

Solomon Snippets

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History of the Samaria Project?

- 2005—first literacy class
- 2006—library books catalogued
- 2006—literacy trainers trained
- 2008—library/classroom built in Namaraoni
- 2008—beginning literacy classes in second village (Pitukoli)
- 2009—ongoing literacy classes & trainers trained in Pitukoli
- 2010—planned building of classroom/library in Pitukoli
- 2010—planned beginning literacy in a new village

Inside this issue:

<i>Literacy in Pitukoli</i>	2
<i>Youth donate</i>	2
<i>History of Samaria Project</i>	3
<i>Namaraoni - where it began</i>	3
<i>How to donate</i>	4
<i>Requirements for 2010</i>	4

Building plans for Pitukoli

Plans are progressing for another team to return to The Solomon Islands in September 2010, to build a classroom/library in the village of Pitukoli, in Central Guadalcanal.

The building is the final stage of the literacy project in that village, after two previous visits where beginning literacy classes commenced, followed by more advanced training of local literacy trainers to continue the adult literacy program.

The Pitukoli building will be the same as the one built in the village of Namaraoni in 2008 by the Samaria Project team. As with Pitukoli, adult literacy classes were commenced in Namaraoni with a subsequent visit preparing library resources and training local literacy

trainers to continue teaching. By the time the building was built adult literacy classes had been underway for 3 years, and with the handover of the building, have been continuing at least 3 days a week in the village. People have been known to walk for 3 hrs to attend a literacy class.

The Namaraoni literacy project has been very successful, as the local people have utilized the resources extremely well, taken ownership of the project (more about what's happening there in a later issue) and utilized the building effectively across the entire association (region and



The Classroom/Library built in Namaraoni in 2008—the same design will be used for the 2010 building.

neighbouring villages).

The team is very confident that the people of Pitukoli will take up the literacy project with the same enthusiasm. Already they are milling and carting the timber required, in preparation for the arrival of the team in September.

Donations to support this project are being sought now (see details below and back page).

Tax deductible donations

The Samaria Project is partnered with World Relief Australia, to allow for the collection of tax deductible donations.

World Relief Australia Inc is an overseas aid agency committed to providing emergency relief

and community development initiatives which will result in the relief of poverty, suffering, and misfortune to needy persons in developing countries regardless of age, sex, race, ethnic background, religion, political

beliefs or marital status.

Go to their website to find out more at www.wra.org.au

See back page for details of how to donate to the Samaria Project.

Literacy begins in Pitukoli

In 2008, while the building was beginning in Namaraoni, seven members of the team travelled to the village of Pitukoli to begin a new literacy project there.

Preparatory literacy classes (giving meaning to sounds and symbols), were already in place, overseen by several very dedicated local ladies.

Three or more classes a day were held, and were eagerly attended by up to 40 ladies and men, of varying literacy levels. Many had never experienced a day of formal education in their lives, and learned to write for the first time.

The local literacy teachers were left with skills and resources to continue teaching until the return of the team from Australia.

In September 2009, a group of nine returned to continue the teaching in Pitukoli. They were delighted to see the continued enthusiasm and learning that had occurred over the year, since the first visit.

The first five days were spent training trainers, who were selected and sent from seven surrounding localities. A box of resources was provided for the trainers to take back to each locality.

The second week addressed local literacy. Twenty students were expected, but in excess of 60 arrived—so many, that there was not enough stationery to go around. After the first session, the students were divided into two groups according to ability level, to maximize learning outcomes. On completion, all students were provided with a certificate of achievement.

The people of Pitukoli are dedicated to the advancement of adult literacy in the village and surrounding areas, and now eagerly await the arrival of the

team in 2010, and the building of the classroom/library. The classroom/library is proceeding in that location because of the commitment the people have shown to adult literacy, and their willingness to share the resources with other surrounding villages. Evidence of their commitment is their enthusiasm to start obtaining the timber required for the building, cutting and milling it themselves, in readiness for the 2010 building



Early literacy lessons in 2008 in Pitukoli

Sacred Heart Youth donate to new library

The youth from Sacred Heart CFC Children's Group Boval, were excited to hear about the literacy project in The Solomon Islands, after a visit by 2008 team member, Judy Simpson.

The children were amazed to hear about the lives of the people, and how much they valued the opportunity to learn literacy.

For over a year, the children have been collecting books and stationery items to donate to the next library to be built by the team. Unwanted, unused and surplus

stationery from their own schooling bookbags has been collected, and will be greatly appreciated by the people in The Solomon Islands.

The children have also collected a variety of reading and text books as well as culled library books, to make up 5 boxes of books and sta-

tionery which will soon be shipped to Honiara in readiness to fill the new library at Pitukoli.

In addition to this, the group has donated \$200 which will fund the shelving in the new library.

"It is good for the children to be able to donate towards something concrete"

"It is good for the children to have something concrete and tangible to collect for", said youth group coordinator Mrs Veronica Forsyth. "The children have enjoyed collecting the items, and

look forward to hearing about the 2010 project."

The history of the Samaria Project

The Samaria Project was born in 2008, when a team of people, with connections to Central Presbyterian Church and Westside Christian College united on a short term mission project to build a library in the village of Namaraoni, in the Solomon Islands.

Lead by Kim Whitmore, this project followed on from literacy work which Kim had commenced during two previous trips to the village in 2005 and 2006.

The Samaria Project name comes from the book of Acts where we are commanded to “be (Christ’s) witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”. Just as Samaria was the near neighbour to the people of Jerusalem, The Solomon Islands are near neighbours to the people of Australia.

Kim travelled to the village in 2005 with students from Westside Christian College, and it was on

that trip that she commenced literacy work with the ladies in the village (see below).

Kim returned privately in 2006 to train Literacy Trainers and to begin work on providing the village with books for a library. On that occasion she travelled with her four sons and fellow teacher, Dorothy Sanwick. The intention was that while the boys worked on cataloguing the many books that had been donated to the library by people back in Australia, Kim and Dorothy would do the literacy training. A violent stomach bug which affected the entire group resulted in a slightly different format, such that whoever was the least ill each day conducted the literacy training.

Participants came from 8 surrounding villages to attend the four day

Trainer’s Workshop, and boxes of resources sufficient for each village were given to them to take home to continue the training in their villages. The local literacy teaching was continued by the team. Kim was thrilled to see the progress that had occurred over the past year, indicating the commitment of both the students and the trainers to continue their learning.



Andrew, Jake and Daniel Whitmore catalogue library books in Namaraoni in 2006

Namaraoni—where it all began

A preparatory literacy work specifically for women, had begun in Namaraoni just prior to Kim Whitmore’s arrival in 2005.

These classes focused around teaching the connection between sounds and written symbols, beginning in the local language and then progressing to Pidgin.

When the local ladies found out that Kim was a teacher (especially skilled in teaching early language), they pleaded with her to teach them English while she was there. They wanted to be able to read their bibles, and had been praying that someone would come to teach them English, in a way that they would understand, and that they would be ready to learn.

Because of the classes they had already been attending, they were at a stage where they were ready to progress further.

With extremely limited resources, Kim prepared classes for a number of enthusiastic ladies, keen to learn literacy (more on that in a later issue).

Many had never experienced a single day of schooling in their lives, and did not even know how to hold a pencil.

But why teach English if it is not the first language of The Solomon

Islands? “Whilst English is the third language, it is the primary written language in The Solomon Islands”, responds Kim. “The primary language (simply known as Language) is rarely written, and the second language, Pidgin, is written in only a very limited form. The majority of written material available to the people is in English.”

“The people have bibles which are almost solely in English, and they hunger to be able to read them themselves. They are eager to learn the language of the outside world.”

“Whilst English is the third language, it is the primary written language in The Solomon Islands”

SAMARIA PROJECT - LITERACY PROGRAM IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

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We are on the web

www.centralchurch.net.au

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Requirements for 2010 - can you help?

Library books and building resources will need to be shipped to The Solomon Islands months before the arrival of the team. These things need to be collected by the end of April, in readiness to ship over.

Already, an extensive collection of books has been put together. They are yet to be sorted, boxed, labelled and weighed in preparation to send. To date, no building resources have been collected.

If you can assist in any way, below is an outline of some of the items needed.

Books - story books and novels for

children, teens and adults are always appreciated. Some non-fiction books for all ages would be useful. Reader's Digest condensed books are great.

Whilst books don't need to be new, they do need to be in relatively good condition. Repairs with sticky tape won't hold up in the humidity.

At this stage, sufficient stationery items have been collected.

Building materials required include everything except the timber to build. This includes roofing iron, concrete, windows, doors, nails and screws. We were fortu-

nate to secure some very suitable second-hand donations last time, so if you can possibly help, we would love to hear from you.

Many of the tools remain in Namaraoni from the last trip, including a generator and power tools. Some hand tools may be required. We may be able to provide more details in future newsletters.

Cost of shipping resources is approx \$160 per m³. We expect to have to ship up to 8 m³ so any donations to assist with this cost would also be appreciated.