



This years' Trustees meeting



School and Staff



Youngest comes to stay

Fiji Deaf Ministry, PO Box 2495, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

email: Fiji.Deaf.Ministry@gmail.com

Our new Website: www.fijideaf.net

We feel quite proud of our new website. Some of our supporters have worked hard to put this together for us. Please go and have a look. We will keep on working with updates too and keeping it fresh – there are always new things happening at the School and Hostels. You can even register your email to be advised when there is a new blog from Jim and Marilyn Cooney to read – these have been really interesting.

Seeking on Koro

Luke 18:16 "*Jesus, however, called for the children and said, "Let the little children come to me, and stop keeping them away, because the kingdom of God belongs to people like these."*

Koro Island is a moderate size island in the Koro Sea which lies between the main islands of Viti Levu, Vanua Levu and Taveuni. About 5000 people live there. There are over 300 inhabited islands in the nation of the Fiji Islands and some are hundreds of kilometres away from Suva, where we operate our school for the Deaf. Folk on these islands may not have even heard about our school and the help that it can bring to any deaf children in their communities. So, we go looking for them. Jim Cooney tells the story of finding some deaf little ones on Koro Island.

"We believe that at least 35% of the deaf school age children in Fiji are not in school. We have a burden for these children, and we seek them out. Last March, a Fijian woman named Sereana came into my office, to tell me that there were many deaf on Koro Island. She had met her old friend Liti, who is in charge of our Junior Boys Hostel. Liti told Sereana that she was now working with deaf children. Sereana then told Liti about the deaf on Koro, so Liti sent her to us.

'Are you sure that they are deaf?' I asked. (Many Fijians lump all handicapped children together.) Yes, she was sure! So we made a plan. Her brother was going back to Koro and it's 14 villages. He would try to locate the deaf children.

A young man named Wani, brother of Mela, a deaf woman who worked for us, has helped us find deaf children on other islands. He is age 17, very bright and mature for his age. I asked him if he would go to Koro during the school break, between terms 1 and 2. He enthusiastically agreed. We then asked Avikesh, one of our grads, now in Form 7 at Gospel High, if he would join him. Then Sanjesh, one of our deaf Teacher Assistants and hostel workers came and asked if he could go too. We accepted both. Lastly, I asked Isi, our office manager, if she would lead the team and serve as sign



language interpreter and treasurer.. Isi leaped at the chance. I think Isi would be a great political campaigner, as she enjoys going to any 'event' and even gets excited about the opening of an envelope! So we had a team

The bus trip from Suva to the boat landing in Natovi was almost three hours. The boat ride to Koro was another 4 1/2 hours, and with the carrier rental to Sereana's village, the trip was a total of about 9 hours.

Koro means 'village' in Fijian. The sign language sign for Koro is K+fish. It is said to be the most fertile of the Fijian islands. It is famous for the turtle calling ceremony during which villagers chant songs and turtles rise to the surface. Our team, however, was

there to find deaf children, not turtles (not even Ninja Turtles). This was Isi's prayer: *It is confirmed, we are going! Thank*

you Heavenly Father for the timing, See you soon, Koro Island. Father, bring them to us, so that they can be educated; but the most important thing is for them to know you. Children with special needs are just amazing. It just confirms that our God is an awesome God. We can't stop praising him! God quickly brought deaf brothers, Pita (age 5) and Atu (age 3) to them. They are from Sereana's village. They also found 3 other deaf children, around age 8, from different villages. The villagers rolled out the *bamboo carpet!* Different bures (homes) fed the team each night of the week long trip. The team taught the entire village sign language. The villagers were amazed, seeing our deaf team members communicate in sign language with each other.

Praise God! The two boys and their mom are now at the Gospel School for the Deaf. They are comfortable and happy. Their mom has since returned to Koro.

Please pray that the other 3 deaf youngsters will soon join us.



Teacher Felicity, Atu, Pita and their mom

Good News

A New Zealand couple is wanting to go to Suva to help in the Ministry and are being led by God in this. We will give more details as soon as matters are definite but we can praise the Lord for this and continue to pray that they will be able to get there "at the right time". There are so many things for them to arrange: family matters, property, work permits, and so forth.

New Accommodation

All our senior students have had to move to new rented houses this year. The senior girls moved first, just down the street but into a smaller house and so some of them have had to move into the main hostel with the young ones.



The senior boys were only able to find a replacement house the week before they had to vacate the old house. However, the wait meant that they are now in a much nicer house. They live in the downstairs part of a two flat property.

If you cannot have a new house then maybe it is time to redecorate? A team of staff and students from the Australia-Pacific Technical College in Suva came and repainted and wallpapered the main hostel and left the fancy mural shown on the right. We are so blessed for people to help like this!

New (Old) Hostel Van

No, not a new vehicle but the old one repainted when rust was removed and mechanical repairs made using donations from a church in Wellington (see below).



Sewing class for the young ones



The refurbished van



Intermediate boys and helpers

If you would like to make a contribution, please make cheques out to **Global Connections in Mission** (n.b. 7.4% to a maximum of \$200 is deducted by GCiM before sending to us). **Please do not send gifts direct to Fiji.**

Alternatively, you can make an online deposit to bank account **06 – 0729 – 0336879 – 00** with the Reference set to **FIJI DEAF.**

Either way, please **always** send the details below to GCiM at **PO Box 744 Palmerston North New Zealand**, or to **admin@gc3.org.nz** so we know who it is from and the purpose.

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\$..... is Enclosed Paid Online For the **Harland Deaf Ministry Trust of Fiji** to help with:

Greatest need Hostel activity School for the Deaf Building Programme Teacher Scholarship