

Term 3

Term three is rushing by quickly and plans are underway for end of year functions and celebrations. We would normally be into our last week of school by now, but as so much school was missed during Covid, the term will go through until mid-December. We hope to have a new playground built for the school by early next year, made possible by donations given by you to fund the project. At this stage, our numbers are

looking to be reduced in 2021, but hopefully, more contacts will be made before the commencement of school in January.



End of an era

After many years, **Lario, Vitalina and Tiare** (left to right) have completed their education and time with us, and will return to their families where they hope to find employment in the food industry. They have worked well to finish their **cooking course** this year and part of this last term they have been completing the practical section of their course. Tiare has been at the Gospel High canteen, Lario at the Gospel Primary canteen and Vitalina in the kitchen at our main hostel. We wish them well and thank them for their contribution to our school and hostels, and for the ways in which they have helped and cared for our younger children. We will miss them, but we pray that Lario and Vitalina will still be involved with our CFD (Christian Fellowship for the Deaf) group and that Tiare will have support from former students when he is able to return to Kiribati.

Thank you - you have made a difference...

As the curtain comes down on 2020, GSD and Harland Hostels would once again like to say a huge **"thank you"** for your support throughout a difficult year for you, and for us. You would be so encouraged to see how far the children have advanced with their education, their signing, their relationships with other children, their manners and respect for each other, their willingness to help around the hostels, and their understanding of God's love.

You have made a difference in the lives of our beautiful children, who have struggles which the hearing do not understand. Your support has paid our staff's wages, fed our children, and bought seeds for them to plant gardens. You have bought new clean bedding, chairs to sit on, and washing powder and soap to keep their clothes and bodies clean.....the list goes on..... May you be blessed as you have blessed our children and those who care for them.

Vinaka vakalevu and Best Wishes to you and your families as you celebrate Christmas together.

Fiji Deaf Ministry: <https://www.fijideaf.net/>