



## Fiji charity worker Sarah says ‘Vinaka’ to ParcelHero!

### Yasawa islands’ children receive vital school equipment

When Sarah Ashton visited Fiji’s Yasawa islands in 2013 she felt moved to help the islanders. Though the Yasawa Islands looks a paradise, the population live below world standards of health and poverty. Sarah initially only intended to stay a week to help an education project; but the work of the Vinaka Fiji Trust captured her imagination. The Trust was set up in 2010 to give something back to the villagers to say ‘thank you’ (*Vinaka*) for welcoming people to their islands.

Sarah volunteered to help at the Nativi District School, and found it had no computers, no internet and no lights, and all schooling is done on blackboards and using textbooks. The children can’t even read at night as there is no electricity.

Sarah decided to help further by sending much-needed equipment to the school. ‘When I returned to the UK, I decided to do a fundraising event to raise money. I did an event in my local church and managed to raise enough money for 100 pencil cases, stationery, books, whiteboards and puzzles. I packed it all up and then had to find a carrier to get it to Fiji.’

However, sending items to remote islands can be a difficult and expensive thing. Happily, Sarah discovered London-based international couriers ParcelHero. ‘I looked at many ways to send the parcel but they were all very expensive. Most couriers I looked at would have cost close to £200 or more. Kindly ParcelHero offered me a 50% discount which meant much more of the money I raised could be spent on resources rather than delivery costs. Even on a remote island, they still delivered door to door.’

Now Sarah has been able to hand out the pencil cases, complete with pencil, pen, ruler, rubber and sharpener. Sarah says: ‘The children were really grateful. Small things we take for granted make a big difference to these kids. They will use these every day, and the books and educational resources I sent are being used to teach in the school and improve English and grammar.’

Grammar is quite an issue for the Yasawa islanders. They have to learn three different languages, and in addition there are 22 dialects in Fiji; the children have to learn their own as well as the common Bauan dialect. They face huge challenges from a young age as, without passing English, the children cannot progress through school.

Sarah says Vinaka Fiji are always happy to receive donations of books and school resources to help the children learn more. To find out more visit [www.vinakafiji.com.fj](http://www.vinakafiji.com.fj) and to find out other remote areas ParcelHero serves, visit [www.parcelhero.com](http://www.parcelhero.com)

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