

House of Sarah

.....transforming the lives of those who come seeking help.....

January – March, 2015 Newsletter

Dear Colleagues and Friends

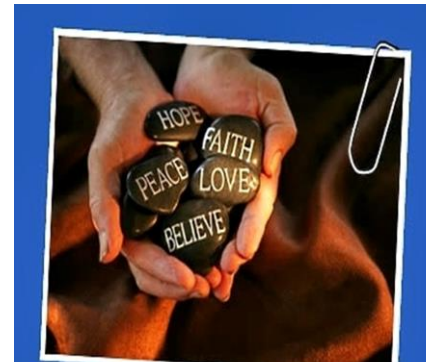
Greetings from the House of Sarah – as we begin the New Year we have much to be excited about.

First the Committee of Management is pleased to announce that they have appointed Nai Cokanasiga as Project Director and Manager of the House of Sarah. Congratulations Nai!

Secondly we have been notified by UN Women that we will receive a grant to enable us to conduct workshops for clergy and lay leaders on the interface between the Bible, human rights, gender equality and gender based violence. Also we will be conducting workshops for the referral women from each parish as 'Sarah Carers' they will be the eyes, ears and voices of the House of Sarah,—providing care, support and referral in their parishes and communities.

We will also be able to increase our care, support and referral ministry beyond Suva and provide further training for our staff involved. And finally we will be able to build and support our involvement in the Ecumenical Network. This means that 2015 will be busy and exciting.

During this season of Lent we are reminded of Jesus' journey to the cross but we also know that the violence of the cross was not the end – the resurrection was God's no to violence and His assurance that violence would not have the last word. That is what sustains us in our ministry at the House of Sarah as we reach out to those survivors of violence and as we work hard to promote equal and respectful relationships in our homes, our churches, our schools and our communities. We thank you for your support this past year and look forward to working together in 2015.



**The House of Sarah...
building equal and
respectful relationships
within our families, our
churches, our schools and our
communities**



Nai is well known to most of us – she is currently the Vice-President of the AAW of the Diocese of Polynesia and has worked in ministry partnership with her husband Matai for over 12 years.

From 1983-2004 she was the Health Programme Coordinator for the Fiji Red Cross Society based in the Suva Headquarters and from 2005-2009 she was the Programme Manager for F.R.I.E.N.D., in Lautoka from 2012-2014 she has been Community Support Facilitator and part-time Counsellor at the House of Sarah. She is a trained social worker and brings both counselling and pastoral care skills to the position as well as a depth of understanding of the issues and dynamics involved in the area of violence against women. These skills combined with her understanding of the Diocese Polynesia and knowledge of the AAW makes her a strong advocate to lead the House of Sarah in 2015

Sarah Carers' Workshop

Early in September nine women representing the parishes of St John's Wailoko, St Mark's Newtown, Holy Trinity Cathedral, St Michael's Matata, Holy Family Waidadra attended a workshop at the House of Sarah which provided the training to enable them to be 'Sarah Carers' or the eyes, ears and heart of the House of Sarah within their parishes and communities. The training which will enable them to provide care support and referral included communication skills, Police, legal and health information, professional confidentiality, Code of Conduct and Bible knowledge.

The staff team at the House of Sarah were assisted by staff from the Fiji Women's Crisis centre, the Wellness Centre for Women, the Police Sexual Assault Unit and the Ministry Office. The plans are to continue with follow up one day training.

The House of Sarah are most grateful for the generous donation from the New Zealand 'Golden Oldies' which enabled us to conduct this workshop which has provided a model for us to use to conduct similar workshops in the West and North as well as an additional one in Suva – Ovalau.



Sarah Carers' following the presentation of their certificates by Bishop Halapua
Seated are Maria Senitoarau Dari and Adi Vaciseva Mulo from St Marks. Standing from the left
Fiolmena Lisi – St Mark's Young Mothers; Litia Tinai –St Michael's All Angels, Latitela Likuselaia - St John's; Archbishop Halapua; Lanietta Tuiwaiwai- St John's Nai Cokanasiga- House of Sarah; Ulamila Lekuca- Holy Family; Rev. Ann Drummond- House of Sarah; Vilisi Latianara- Holy Trinity.



A lighter moment at the Church Leaders Workshop – following a discussion on pre-marital counselling a wedding takes place! Participants in the workshop were: The Revd Yusuf Sahayam, Holy Trinity Cathedral; The Revd Demesi Sitei Waidradra; The Revd Mereti Rabonu -St Marks; The Ven Henry Bull – Dreketi; The Revd Jone Tuiwaiwai - St Johns, Wailoku; The Revd Ben Tapelu – Samoa The Revd Lola Kolo'amatangi – Tonga The Ven Taifai To'omata – Pagopago; The Revd Luisa Smith - St Leonard's, Savusavu; The Revd Daniel Sahayam – Sigatoka; The Ven 'Amanake Tu'itavake - DoP in Aotearoa NZ

Church Leaders' Workshop

Clergy from across the Diocese of Polynesia gathered at the House of Sarah for a workshop which included new learning and skills in a number of areas.

This was a challenge workshop and the men and women who attended. New insights into the Biblical context for passages such as Genesis 2 and Ephesians 5 were shared by the Rev. Dr Cliff Bird. Dr Bird spoke on the Biblical foundation for Human Rights as our God given 'birth right' and our reciprocal human responsibilities.

They also learned about the standards the Church expects of its leaders by studying the required Standards set out Canon 1 Title D and the consequences of a complaint of misconduct being levelled against clergy and church leaders.

Skills required by clergy to respond positively to survivors of violence were also shared by staff from the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and House of Sarah.

The positive feedback from this seminar encourages the House of Sarah to continue to provide workshops covering these subjects to all clergy and church leaders in the Diocese.



Members of the Golden Oldies demonstrate the making of gift boxes with members of the AAW women from Suva-Ovalau and the Sigatoka.



AAW women learn the skills of making crosses from materials brought by the Golden Oldies from New Zealand.

Elizabeth (left) and her friend Carlene raised NZ\$1000 to enable us to conduct the Sarah Carers' workshop. Elizabeth also supplied all

Break the Silence Sunday in Samoa

Churches throughout the Diocese of Polynesia celebrate 'Break the Silence' Sunday at services on November 23/14 –

From Archdeacon Taimaleagi Fagamalama Tuataga in Apai Samoa

"So today we honour the dedicated efforts of the AAW *HOUSE OF SARAH in Suva*. This AAW ministry promotes the building of equal and respectful relationships within our families, our churches, our schools and our communities. Last month Fr Ben attended a training for 10 priests to launch a module for a "Safe Church." He shall be reporting to vestry on that. The Revd Sereima Lomaloma (Education Ministry Coordinator), followed this up in a training for us later in the month. This training covered disciplinary actions and process for church employees and licensed ministry. The Leadership of the Diocese, the Bishops, the Standing Committee and the House of Sarah are urging all of us to declare today as the Break the Silence Sunday and have also sent us appropriate material for our service this morning. Hence the sentence and collect that we prayed are actually from those resources and I think it appropriate that the President of the AAW, Leiatualesa Mrs Katifa Bryce leads us in the Diocesan Intercession provided by the House of Sarah. The Bible texts are also those selected for today throughout the Diocese and were mentioned in our Sunday sheet for last Sunday. Thanks be to God. We also have a sermon from The Revd Ann Drummond - the same is being preached. I made amendments and additions in the script as appropriate."

This year materials prepared by the House of Sarah for Break the Silence Sunday was used not only in Fiji but in other Pacific countries by many different denominations.



House of Sarah as part of the Suva Christian Network participated in the:-

16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence November 25–December 10



About 100 people representing Anglican, Methodists, Seventh Day Adventists, Salvation Army, Baptists and Pentecostal participated in the Ecumenical Seminar and Worship held at Holy Trinity Cathedral on December 4th, 2014. Dr Holger Szesnat led an interactive Bible study on Ephesians 5:21ff. This created much discussion in the five groups as he led us through a structured study of the passage which he says

“The outcome of all this is that the way a husband ought to relate to his wife is based on a self-sacrificing love which treats 'the other half' as carefully and lovingly as oneself. This whole line of reasoning in Ephesians 5:25-32 is in keeping, I would argue, with the notion of mutual subjection: I subject myself to the other by loving the other.....and our text does not openly attack hierarchical structures in the way that, say, Gal 3:28 does: it is more subtle than that, but just as subversive of our human tendency to think in status terms.”

The seminar ended with worship followed by lunch provided by the women of St Luke's.



Rev. Tomu Asioli outlines the summary of his discussion group at the conclusion of the Seminar.



Bishop Halapua lights the first candle of the 16 Days at the commencement of the worship service. Titilia Vakadewavosa – worship leader (centre), Asela Naisara MC (right) and Rev. Ann(left) look on.

Our thanks to Emanuel Daniel from St Matthew's for the 16 Day candle stand.

The Bible study and worship resources can be found on our website www.houseofsarah.org



November 25 – United Nation’s International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

From the left Unaisi Bevu – Empower Pacific, Natasha Stott Despoja - Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls, Nicolas Burniat –UN Women Deputy Representative, Nai Cokanasiga - House of Sarah, Osnat Lubrani – UN Resident Coordinator and Vilisi Litianara- Sarah Carer.

The House of Sarah was invited by UN Women – Fiji Office to participate at the launch of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence in a ceremony that “Natasha Stott Despoja, **Oranged**” the Lautoka Market. Nai Cokanasiga and Vilisi Litianara (Sarah Carer) represented us and spoke of the work of the House of Sarah. The guest of honour was the Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls Natasha Stott- Despoja. (second from the right)

House of Sarah says Farewell and Thank You.

This year the House of Sarah said farewell to Marama Tuisawau and we thank her for the pioneering work she did at the House of Sarah especially the workshops she conducted throughout the Fijian part the Dioceses

Marama is now the Deputy Registrar of the Family Court in Suva – we know she will continue to support House of Sarah and will be able to assist us learn more about the role of the Family Court in providing support and bringing justice to survivors of Domestic Violence



Violence Against Women with a Disability Toolkit.

The House of Sarah staff participated in several workshops to provide feedback to the Pacific Disabilities Forum as they developed this toolkit which is an important resource highlighting the vulnerability of women with a disability and providing tools to assist the wider community be more inclusive in developing services to meet the special needs that confront women with a disability,

UN Women Support the Work of the House of Sarah



(Photo thanks to UN Women)

The House of Sarah was one of 4 NGOs and one government agency to receive a UN Women Pacific Fund – Elimination of Violence against Women grant for 2015 (This fund is supported by Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)

This will allow the House of Sarah to:

Increase the access of women survivors to quality services

1. Widen the counselling services offered at the House of Sarah
2. Enabling of Sarah Carers to provide support in the communities

Advancing primary prevention initiatives

1. Workshops for church leaders on interface between Biblical teachings, human rights and gender-based violence
2. Implementation of Safe Church practices
3. Supporting Simeon Ministry's engagement with men in prevention of VAW&G.

Advocacy with other faith communities on prevention of VAW&G

1. Fostering ecumenical coalitions and networks : Suva Christian Talanoa forum
2. Promoting safe church with the Fiji Council of Churches, Pacific Conference of Churches.

The project will be targeting the leadership of local congregations. The aim is to significantly change the culture, behaviour, perceptions of church leaders so that churches are safe and more responsive to victims & survivors of violence as well as advocates for Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Other recipients of the grant were Fiji Girl Guides, Medical Services Pacific and Ministry for Women. The House of Sarah was the only faith based organisation in Fiji to receive a grant.

UN Women's Pacific EWAV Grantees

South/South Learning Exchange in Melbourne

As a provisional grantee of Un Women the House of Sarah was invited to attend Learning Exchange in Melbourne. The Pacific UN Women office staff and representatives from a number of UN Women funded projects in PNG, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Tonga, Samoa and Fiji attended. That in itself was beneficial as we all learned about other projects – their strengths and their challenges.

Nai Cokanasiga was the official House of Sarah but Rev. Sereima and Rev Ann were also able to attend. We heard from a range of best practice services in violence service provision and prevention as well as from health and welfare organisation. The Deputy Director of Police also shared with us the journey of the police force reluctant respondents to proactive intervention and support. We heard about the value of working with men but one of the many highlights were field visits to local service providers. Nai was fortunate to visit one of the faith based service providers the McAuley Centre run by an order of Roman Catholic sisters. They run two homes for homeless women and one refuge home which is for women and children from all parts of the world, who had been in an abused relationship with their partners and are in a process of legal matters as far as separation and divorce is concerned. Rev Sereima and Rev. Ann were fortunate to attend a local conference – Ending Violence – it's Everybody's Business – which brought experts from across Australia and the region including UN Women's Pacific Fund Manager Tupou Vere.



Delegates to the UN Women's Pacific grantees Learning Exchange in Melbourne's Federation Square –photo thanks to UN Women

After the week of learning in Melbourne Nai was fortunate to be chosen to extend for another three days to at the Barwon Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) in Geelong about 100kilometers from Melbourne. The Barwon CASA is located in a 'one stop shop' which also accommodates the police sexual assault unit and the Department of Health and Human Services. Session during the three days included 'Recognising and Responding to Sexual Assault; The Vortex of Violence; and a special visit to the Weatherong Aboriginal Centre to discuss the unique issues that confront Aboriginal women. Nai events please go to was also interested in the online counselling service provided by CASA volunteers and saw it as a possible model for use in Fiji.

For the full report of these events go to:

www.houseorsarah.org

Suva/Ovalau AAW celebrate Break the Silence Sunday in Wainaloka

Tania Ah Kee, President of the Suva/Ovalau AAW (left) asked families to think about family life and values as a way of eliminating violence in families. She also challenged the men present to think about their role in the prevention of family violence and how they can support the efforts of the women.



Visitors to the House of Sarah

The House of Sarah always welcomes visitor and since our last newsletter we had a few including the members of the Anglican Women's Studies Centre (opposite), the Church Pension Board members, the Golden Oldies, the Samuel Marsden Collegiate School Whitby N.Z, the Regional Training Programme participants, the Solomon Islands Christian Care Centre plus too many individuals to name personally.

The House of Sarah appreciates enjoys sharing with visitors the work we do and we also appreciate learning from you as you share with us what you have been doing as we work together to prevent violence in our communities. Please continue to visit!

*Members of Anglican Women's Study Council in kalavata
From left: Revd Numia Tamoana, Revd Amy Chambers, Archdeacon Carole Hughes, Revd Mere Wallace & Karena de Pont*



Check out our new website

www.houseofsarah.org

Thanks to Martina Donkers – Anglicare Polynesia Australian volunteer the House of Sarah now has a website. It is still a work in progress but it does tell you about the House of Sarah and enables you to download many of the resources we have created. We would appreciate your feedback on the website and ideas for other thing that we might put on it.



We also wish Martina all the best for the future as she leaves us to return to Australia. The House of Sarah team have enjoyed sharing our space with her and thank her for sharing her skills with us. We particularly appreciated her project planning workshop and her daily computer problem solving skill. Cool!

You can contact the House of Sarah on 3100665 or email aawhos@yahoo.com or visit us at 6 Desvouex Road, Suva or visit out our website on www.houseofsarah.org

