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Projects Abroad Fiji “Isles of Smiles”

March 2013

Editor's Note

Bula!

The year is already flying by so fast and this has been the busiest month to date. We've had a massive volunteer influx that almost overwhelmed us but our awesome Projects Team are doing great things! We've also moved to a new building which is much larger than the last and so much better in terms of entertaining space for the volunteers. We've had a great beach clean-up campaign that was enjoyed by all the volunteers. The welcoming reception at the site was awesome and the volunteers were in awe of it all! There are pictures also included for all to see in the Photos Galore section. I also went to Nadi to check on the placements and met some amazing young ladies who had started up a Library Project at one of the schools. This was great initiative and hard work displayed by our volunteers. The new community site is up and running and the atmosphere is incredible, so much so that we've had some Suva volunteers ask to be sent to the village. This really shows how wonderful our Fijian hospitality can be and how much our volunteers appreciate and respect the Fijian traditions and culture. So much has changed in the world but there is one thing we're certain of and that is the amazing capabilities of our Projects Abroad volunteers. Let's all look forward to St. Patrick's Day and Easter around the corner! Enjoy!

“Life is either a daring adventure or nothing” - Helen Keller

Vinaka

Michelle Ali

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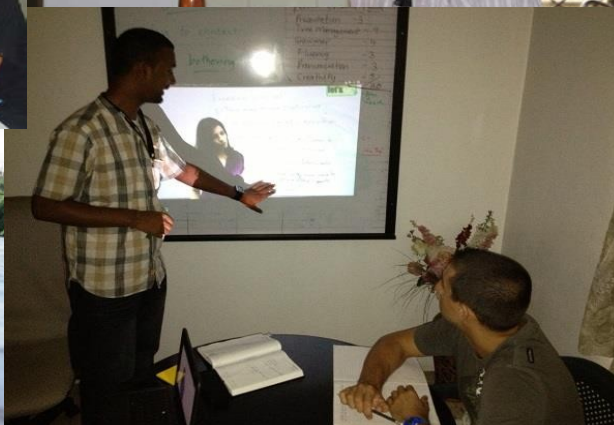
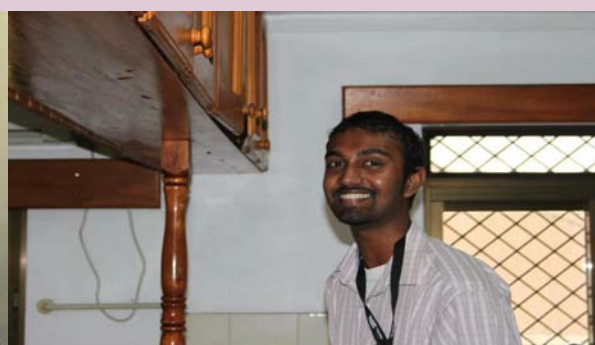
Language Course Developments—Jessica Warner

Since beginning in August 2011, our English Language Course here in Fiji has been growing and developing steadily. Teacher Prashneel Goundar runs his English lessons alongside his duties as Nadi Office Manager. So far he has helped 21 students from almost 10 different countries to improve their written and spoken language skills. These classes are not the standard lecture style lessons which students are used to back home - Prashneel tailors each course to the student's ability and interests. So whether you are interested in written or spoken, formal or slang, IELTS, TOEIC or just an all-round improvement of your communication through English, Prashneel will design the perfect course for you.

The emphasis of lessons is on practical language use, and students get the chance to bring their learning out of the classroom and into the 'real world'! Stéphanie Laguigné spent one of her most memorable English classes at the beautiful Hindu Temple in Nadi, where she learned all about the culture and customs associated with the temple. Other students have had classes at the cinema, while shopping, in restaurants, mailing letters at the post office or simply walking around Nadi's stunning streets and beaches. This creativity and flexibility make our Language Courses a huge bonus to any volunteer placement!

Prashneel (or Mister P as he is also known!), is currently completing his Master of Art in Teaching English as a Second Language (MATESL). As his qualifications develop, he is using this new found knowledge to expand and develop his classes. In response to the demand, he is currently designing a curriculum for BusinessEnglish. Video tutorials are also becoming part of the classes. With ever-increasing numbers of students travelling to Fiji for English lessons, we will soon be enlisting the help of our new part-time teacher, Litiana Lotu. Prashneel is keen to develop all areas of Projects Abroad Language Courses, and says that student feedback is one of the most important ways to do this. He has introduced feedback systems for all of our Language Courses globally, which have proven a great success.

Right now in sunny Fiji we have three students - Ben and Leo, both from France, and Simon from Germany. They are all fitting their English classes around their volunteer projects. Ben is working in Nadi Special School, helping with Vocational Training; Leo is working at West Charity Trust, our local animal shelter, and Simon is helping to care for the children at Andrew's Kindergarten. The three boys are showing great improvements and are enjoying learning English in this unique environment! We wish them all the best and we thank our English teacher for all the help and support he gives to his students (and to the rest of us here too!).



Galoa Beach Clean-Up Campaign: mytripblog

Hi all!

Last Saturday was really fun! All the volunteers and staff made their way to our new community site in Galoa. We had no idea that a grand welcome ceremony was being planned and were pleasantly surprised by all of this! It was amazing! After the traditional kava ceremony and the welcome prayers, we were treated to a Fijian dance ("meke") and serenading by the youths. It was spectacular! The volunteers joined in on the fun as they danced in the village hall with the community. Our staff were very grateful for the effort and the time put into the whole affair. A very big VINAKA to Mitieli Savu and his wonderful family for hosting us all and organizing a flawless social day! After the formalities were done, we were all whisked away to the beach to begin our clean-up campaign. The Projects Abroad Fiji flag was raised by the youths on the beach and armed with sacks and gloves, our volunteers began their cleaning. I think at one stage I almost fell in the water as I tried to get the perfect shot of the beach and the volunteers from the water. No fear, all the equipment is safe and sound....and dry! The entire beach curves around the village and is very picturesque. There was white sand and clear cool water that made our day so bearable, given the heat. After a thorough cleaning, our volunteers and staff were hosted to refreshments prepared by the villagers - there were cakes and pies, sandwiches and fruit juice. While we relaxed, the volunteers joined in on the kava drinking ceremony with the villagers in the hall and listened to the youths serenade them with guitars. It was a great experience for all of us! Having done all that, we made our way back to the beach as they had set up volleyball net for us to enjoy. The volunteers also took advantage of the cold water and went in for a dip after a long, hot day of cleaning up and such. The entire organization of the event was well done and I commend the staff and the Galoa community for making this possible. Here are some of the photos from the day. Also look forward to the new album to follow. Once again, thank you to everyone for all your help!



Oratory School graduate discovers and learns about a different culture by volunteering in Fiji—Charlie Skipwith

Rugby was the driving force behind Charlie Skipwith's decision to volunteer in Fiji with Projects Abroad. The 19-year-old gap year traveller had always wanted to visit Fiji because of the love of the sport as he had met a few Fijians playing club rugby in the United Kingdom. After finishing high school, Charlie discovered Projects Abroad and all the fascinating destinations he could travel to and help out where necessary. Coming down to Fiji was the best thing he had done as he had always wanted to help out with teaching in the communities and at the same time, learn more about the culture of Fiji.

Charlie volunteered at the Community Project, looking after and teaching the children of the Mokani Village, a 45-minute journey out of the capital city of Suva. Teaching at the village school is very important as the long-term benefits of doing so are very rewarding. "The children will benefit from English and European visitors as they would help teach and encourage the children to learn more," said Charlie.

Being placed at the summer school in Mokani Village, Charlie's daily tasks included lesson-planning for the children of all ages. Not only was academics on the plan, but also creative and educational games and songs that were enjoyed by the children. Charlie was able to assist with day-to-day teaching and partake in games during the breaks. Charlie believes that his volunteering experience in Fiji has made quite a remarkable difference in the school he was placed in. "We made the children enjoy coming to school and they were always excited to see us and keen to learn about foreign countries, basic English and mathematical applications."

Leaving Fiji, Charlie has taken with him valuable people skills and the ability to understand and respect a completely different culture. "Fiji is so very different from home and it is amazing to see the huge difference in the level of resources they have compared to the United Kingdom." His most memorable experience was seeing the children follow the volunteers all the way out of the village as they drove off after a school day. "Seeing them run alongside the van just showed that they really wanted us to stay longer." Charlie will take with him memories of a beautiful island nation and its friendly people who made him feel so welcome and opened their homes to him.

We wish him well on his travels and thank him for volunteering with Projects Abroad. We hope this inspiring story encourages others to help Projects Abroad continue to make a difference, and by doing so, learn something themselves along the way.



Project Updates

Care and Teaching

We've had a busy start to the year in the Care and Teaching Projects. There have been more placements in schools around the Western and Eastern region and the feedback has been very positive. There have been a few PRO volunteers who have graced us with their presence and helped so much in terms of their vast experience in related fields. The placements have benefitted a lot from Projects Abroad. The special schools in Lautoka, Nadi, Suva and Nausori have been blessed with such wonderful volunteers, all eager to do their part and help in whichever way they can. From the middle of last month to date, the stream of volunteers into these projects has increased so much that it has kept our Projects Team in both offices on their toes and on the road. Our volunteers are doing very well and making us all proud!

Community project

Our newest Community Project is in Galoa, a 45-minute drive out of the Capital. Our volunteers are teaching at the community schools, aiding them in learning basic computing skills. The community of Galoa has been so welcoming and our volunteers are feeling right at home. Having visited the village myself, I felt right at home. The hospitality shown by the villagers was so overwhelming and the camaraderie shown by all to make our volunteers feel comfortable was absolutely amazing. We have high hopes for this project to continue and we look forward to having more volunteers in the near future.



Photos Galore!

