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Editor's Comments

Bula everyone and welcome to a year of greater heights, greater visions and even greater achievements! January has kicked off on a high note with our Shark Conservation Project in Pacific Harbour and we are just as excited as the volunteers to start the project.

Holiday School program has been another highlight for this month; unfortunately it is coming to an end as students will be returning to school. The volunteers and Project Teams are doing a remarkable job handling the holiday school and keeping the children interested every day. So great job guys 😊

Please read on to find out more about our updates and great testimonials from our past volunteers. This month is just the beginning of a whole new year of challenges so do set your goals and work towards them. Keep improving, Keep growing and KEEP SMILING!!

Vinaka Vakalevu (Thank You)

Tagimeucia Koroivuki

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Country Director's Note

Happy New Year Everyone!

I love that feeling of excitement at the beginning of a new year. I always give myself time to reflect on the past in order to learn, appreciate, and to look to the future in order to grow and evolve. I had a super 2013 having begun working at the Projects Abroad Fiji team. I was afforded the opportunity to meet some incredible people, be involved in some amazing activities and help to make a difference to this little piece of paradise in our beautiful world.

Over the last year I have learned the value of friendship, the importance of living life to the fullest and how vital it is to preserve and protect our planet, its inhabitants and natural resources. In 2013, I met some of the most amazing people, who came to volunteer from all four corners of the world. They brought with them fresh ideas, incredible energy and an abundance of enthusiasm.

Today, as I sit here on a small island in the middle of the South Pacific Ocean, I am feeling so grateful and happy to be here and very much looking forward to meeting all the new volunteers who will be coming out to help us with our work over the next 12 months. In 2014 there is so much to look forward to as we work together with our international and local partners in making the lives of so many in Fiji a little happier. As Einstein perfectly put it, "Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow."

Peace,

Ingrid Sprake

Country Director

Fiji

Holiday School – Shark Awareness Programme

Projects Abroad Fiji conducted a Shark awareness programme at the Holiday School program for the children at Saunaka village in Nadi. The activities included drawing & colouring of sharks, learning types of sharks, writing a story about sharks and learning the importance of sharks for the marine life. They even had a game of rugby which was made up of two teams Sharks and Killers and of course the Sharks won six to nil but it was a tough game. We thank the Whiteford sisters for their great support Ms. Tara Whiteford, Lauren Whiteford and Josephine Whiteford from Australia and to Jasmin Blum, Julian Fischer from Norway and Vanja Jonsson thanks for helping out girls! The children absolutely enjoyed the programme and have quickly turned into shark lovers. The theme for the day was "Sharks are not our enemy, they are our Friends"



Francesca Bianchi: Switzerland, Community 6 weeks (November – December 2013)



My name is Francesca Bianchi and I am 19 years old from Switzerland. I finished high school this year and I decided to take a gap year. After learning a little bit of English I wanted to find something that could help other people and at the same time travel, see new places and meet new people.

Volunteering was the best way to really help and learn, and after finding Fiji on the list of developing countries, it was the perfect location. I chose Projects Abroad because it was the only organization which offered a community project. The project was the perfect mix of teaching and learning everything about the Fijian culture. In fact, living in a Fijian village gave me a strong sense of community as they organized a lot of things as a group; dance evenings, travelling around the island, and building the new church in the village, which was a wonderful experience to view.

Sofie Nann: German, Care 3 months (September – December 2013)

My name is Sofie Nann and I am 18 years old from Germany. I live in Stuttgart, a town in the South of Germany, together with my two sisters and my parents. After finishing High School I wanted to spend my free time travelling, before I attend University. For me, it was important that the country I chose would be really different from home. I wanted to get in touch with people who live in different living conditions and I was keen to learn about another culture/lifestyle/food etc. With all these reasons including the beautiful images on the internet, I chose Fiji as the country I wanted to visit. Fiji is one of the furthest countries you can travel to from Germany, so it sounded like a great adventure. This is also one of the reasons why I did not want to travel independently without the support of an organization.

I heard very good things about Projects Abroad from several friends who had travelled with the organization so it was an easy decision made. For me it was necessary that I use my travel time in an effective way, such as volunteering and helping others. I have great love for children as I had already had experience working with children in Germany, so I choose a care project in a kindergarten in Fiji, and I do not regret my decision at all. I will truly miss Fiji and all the wonderful people I have met!



Shark Conservation Project – Pacific Harbour



Projects Abroad Shark Conservation Project has kicked off well in Fiji with 26 volunteers confirmed for the month of January 2014. Currently, 13 volunteers are in country and have already begun their diving lessons with Beqa Adventures Diving team, who is responsible for teaching volunteers how to dive and guiding them through the whole process of Shark feeding and tagging. There are currently two villas situated at Pacific Harbour, which is 45 minutes outside of Suva. The villas consist of a kitchen, living room, study area, bedrooms with bunk beds, toilets and bathrooms. The accommodations are located quite close to the beach to allow easy access for the volunteers to attend diving lessons.

The volunteers are settled in and are happy with their homes. Their daily schedule would include breakfast in the morning, then a short break before they go straight into diving lessons, which will take two hours. After they get back, they freshen up for lunch and assignments, then an afternoon rest and presentations. Of course these volunteer divers will need a break, so there will be a social night held every week where they can experience the local culture, food, dances and mostly people.

The cleaning is done by two Projects Abroad staff Bale and Litia who has done a great job of maintaining the cleanliness of the villas. As for now volunteers are to be fully trained, physically and mentally, before the shark diving begins. Those who are not certified are currently undergoing training for diving and are catching up to speed to those who are well trained in diving. Is it challenging? Of course it is but is it worth it? Worth every second! We thank the Shark Conservation volunteers for taking out the time to make a difference in helping out with this campaign.



COMMUNITY DAY – NAVAKAI HART VISIT



Projects Abroad Fiji volunteers were thrilled to visit the Navakai Hart in Nadi. A total of 20 families are living in the Hart paying low rent for their residence. The families comprise of elderly people, single parents and children. While some do have jobs, the rest resort to making handicrafts and selling root crops to sustain themselves. Projects Abroad volunteers and staff gave hampers of food, school books for the children and other necessities to help them at the beginning

of the year. The volunteers purchased handicrafts and fijiian fans from the women who were absolutely grateful for the support. The Fiji Council of churches had formed this particular hart to assist the very low income earners in their housing and so far it has helped enormously for these families in their daily living. After the giveaways the volunteers were taken on a tour around the village and were entertained with a meke (dance) by the women. The volunteers do feel it was an eye-opener for them to realize how people are struggling across the globe. We thank the volunteers for making this Community day a success!! Great Job Guys 😊



DONATIONS!!

We would like to thank Nicole Galloway for donating \$2,104.00 to Treasure House Orphanage. She is a past volunteer of Projects Abroad Fiji and was based at the orphanage for two weeks during her volunteer work. The children and staff of Treasure House sincerely thanks Nicole Galloway and Projects Abroad for the donation.



Children from Treasure House with Projects Abroad volunteers and staff

We would also like to thank our Sports volunteer Mr. Fredrik Gille for donating much needed sports equipment such as balls, nets, cones, etc. to the Sports Project of Projects Abroad Fiji. We thank you Fredrik for the awesome support.



L-R Fredrik Gille and Maika