

Fiji Deaf Ministry

October 2009



Harland Hostels for Deaf Children P O Box 4728 Samabula, Suva, FIJI e mail:- paul.ruth@paradise.net.nz

Dear Praying Friends,

“... he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he ... will neither slumber nor sleep.” (Psalm 121: 3)

In November, two deaf students in the Gospel High School will be taking their school leavers' exams. If they pass, they will be the first deaf women in Fiji to graduate from high school. This is just one of this year's achievements.

This year there have also been a number of bereavements in the deaf community. In September, Rachel Simpson died suddenly. Rachel and her husband John have been strong local supporters of the deaf over a number of years. John is a Trustee and a member of the Ministry's Management Committee; this couple worked hard to understand and include the deaf.



Vivienne Harland is currently struggling with pain. After almost a year of remarkably good health the cancer seems to be spreading.

In better times, in August, Vivienne visited Fiji. While there she prodded along the plans for enlarging the junior hostel and incorporating the senior girls' hostel into this building, probably on a second storey. The local Mobile Missionary Maintenance representative has looked at the project and an architect is producing a plan. The new boys' hostel, to be located next to the school, is also on this architect's desk.

In early October, Vivienne was again in Fiji but this time she had to be hospitalised with breathing problems. The problem was stabilised and Vivienne was well enough to return home.

The **Deaf Hostels** are buzzing this week, almost everyone has been attending the Fijian Paralympic Games. Yesterday the boys and girls both won their basketball championships; very exciting! (At the top of the page you can see the champions with their trophies.)

The local nurse who was checking everyone's health, once a week, did not stay long. But an American nurse has volunteered to work in the hostels during Feb 2010.

She will help out where she can, check everyone's health and train hostel staff in basic health care.

Brett, an American university student, is currently volunteering in the junior hostel. He is this hostel's "ears" at night (ideally every night each hostel has a hearing person on site) and is helping teach some of the children dance routines for the end-of-year public performance, on the 5th November. Brett is also skilled with a camera and is making videos of the hostels and school. And for his voluntary work Brett gains university credits back in America!

A big tub of peanut butter was donated this week and the children say that they are enjoying their sandwiches more than usual!

Marilyn reports, "I stopped by the other night and the kids were all involved in playing games, games using number and letters. It was good to see them all playing together and learning."



Hair-cutting day at the hostel is an important event. There are lots of advisers to assist the older boy with the razor!

The **Deaf School** has been dealing with new challenges. Earlier this year the government required that all civil servants retire at the age of 55yrs. This has left teacher shortages in a number of government schools who have recruited from the deaf school with offers of higher pay. A larger pay packet is particularly appealing in hard times. At the same time it is very disheartening for the school to have trained up teachers only to have them leave. On the other hand there is now a pool of older teachers keen to work; the school is currently looking for new recruits from this group.

Finances are down but still manageable at the moment. However, the Christian Blind Mission which had been paying most of the teachers' salaries and the operating costs of the school, is having to reduce their contribution for next year by 36%.

Miri Politini who volunteered as Head Teacher for six months, filling the gap left by one of the head-

hunted teachers, has done a wonderful job and plans to stay on for a couple of days a week.



The older students, in class 5, are studying China. When Teacher Mere introduced the class to the big rivers in China, Taware remarked, "The Yangtze River is like the Ganges in India, the Nile in Egypt, and the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia." Pretty impressive for a deaf student with only two years of schooling!

Class 6 students have been doing a literature unit this year. They have completed *Heidi*, *Treasure Island*,

and *The Swiss Family Robinson*, and are now reading *Making Good*. Below is a photo of the ship, Prince Albert, that the students built in their classroom. Labels have been put on the different parts of the ship, and in science, students will learn about storms, wind, weather, and navigational instruments. The ship is also used as a classroom reading area. Pirates are a favorite topic with the boys!

Ed: I think these kids have more fun and learn more than mine do in the local primary school!



Key Staff

Jim is a retired headmaster of an American deaf school. Now in his 70s, Jim spends 6 months every year working long hours in Fiji. Director of both the hostels and the school,

Jim is a gifted servant leader. Much of his role is to inspire, encourage, and empower the local leaders.



Sikeli and his deaf wife, Sereima, are hostel parents to the senior girls as well as raising their own three children. Sikeli is also a pastor to the deaf. He teaches and encourages local and distant deaf and often travels to visit with isolated

deaf individuals. Hearing himself, Sikeli is fluent in sign language and a leader in the deaf community.

Prayer

- more teachers for the school
- an admin assistant for the hostels
- Vivienne's health
- that the school, hostels and staff flourish
- news just to hand: chickenpox is going through the junior hostel. *Poor kids, poor staff!*

Praise

- the children are learning, growing and prospering
- Miri Politini's work in the school
- for the life of Rachel Simpson
- for the hard work and commitment of many staff

Thank you for your support. Please keep praying for the Ministry. God bless, *Vivienne*

(This newsletter was written by Ruth Harland for Vivienne.)

If you would like to make a contribution:

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To the Harland Deaf Ministry Trust of Fiji for:

- Where the need is greatest Hostel needs School for the Deaf Building Programme

Name:..... Email:.....

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