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Projects Abroad Fiji “Isles of Smiles”

May 2013

Editor's Note

Bula!

May is crazy! May is insane! This has got to be the busiest month to date. We've had some pretty intense days where meeting deadlines was like racing towards the finishing line. We've had a BBQ to thank the volunteers for their wonderful work at the Holiday School. We've also been darting around the place organising our Office Launch. If you have done this, you will know the stress it entails in terms of sorting out caterers and making sure that every detail is considered and fine-tuned. There can never be room for failure when hosting these functions. It has been an eye-opener and I've honed my organisational skills in the first two weeks of the month. May has brought with it struggles as well. The volunteers have had their own personal struggles in terms of adjusting to a new lifestyle but they have done so well. It is amazing to see how wonderfully they fit in to Fijian society and life. Life brings with it many challenges but we do our best to overcome the toughest situations. We adapt every single day of our lives. May was also the Annular Solar Eclipse that was a spectacular sight to behold! I hope you all got to see pictures of it, or if you were lucky enough to see the real deal! We have also got word that our new Shark Conservation Project kicks off in January 2014 and I will be bringing more information about this in the next issue, with photographs as well. Until June comes along, I bid you farewell and thank you for volunteering with Projects Abroad Fiji.

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

Vinaka

Michelle Ali

Information Coordinator

Projects Abroad Fiji



Dratabu Village: Mytripblog

Bula All!

Monday morning madness greets us all! I visited Nadi last week and thanks to Aunty Meme (mere Gaunavou), I was able to drive into Dratabu Village to visit two of our wonderful volunteers who are living and working in the village, namely Maud Schreuders and Melanie Van Schriek. They teach at the village kindergarten/school where they help in library and Information Technology classes. These girls were really enjoying themselves at their host family as the views are breathtaking and the life is simple and relaxing. Their host mum is such an amazing and friendly Fijian lady by the name of Lavenia Kurucake who loves entertaining and taking the girls out to meet family and friends. She is also very active with the Women's Club in the village and the volunteers actively participate in creating tie-dyes and screen-printed sarongs and decorative hangings for the house. Maud and Melanie will be taking back self-made sarongs when they return home and the love of a wonderful Fijian family from Dratabu Village in Nadi.



Telford volunteer shares her knowledge with a local animal shelter in Fiji—Paula Duff

Paula Duff has vast experience when it comes to volunteering abroad. She has travelled the world to offer her services in caring for animals and educating people about the need to better care for their pets and shine light on the problem of animal cruelty.

Back in the UK, Paula works for the country's largest veterinary charity organisation called the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA). She took a six month sabbatical from work to share her skills and experience with an organisation similar to PDSA. "The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Fiji fit the bill perfectly and it also happened that the Fijian islands were absolutely gorgeous!"

Through Projects Abroad, Paula became an Animal Care volunteer at the shelter. She took on a more administrative and marketing role by creating newsletters and proposals for making donor applications, researching international grant-making organisations, and setting-up staff workshops. Paula was able to help with developing staff skills through workshops and also help generate ideas with regards to vet recruitment and the improvement of customer service.

As a volunteer, Paula believes that her work in Fiji was very timely as the country is still years behind when it comes to animal welfare and rights. "Animal welfare in Fiji is not as progressed as in the United Kingdom. To help move it forward, it needs more funds and outside expertise is crucial."

"I can see there are many challenges in Fiji that require tact and diplomacy to overcome. I'm sure these situations will help to improve my managerial skills and also appreciate what a wonderful charity I work for back home."

Her most memorable experience while in Fiji was when she arrived on the first day of work and it so happened to coincide with a visit from 38 kindergarten students. So many children plus all the puppies was slightly chaotic and overwhelming! It was something she will never forget. Her advice to future volunteers would be to come with an open mind and be prepared to share their skills and knowledge with the locals.

Paula will take back with her wonderful memories of Fiji and the heartwarming thought that she did her utmost to help lay the foundation for proper animal welfare and rights.

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 only just ended our Holiday School season and the new school term has officially begun. It was a great experience for many of our volunteers on both sides of the island. As usual, the alternative experience was concluded by the handing of certificates to the children and the schools hosting a tea party for the hardworking volunteers.

Community project

Our community project is well underway in Galoa Village and we've seen the arrival of many volunteers all keen to get their hands dirty doing a variety of things in the village like working in the plantations and teaching in the schools. Our hosts in the village have been absolutely wonderful and the volunteers are really enjoying themselves.



Photos Galore!

