



SMOL TOKTOK BLONG ViVa



July 2013

Quarterly Newsletter of the Victoria-Vanuatu Physician Project

Don't miss the ViVa Family Barbecue Sunday, August 18th!

On **Sunday afternoon, August 18th**, ViVa will be hosting a “welcome back” party for Dr. Michael Pilgrim and his wife Lorna Way. We would like to welcome all alumni, ViVa friends, and any other interested doctors and their families to this barbecue. It will be a great chance to catch up on what is happening on Tanna, and also, if you have never been, and are perhaps interested, it is a chance to meet other doctors, spouses and children who have taken the leap into one of the best experiences of their lives.

The barbecue will be at Sean Cruz and Andrea Lewis' house, 5181 Rutli Meadows Place from noon to 4pm.

Google Map: <http://goo.gl/maps/vicn7>

ViVa will provide hot dogs and chicken legs and children's drinks. Guests are asked to bring a side dish plus any alternatives they would like for the barbecue or to drink. Sean and Andrea have a badminton net, a bocce ball set and trampoline. Guests might like to bring a lawn chair.

Sean and Andrea's phone number is 250-380-7570.

You can RSVP to Sean and Andrea by emailing secretary@vivaproject.ca

Tanna Crossover Time!

Dr. Paula Ryan, a long time Saltspring Islander, is on her way to Vanuatu with her husband, Michael Berendt and two children, Annika and Eric, to take over the duties of Dr. Michael Pilgrim and his wife Lorna Way.



Ryan-Berendt Family

Paula will be taking leave from her comprehensive family practice on Saltspring Island. Her husband, Michael is a school teacher who loves to sail. Annika is 14 years old and is looking forward to working in a Tanna school and helping at the hospital. Eric is 11 years old, enjoys soccer and water sports and is looking forward to playing with the Ni-Van children.

Cycle Jersey Fundraiser

A big thanks to those who bought and encouraged others to buy the custom-made cycling jerseys and shorts that were sponsored by ViVa. This effort was a success with over \$400 raised. We may try this again next year with the expectation of expanding our market to the many avid cyclists in Victoria.

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Fundraising is always ongoing due to the high costs of maintaining the Doctor's truck and house in Vanuatu. Michael recently reported that the house roof needs to be replaced and some new floor covering will be needed for the peeling linoleum tiles. These will be expensive undertakings.

New Oxygen Plants to be installed in Vila and Santo

Through AusAid funding, oxygen-generating machines will be installed at Vila Central Hospital in Port Vila and Northern District Hospital on the island of Espiritu Santo. These would be great assets to the hospitals because it would remove the need to buy oxygen from the private gas suppliers. The hospitals would be able to use in-wall piped oxygen instead of the heavy and hazardous oxygen tanks. Unfortunately, Tanna's Lenakel Hospital is not included in the plan.

Lenakel Hospital is usually reliant on the expensive purchase of oxygen tanks shipped from Port Vila. Due to shortages of hospital funds or delays in shipping, too many ViVa doctors have had the horrible experience of watching infants and children die on Tanna simply because there was no oxygen to help them through their illnesses.

We have been lucky in the last six years to have the use of a small oxygen generator unit on Tanna. This unit was donated by AusAid and Rotary International (Australia). ViVa has taken a special interest in servicing and maintaining this machine, spending over \$7000 dollars on it. Despite much care and attention in an effort to protect the machine from the heat, humidity, and volcanic ash, the machine will not last very long.

This is another project with which ViVa will stay closely involved. Hopefully after the new oxygen plants are installed in Port Vila, the oxygen for shipping will be less expensive and in more plentiful supply for Lenakel Hospital

Vanuatu's Chief of State Meets the Canadian High Commissioner: Words of Praise for ViVa



President Iolu Abil

As announced in the Vanuatu Daily Post in November, 2012, the Canadian High Commissioner, Michael Small, visited the country. While in the country, Mr. Small met at a public gathering with President Iolu Abil, Vanuatu's Chief of State. Mr. Abil was full of praise for Canada's help to Vanuatu and in particular for the ViVa project as you can see by this quote:

"I wish to note in particular a special arrangement currently in place, whereby experienced Canadian medical doctors are being recruited on a 6-months rotational basis, to serve our main hospital for the Southern province of Tafea. I wish to further note that such service touches the very core of our people's lives has a long-term positive impact on the over-all welfare of our people, for which we are truly grateful."

- As reported by Glenda Shing, 30 November 2012, Vanuatu Daily Post <http://www.dailypost.vu/content/head-state-welcomes-high-commissioner-canada-vanuatu>