

FIJI DEAF MINISTRY

Jesus said, "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me."
John 14:1

School Memories

In 1988 little Tully sat quietly outside the Principal's Office. She knew she was in trouble but she was hopeful that her parents would understand, and she considered that she was in the right! Mum and Dad had been sent for as part of the discipline process. As soon as they arrived the little girl made signs and then she mimed.



A GSD child (not Tully) signing.

Her parents got the message and explained to the Principal: Tully had been punching a group of children who had been bullying her because she was deaf (she was the only deaf child in this school). The parents of the other children were sent for and the matter was well resolved

A New Leader

In 2017 Tuliana Waibuta became the head of the Fijian Christian Fellowship for the Deaf (CFD). Tully (*Tooley*) is a quiet, perceptive, very kind and very courageous woman. This is her story:

Tully became deaf following an illness at the age of 6. In spite of her disability she enjoyed the local primary school. She had friends who used the signs that had been made in her home and they mimed to her.

Maths she did well at.

Language and reading were

difficult. At the age of 12 Tully was sent to Hilton Special School, in Suva. There she met other Deaf and learnt more signs. In 1999 she got her first job: teaching new entrants at the new Gospel School for Deaf. After school Tully became a student. Matthew Adediji, the first GSD teacher, taught her more signs and how to read English. She lapped it all up and worked into the night reading and reading.

Tully is a pioneer among the Fiji Deaf. She was one of the first sign medium teachers in Fiji. She was the first Deaf person to take a course at the South Pacific Teachers College. (There were no interpreters then, all Tully's learning was from books. She passed!) Tully was also an early hostel staff member in the Harland Hostels.

In 2014 she became a Deaf Association Project worker, travelling throughout Fiji to visit Deaf. In 2016 she took up full-time study on a diploma in special education, at the university. She may return to the GSD since she is now keen to work with senior students.





Behind all the changes there has been a long established relationship with the CFD. At the CFD Tully learnt of God’s love, and committed herself to Christ. Her life gained new meaning and focus. She began teaching Sunday School. For several years she has been part of the CFD leadership team. In 2017 Tully became the overall leader. She was nervous at taking on all this

responsibility but Deaf and hearing friends have encouraged her and a source of confidence has been Jesus’ promise in John 14:1.

When Tully speaks of her plans for the CFD she does so with passion. Her major concern is pastoral care, ensuring that all Deaf know they belong and are supported. “We must be good shepherds,” she says, “we must care for the sheep. We need to encourage and support the Deaf. Life is hard for many of them. We need to look for potential leaders and mentor them. There is much work to be done.” Tully began last year by strengthening links between the Deaf in the West, under the leadership of Mesake, and those in the Suva area. She continues to oversee the Deaf Sunday School and youth group. In addition, she and Mesake now run a weekly home group for adult deaf. The two annual camps are also ongoing priorities as Deaf gather from all over Fiji for these events. “Please pray for us,” Tully asks.

Please Pray -

- That the new student from Vanuatu (the first for many years) will be able to come to Suva
- For wisdom in deciding the best arrangement for children in hostels, which are very full at present.
- For energy and enthusiasm for school teachers as a new term gets underway.
- For two new children around 8 years old who have just started school for the first time.

If you would like to make a contribution, please make cheques out to **GC Aid** (n.b. 7.4% to a maximum of \$200 is deducted by GC Aid before sending to us). **Please do not send gifts direct to Fiji.** Alternatively, you can make an online deposit to bank account **06-0729-0522196-00** with the Reference set to **FIJI DEAF**.

Either way, please **always** send the details below to GC Aid 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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For the Harland Deaf Ministry Trust of Fiji to help with:

- Greatest Need
 Hostel Activity
 School for the Deaf
 Building Programme
 Teacher Scholarship