



The First day at Kindergarten for Ronesh Chand *by Radhika Latchmi, Education Officer Lautoka*



excitement.

Taking off ones sandals outside the classroom is the rule, but for Ronesh it was a bit difficult, as he was worried that his new pair of sandals would get lost or dirty and he was not willing to part with them. However, at his mothers request, he did so and came to sit quietly at his desk along with some of his friends.

The task of taking a photo of him with his classmates was a noisy affair. We watched as the teachers tried to sort the children out according to their height and some were so frightened they started crying as they did not understand what was happening. According to the teachers, incidents like this are a daily affair a kindergarten.

We talked to the class teachers Mrs Roshni Sharma and Mrs Shakuntala Singh, who said that they were so glad that the Bayly Education Fund are assisting Ronesh with all items necessary for preparing a child for his first day at school.

The school had been made aware that an organization was assisting Ronesh's family and when we actually met, they were so happy to learn that it was the Bayly Welfare/Bayly Education Fund.

There was excitement in the eyes of little Ronesh Chand and it was a moment to be cherished- by his mother and all of us at the Bayly Education Lautoka.

Whilst visiting Rifle Range, Lautoka, Mariamman Kindergarten, the Lautoka Almoner- Mrs Michael and I dropped in to see how Ronesh was doing at kindergarten. We watched as he walked towards his classroom, holding his mother's hand and it had us thinking of our first day at school.

A very quiet & shy boy by nature, Ronesh stood proud in his school uniform, with bag and school sandals at the start of the new year.

Attending school for the first time is always filled with nervousness and also

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Harcourts Fiji Donation

The JP Bayly Trust is once again extremely grateful for the very generous donation of \$20,000 that has been received from Harcourts Fiji.

These funds will be allocated to our three Centres which are located in Suva, Lautoka and Labasa. The Trust provides tuition fees, books, stationery, uniforms, school bags and school shoes. The Suva Centre has assisted 120 children, Lautoka 120 children and Labasa 105 children.

Around 800 families directly benefit this year from grants provided by the JP Bayly Trust to Bayly Welfare. These are families who are either very poor, sickly and/or elderly and who are unable to put food on the table for their families.

Due to the ongoing financial constraints, the Bayly Education programme is only able to assist the children of these families.

Harcourts, Fiji has donated \$60,000 over the past six years specifically for education assistance.



International Early Childhood Education Care Conference

By: Manorma Chandra

I attended the International Early Childhood Education Care Conference (ECEC) between April 14 – 17, 2009 in Kuala Lumpur, as a representative of Bayly Education, Suva.

Children are very important. They are the leaders of tomorrow. Developing human capital begins with them. When we plan to develop them at an early stage, we are building a solid foundation in them. We shape them and mould them from a very early stage in their life. It is true that children lack experience, but we cannot continue to undermine them. We, ourselves, see they enter the early childhood experience with a sense of joy, wonder and curiosity. Where they are “short” on experience, they make up for in enthusiasm and expectations. In quality early care and education programme centers, the teachers and primary caregivers provide the environment and curriculum through which the child can gain knowledge, self confidence, strength and a sense of wonder at the world. A great deal needs to be invested to facilitate

the building of human capital which begins with our children. There is need for constant research, investing in educators, upgrading the curriculum and involving all stakeholders (parents, community, religious groups, government) to provide the best for the children.

My previous work experience has taken me to a School of 9, Kindergarten and Primary school level teaching. During this time I had also pursued a certificate in Early Childhood Learning with the University of the South Pacific, which I successfully completed in 1989.

The seminar that I attended in Malaysia together with my work experience in my previous jobs, tertiary education and my present job all combined to facilitate my understanding that children are such important human capital and they must be handled with care. These caregivers (in homes, centers) and teachers mould and shape the children and lay a solid foundation for them.

Throughout the conference, speakers made us aware that many countries are

gearing up so they can better assist the children’s educational needs by the introduction of new programmes. Government’s need to be involved in constant planning and setting standards towards a high quality level in early learning programmes. These are programmes that are being continually developed and are suitable for children’s learning, and those that value a well-trained workforce. The University of the South Pacific is offering Certificate, Diploma and B.Ed. programme for Early Childhood. For self motivators this personal upgrading will be mutually beneficial to both the children and to society as a whole and will provide a foundation for our leaders of tomorrow.

Upon my return, I was able to share my knowledge with our Education centres in Labasa and Lautoka, through a power point presentation. I am so thankful to the JP Bayly Trust for sponsoring me. It was such a wonderful experience. Year 2010 has opened the eyes of many and we have been given the green light to assist children to attend kindergarten.

Bayly Education assistance in North

More than 100 needy students received educational assistance from Labasa Bayly Welfare/ Education Centre this year.

With only a few days left before the school was to open, parents gathered with their children to receive assistance. Labasa Almoner, Satishwar Chand, said that it has been more than ten years since they have been providing educational assistance to the children of Labasa.

In 2009, 141 children, in Labasa, were assisted with the Bayly Education programme. The numbers increase as the year progresses and education is provided for from Kindergarten to Form 7.

Only children of cases that are registered on Bayly register are

assisted by having their school fees paid, uniforms, books, school bags and sandals provided.

One of our cases, Akisi Davelevu,

children’s school stationery, etc. Ms Davelevu, a single mother, has been receiving support from the Bayly Trust for the past two years.

She is extremely thankful that the JP Bayly Trust is able to provide assistance to her children so that they can complete their education.

“The staff of the JP Bayly Trust usually visits my place to see how things have been going and also visit my children at school to see their progress which clearly shows their love and support. The Almoner and Education Officer treat the children like their own family and they make sure that they lead a good life and become successful citizens of



Back: from left Shaneel Chand and Yogita Sami
Front: from left Krishneel Deo, Krisha Deo, Shamal Chand

35 a mother of four children was present at the office to collect her

Fiji” Ms Davelevu said.

Parents urged to set Education as a priority

by Manorma Chandra

Research has shown that close to 7000 students dropped out of the school system in 2008, before they reached Form 6.

The data gathered by the Foundation for the Education of Needy Children in Fiji (FENC) showed that of the 21,072 students that enrolled in class 1 in 1997, only 14,089 made it up to form 6 in 2008,

which is a drop of approximately 33% or 6983 students.

Poverty was the main reason for this. "We must invest in our children because they are our future".

Since 2002, the JP Bayly Trust has taken full responsibility to reduce the poverty level for the families that we assist in Suva, Lautoka and Labasa through our Bayly Welfare and Bayly Education centres. We have been extremely successful, but until we can re-educate the parents of the importance of sending their children to school we can not claim a 100% success rate. The children's parents play a major role in the development of a child. Many times on our home visits, we find mothers just getting out of bed to attend to us, children sitting with flies all over them. It has been said "cleanliness" is next to godliness". We try and explain to the parents that being poor does not mean they take no pride in their home and family and we keep reinforcing this on our home visits. However, it takes many many visits before the message gets through to the parents.

We have also started counseling the parents, especially the mothers, to ensure that the children attend school every school day. On our school visits we check with the teachers about the children's attendance.

At the International Early Childhood Education Care Conference, I have also learnt how important it is to start the learning for our children from pre-school level. The children are then able to perform well and find it easier to adjust to the school system. Their brain as small as it is, still absorbs

everything that goes on around them. Realising the importance of this, from 2010, the JP Bayly Trust has sponsored 6 children to start at kindergarten (2 in Suva, 3 in Lautoka and 1 in Labasa).

The excitement in Mosese Vueti Cake's eyes when he was issued a new school bag and sandals says it all. He will be attending Nakasi Hart Kindergarten which is walking distance from his home.

The happiness of Lili Baumarama dressed in her uniform and ready to leave home for her first day at school. She attends The Salvation Army Kindergarten.



Mother strives for a Living

Sulueti Dicurumi, a mother of 5 children describes how she tries to fulfil the daily necessities of providing for her family. Having spent most of her time in the province of Cakandrove, she moved to Vunimoli in 2003 so she could send her children to school to be educated. A year later her husband had a stroke and became bedridden. The real ordeal now began for her to look after the needs of her family.

Sulueti thanks the village head for providing her with a small house and a piece of land where she plant crops for

their daily needs. When she had no longer had any means of earning an income she then looked to many organizations that could assist her and her family.

After alot of hesitation, she made her way to Bayly Welfare Labasa where she was provided temporary relief until July 2009. The Almoner was then able to bring her onto the books as a registered case in July 2009 and Sulueti is really happy that she is now given food rations, clothing and all education materials for her children. This has lifted a huge burden of Sulu's

shoulders and she gives thanks to the staff and the JP Bayly Trust for looking after her families needs.

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LIVING THE DREAM

by: Mrs Sarojni Michael

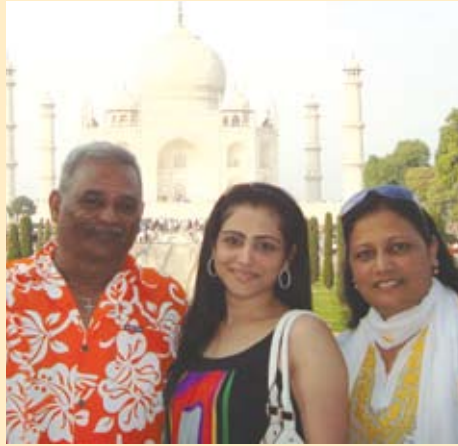
24th of November, being a welfare day, I was at work as always, but today was different for one reason- I would be away from the office for 1 month. The families who came for assistance that day, knew about my holiday and wished me a safe flight. Taking their blessings with me together with prayers from my staff & volunteers, I was ready to depart- relying on the Bayly Team with full confidence. The staff had organized a lunch get together that week and it was very touching. We all ate together and shared in happy memories.

When my husband, Philip, and I boarded the flight, I knew I was leaving behind my family at Bayly and I wouldn't see them for a month. Sitting on the plane, I couldn't help but think of everyone there... my heart was with them. In all the excitement after meeting family members, Bayly slowly slipped away. Then onto a 14 hour flight, the trip to Dubai, allowed my thoughts to wander once again. Would they be able to cope? Would everything be all right?...so many questions!

When I reached Dubai, the excitement was overwhelming. My only daughter, Gina, was there to greet me with her friends and a beautiful bouquet of flowers. She was able to put aside my thoughts of Bayly for a short time - and so began my holiday. Gina took us everywhere! We went out for sightseeing & visited some exciting places- Palm Island, Jumeri Beach, Heritage Village, Global Village and the tallest tower in Dubai which

I later heard was featured in the news.

I made a habit of calling the office every second or third day and emailing my education officer- Radhika. This became the



Mrs Sarojni Michael and Family

routine when back in Gina's flat. We often yarned about what was going on in Fiji and this kept the home sickness at bay. When I made my calls to the office, I always wanted to know how things were going... Radhika would always tell me "you are on holiday, relax, enjoy yourself, everything is fine". Knowing all was well at the office and under control, I managed to do just that. I had fun fun fun.

Every now and then I glanced at the calendar- our annual Education Prize Giving day was nearing. I again emailed Radhika and asked her to contact some of our generous donors and other individuals who are always

there to assist us.

The day of the prize giving day, I was in Delhi- India and I called Radhika at 5a.m in the morning, to find out if everything had been organized. She gave me a brief update on the preparations for the function and that Trustee Bossley would be present, I was so relieved. All day long, my mind was occupied with thoughts of what was going on since this was the first time that I had been away during prize giving.


I called Radhika a couple of times during the day, only relaxing late at night when I called and was told that all went well and the event was a great success. I was also informed that both Mr & Mrs Bossley were present for the function and so were the representatives- Ms Carol Watkins of Fiji Water and Ms Ana of ANZ Bank as our chief guests.

When I saw the Taj Mahal, I felt a beautiful calming wave wash over me... I knew I was privileged to see such a place. It truly is a wonder.

As I walked the streets of Calcutta, I thought of my families back home & how they were doing.

I returned to Fiji on the 27th of December and was back at work on the 29th. It was clear to me that the centre had been well taken care off which was only to be expected since my trustworthy chairperson, staff and volunteers were there every step of the way.

THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH.



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Registered Office – 193 Rodwell Road, Suva, GPO Box 15042, Suva, Fiji Islands,

(Tel: 3313 139) Email: admin@baylytrust.org
Welfare and Education Centres
Suva 193 Rodwell Road (3312 378)
Email: welfaresuva@baylytrust.org
Lautoka 5 Nede Street (6664 598)
Email: welfarelautoka@baylytrust.org
Labasa Lot 4 Siberia Road (8815 139)
Email: welfarelabasa@baylytrust.org

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