



The Latest News From Friends of Fiji
November 29, 2016

[Cyclone Winston Updates](#)

[Annual General Meeting / Potluck Dinner](#)

[Call for Volunteers](#)

[Membership](#)

[Amazon Smile Donations](#)

Cyclone Winston Rebuilding

Thanks to your generous donations after Cyclone Winston hit Fiji we collected a little over \$15,000. Our goal was to assist with rebuilding projects, hopefully ones with PCV involvement. Being a small U.S. based organization we're not equipped for emergency response but we knew that rebuilding would continue for a year or more and wanted to target needs that might not be taken care of by the government or large NGO's. We're happy to report that all of the funds have been put to use to help grass roots projects sponsored by PCVs, an RPCV in Fiji, and local organizations that we know have good track records.

John Caldeira - Rakiraki

John has been helping his neighbors in the Rakiraki area rebuild. He told us that some of the villages asked him for assistance with bus shelters and road repairs that weren't being taken care of by others. These are a few projects that friends of Fiji helped fund:

Rarapatu Bus Shelter

Volivoli-Kings Road Bus Shelter

Volivoli Puin Road Repair

Navunibitu School Bus Shelter Repair

One of the bus shelters damaged is the home of a mural painted some years ago by PCV Ahndree Brown. A new roof was made possible through your donations.



John informed us that the government was repairing housing in his area and that the demand for materials was creating a strain on supply, so projects are taking a longer time than expected to complete. We hope to get photos of finished projects soon.

Seokmin Kim, PCV

Saki requested \$1,000 for repairs to a school dining facility in Nadarivatu. Project is ongoing.

The Happy Chicken Project

We heard about Happy Chicken both from RPCV John Reeder and from PCV Carissa Wills-DeMello. Happy Chicken Director Austin Bowden-Kirby had been working with Carissa to develop a training program on small scale free-range community poultry farming for villages on Koro and other islands that sustained cyclone damage. Your contributions helped provide chicks and feed to establish programs in villages that Austin is working with. He is continuing to firm up a relationship with Peace Corps to involve other volunteers. See more about Happy Chicken on FaceBook - <https://www.facebook.com/happy.chicken.project>.

Rise Beyond the Reef

A couple of years ago Friends of Fiji was fortunate to connect with [Rise Beyond The Reef](#), a Seattle based organization working with remote communities in Fiji. Thanks to your donations we were able to fund a Crop Re-establishment project in Ra to fund seedlings and citrus trees.



From Rise Beyond The Reef: *Out of the 280+ schools in the western division of Fiji, more than 260 are damaged. Close to 50 are wiped out. We are currently working with Nakorotubu District Primary Boarding School and Nailuva District Primary Boarding School, Ra province, on rebuilding projects and supporting their school gardens as a means to help increase food security for boarding students. Parents simply cannot supply food for boarders right now in either district as both communities lost 70-95 percent of their homes, nearly 100% crop damage and loss of other significant income sources such as coconuts (Nakorotubu coastal villages and Yaqona a dalo plantation on the mountain side within Nailuva). For both districts, the schools have become a place of refuge for young students.*

Fiji Association of Washington DC (FAWDC)

FAWDC is a close partner of Friends of Fiji, often co-sponsoring events and sharing some of the same members. Soon after the cyclone FAWDC sprang into action and hosted a fundraiser. Through contacts in Fiji they learned of a school in Navatusila village on Viti Levu that had been severely damaged and decided to take on its reconstruction as their focus project. FoF committed \$5,000 of the cyclone re-building funds raised to support the FAWDC project.

FAWDC has contracted with engineers in Fiji to prepare plans for reconstructing a classroom building to withstand a category 5 cyclone so it can serve as an emergency shelter for neighboring villages. It will also include a computer lab. The design is complete. Quantity surveyors are estimating the materials required and finalizing the cost estimate. Preliminary estimate is US\$67,000, including the contribution of roughly \$17,000 in labor and materials to be supplied by local villagers.

One strategy FAWDC is considering to help reduce costs is to find an experienced construction foreman who would be willing to lead the project using local volunteer labor. This could be a great opportunity for one or more retired RPCVs to return to Fiji and help coordinate the project. Tentative timeframe is early 2017. The project is a single building of less than 1,000 SF concrete masonry construction, so it is not very complex. If anyone is interested please contact Jay Sztuk at j3sztuk@gmail.com.

FAWDC is continuing to raise funds for this project. If anyone would like to donate you can do so through our website.

[Back to top](#)

Friends of Fiji Annual Pot Luck Dinner & General Meeting

Saturday, January 21, 2017

The Annual General Meeting and Pot Luck Dinner of the Friends of Fiji has been set by the Board of Directors for Saturday, January 21 2017, beginning at 5:00 p.m. at the home of David and Willa Downes, 3327 Mantua Dr, Fairfax, VA 22031 (703-641-0517). All are welcome to attend. The usually very brief business meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. and will include the election of the Board of Directors for the upcoming year and any other appropriate business. If you are interested in the possibility of serving on the Friends of Fiji Board of Directors, please let us know in advance by emailing a brief biography (including details of your connection to Fiji) and what skills and interests you would bring to the Board to FoF President Greta Wetzel at greta.wetzel@gmail.com. The Board generally meets about once a month in Arlington, VA.

Weather-related changes in the Annual Pot Luck Dinner and General Meeting will be announced on the Friends of Fiji website (www.fofiji.org) or by calling Greta Wetzel @ 317-370-5643. The "snow date," if needed, will be at the same time and place, one week later, Saturday, February 4.

[Back to top](#)

Help Wanted - Get Involved

It's always been a challenge to get fresh blood involved in our governance and operations. A core group in the DC area has served in virtually every board of directors' position at least once and usually for many years. Some have been on the board since Friends of Fiji's inception. If you'd like to get more involved we'd love to hear from you. We're planning to conduct more business by web meetings so it's not necessary to live in the DC area. These are positions we need immediate help with:

- Secretary – responsible for recording meetings and distributing minutes.
- Communications – coordination of newsletter, facebook page, and website content
- Webmaster – someone with background in website management to maintain web pages, post announcements, organize content, and all the other stuff that webmasters do but the rest of us don't understand.
- Membership – tracking & promoting membership
- Gala volunteers – help with planning, shopping, food prep, decoration, silent auction, registration. Some of these roles would be best filled by folks in the DC area but if you plan to come to the gala and are willing to help out on that night let us know.

If you're interested in any of these roles please email us at info@fofiji.org

[Back to top](#)

Membership

Early this year we announced a change to our membership policy eliminating annual dues. Since then our membership has almost doubled and we are currently at 256. We converted all memberships to one category with no expiration date. If you should happen to get a renewal notice from us or NPCA you can ignore it and we'll take care of correcting the record.

If the subject line of this email says "Member" your status is good. If it says "Non-member" that means that you either were not a member or your membership had expired at the time of conversion. If you would like to become a member please visit our webpage www.fofiji.org.

Membership in the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) is also free. To join please visit the NPCA [Homepage](#) and click "Join Now".

[Back to top](#)

Amazon Smile

Now you can support Friends of Fiji every time you shop on Amazon.com. Using the following link will take you to AmazonSmile. Amazon will donate 0.5% of every purchase to FoF.

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-1802073>

[Back to top](#)