Last but not the least, SVSG would like to acknowledge the belief, the heart and the support from its established partners. Thank you for supporting SVSG, and thank you for being engaged with our work:

Mari’s Bakery

Sponsored by:
The One Sky Giving Circle
CA, United States of America
SVSG acknowledges the support from the Little Angels Foundation of New Zealand to wards welfare assistance for our vulnerable children.

Faafetai! Faafetai! Faafetai tele lava

A special thank you to SVSG’s ongoing partners assisting with the children’s caring:

- To Toleafoa Elon Betham and the team at the Le Aute Gas for 2 x monthly gas refills for the House of Blessings;
- To Felise Sam Chong and the team at Origin Energy for the gas refill for the House of Hope and your prompt response for our call for assistance;
- To Greg & Maria Meredith for the children’s daily supplies of bread;
- To Epi Smith for the children’s bread supplies twice a week;
- To Tuato & Anna Ryan for the children’s Sunday toanai & bread supplies;
- To Elder Meliula Fata, and the LDS Office for coordinating the regular donations of food, the ongoing maintenance of the Campus and the volunteer support for the children’s rehabilitation programs;
- To Uncle Johnny for the children’s ice cream supply every Sundays;
- To the churches, villages and individuals that donated food and miscellaneous supplies to assist with the children’s daily needs;
- To Mark Tofilau of Sydney Australia for $300 per week donation towards the children’s food and allowance for the Security Guard at the Campus;
- Maurice & Elanit Mitry of Australia for the monthly donation towards the Campus water rates;
- Carolyn Rogers of Abu Dhabi for the monthly donation towards the salary of the Head Matron at the Campus;
- Motuiupaa Dr. Aisoli Vaai of the Saleufi Medical Clinic, for the children’s free medical consultation;
- Taulealeausumai Dr. Titi Lamese of the Ola Fou Clinic, for the children’s free medical consultation; and
- Zhenna Chan Mow-Fa’auiga of the Niu Pharmacy for the children’s free medication supplies.

For this Engage Edition, we pay special tribute to one of our regular donors, Ms. Carolyn Rogers.

From September 2018 to April 2019, Carolyn has been financing one of the matron’s salaries all the way from Abu Dhabi. We pray for God’s healing Carolyn as you go through treatment for your illness. Together with the children of hope we remembers you always with fond memories. God bless!
Donation of food supplies Mr Imran Adil, the Director of PAK Auto Motors and his Muslim Community in Vaigaga, for the children at the Campus.

Thank you Mr. Adil and the staff.

Tanuvasa Lene from Nofoalii stopped by the main office to drop off donation of clothes for the children at the Campus of Hope.

Thank you so much Tanuvasa Lene and family for your support.

Lalovi Palepoi and her children from the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints Lotopa 5th Ward Relief Society donated these lovely shoes for the children at the Campus. Faafetai le agalelei Lalovi. God bless!

Sister Cameron visited the Campus of Hope for the last time in April, to introduce Sister Lanett Ho Ching who according to Sister Cameron, “should be contacted any time should you need anything for the children.” Welcome on board Sister Ho Ching!

It was all smiles at the SVSG office when Lefao Jeffrey Ropati, one of the founding members of the SVSG (Sydney) paid us a surprised visit.

Reminiscing on the good old days and the progress SVSG as an organisation has made thus far, was awesome. Great catching up with you brother Lefao.

Talofa Lava

Once again, we present SVSG’s support services to the people of Samoa through our Engage Newsletter.

I trust that as partners, supporters and families of Samoa Victim Support Group, you will continue to appreciate these Editions as they relate to SVSG’s responsibilities of accountability and transparency. Most importantly, it details our social responsibility as an NGO in Samoa, supporting our people in need.

April has been a busy month for SVSG.

There were children being evacuated to the Campus for their safety; children whose Court cases were successful; and children being successfully reintegrated to their families.

Then we have local and international conferences and summits being attended to; as well as local and international competitions being won.

The likes of Feagaiga Stowers, our golden girl continues to shine at the Arufa Games in Darwin; while the brave Leilua Lino, the 2018 International Children’s Peace Prize Award finalist carries the Positive Movement message in schools; while one of our Girl Survivor attended the International Summit in Hawaii on trauma. How about the nofotane women’s reach; attracting markets outside of Samoa, in New Zealand and Australia?

The achievements far outweigh the challenges that we have to overcome along the way.

As the Chair of the Board, I join the SVSG family in acknowledging each and every one of our supporters here and afar, for supporting SVSG’s work in April.

God bless!

Georgina Lui
Chair, SVSG Board

“You don’t have to be extraordinary in any way. I can do what you can’t do, you can do what I can’t do and together, we can do great things.” Mother Theresa
1. FAMILY VIOLENCE

A total of 67 new cases were lodged with SVSG during April: 53 cases with the Upolu Office and 14 cases lodged with the Tuasivi Office. March recorded a total of 44 cases, so there is an increase of 52% or 23 new cases lodged in April compared to March.

Of the total 67 new cases:
8 were cases directly involving children ages 2 – 17 years old; 5 sexual, 1 child abuses and 2 medical welfare assistance;
22 were domestic violence cases involving mothers;
15 were maintenance and custody cases;
7 were mediation and counselling support related; and
15 were welfare assistance

SVSG continues to apply for Protection Orders for the abused mothers and children. In April, there were 6 mothers and 18 children assisted with their applications for Court protection orders. At the Family Court in April, more offenders of violence were referred to SVSG for counselling support, some of whom were the same offenders in which SVSG assisted the mothers and their children with Court protection orders.

While the therapeutic counselling provided by the Advocacy Programs gives the offenders a second chance to rehabilitate without being separated from their families if they were imprisoned, SVSG believes that for some of the severe cases of family violence, the best option is a custodial sentencing. Nevertheless, this is a matter for SVSG to take up with the Family Court as part of the Advocacy Program monitoring and evaluation process.

Highlighted below are some of the cases of domestic and sexual violence reported to SVSG in April:

01.04.19: Sexual Harassment
A 17 year old college student and her siblings were picked up by a neighbour while waiting for a bus for school, as per their usual routine. The college student was the last one to be dropped off and it was at this time that the neighbouring driver started the sexual harassment. While the car was slowing down due to traffic, the college student jumped off and sought assistance with a family relative who referred the matter to SVSG for assistance.

Loma Linda University Interns 2019
Conversation between SVSG and the Loma Linda University of California resumed in April with regards to having behavioural health students from the University carrying out their internship with SVSG.

Through Talolo Lepale, the Director of the Field Education for the social work department at Loma Linda, SVSG will secure the support from 3 additional students from the University working with SVSG beginning in July and finishing in September. These students would be masters or doctoral students from social work, psychology, counselling and family services.

Thank you Talolo for continuing the partnership between Loma Linda University and SVSG.

FINANCIAL & IN KIND DONATION
The extent of SVSG’s support services for our community in need attest to the genuine and durable partnerships we have established. As such, it is a normal process that we acknowledge all the donations received from our partners and network of supporters.

For April, SVSG acknowledges with gratitude and appreciation the kindness of the following donors:

Donors		Donation for:
Peace Chapel Christian Fellowship	Court Office	300.00
Hana Fepuleai		Campus of Hope	100.00

In Kind:
Leauina Hatier – 1 bag children’s clothes
Tanuvasa Lene of Nofotalii – 8 bags of clothes
Aliah Ale – baby formula milk, clothes
A’oa’o Malua Theological College – bulk food supplies
Moamoa & Siusega Catholic Parish – bulk food supplies
Father Mikaele Tuimanave, Director of the Catholic Schools – pre packed lunch for the children
Sue Rasmussen – boxes of weet bix and milk for the babies
Farewelling a Head Preschool Teacher

She visited Samoa Victim Support Group in February 2018 with a friend and felt a call to volunteer and share her training, experience and passion for children.

In March this year, Rachael Diane Ansley, the Head Teacher for Happy Kids Childcare in Henderson New Zealand started her 30 days volunteering time with the preschool students at the School of Hope.

The end of April saw Rachael joined by her teenage children who travelled from New Zealand to see for themselves what had kept their mother away from home for a month.

Thank you so much Rachael for volunteering at the School of Hope. You blended in well with our support staff especially the children who benefited greatly from your enthusiastic attitude to learning. Thank you also for the donation of stationery and a variety of fun games and puzzles for the children.

16th Hawai’i International Summit on Preventing, Assessing & Treating Trauma Across the Lifespan

Who would have thought that a support service organization from Samoa will be represented at the International Summit on Trauma?

But SVSG’s participation was not by chance, but through an opportunity presented ‘Girls Visibility Fund’, a new funding opportunity available to With and For Girls Award Winners. SVSG became a WAFG Award winner in 2016 and continues to be supported by the With and For Girls Collective. Accompanying the President to the Summit was one of the Girl Survivors of sexual offending, a residence of the Campus of Hope. Her case was successfully completed in February 2019 with the step father being convicted and sentenced to 17 years imprisonment.

The matter is now with the Police for investigation and their usual assistance. In the meantime, an SVSG village representative from the same village as the college student notified SVSG that the perpetrator is a prominent business man and a traditional apology has been presented to the family of the victim. This new information was noted for the record because SVSG still stands by its ‘no drop’ policy, and continues to advocate with the Police for justice for the 17 year old.

24.04.19: Sexual Abuse

Years of sexual abuse by a retired church minister resulted in one of his victims with a child. The victim has since being married and has a family of her own. However, the perpetrator continues his sexual preyn on the victim’s older sister who is already married. The older sister confided to her husband who lodged a complaint with SVSG against the retired church minister. And by lodging a complaint, the older sister and her husband were called upon by the village’s high chief as to why they lodged a complaint against the retired church minister. The couple insisted on pursuing justice and have since moved to the husband’s village to await the Police’s investigation on the matter.

29.04.19: Incest Rape

The mother of a 12 year old incest rape victim lodged a complaint with SVSG against her husband who is also the biological father of the victim. According to the mother of 6 children, she awoke one night to check up on her children when she found her husband raping their third eldest daughter in her bed. Caught in the act, the husband threatened the wife not to tell anyone or he will kill her. It was when the husband went to work that the mother sought help with SVSG. The matter was immediately referred to the Police. The child was taken under SVSG’s shelter care while the husband was arrested on the same day. For the wife and her remaining children’s safety, SVSG applied for a Court protection order against the perpetrator in case he will be released from prison and will seek out the wife for revenge.

For immediate support, please call the 800-7874 Help Line. It is FREE and it is a 24-hour service.
2. CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

The highlighted cases of sexual abuse reported to SVSG in April attested to a community becoming more aware of their right to justice; that despite sexual violence being shameful, the victims and their families need to ‘speak up’; that such matters are no longer private family matters, but are crimes that need to be dealt with in accordance with the law.

Most notable from the sexual abuse cases were the offenders control over the victims; a prominent business man, a retired church minister and a biological father.

SVSG commended the village representatives and family members who spoke out on behalf of the victims, against the social norms surrounding sexual violence being shameful and the stigma associated with it.

There were four new admissions to the shelter facilities during April; 3 were victims of sexual offending and 1 new born child whose mother could not afford to care for her plus her other 8 children.

There were 4 successful court cases recorded for the children in April:

- 1 sexual abuse case at the Supreme Court involving an 18 year old victim from Savaii who was raped by her uncle. The uncle is now convicted and serving a 15 months imprison term; and
- 3 child abuse cases at the Family Court found the fathers involved guilty of the crimes and all of them have been referred to attend anger management counselling with SVSG’s Advocacy Program.

The next stage of SVSG’s child protection work is preparing the children for their reintegration; a process which requires working together with the children’s family for a smooth transition back into the community.

At the same time, SVSG ensures that its policies and child protection systems are not only sound, but relevant to cater for the demand for child protection services in Samoa.

Samoa Qualification Authority PSET Annual Conference 2019

As one of the stakeholders of the Samoa Qualification Authority through its Introduction to Caregivers Training now recognized by the SQA as a non-formal learning, SVSG was once again invited to attend the SQA PSET Annual Conference from 11 – 12 April.

SVSG was represented by one of its staff, as one of the Panelists on the Topic: Contributions to lifelong learning to employability. The other panel members included Maulolo Tavita Amosa, Director of the Fatuiaipu Consult and Reverend Dr. Moses Moalo, Principal of the Piula Theological College.

SVSG’s presentation focussed on lifelong learning and employability from SVSG’s perspective; where every day is a learning experience; while Employability extends to include personal attributes, the characteristics of a person that no set of skills, knowledge or understanding on a specific work, can substitute.

Gender & Social Inclusion

Ms. Belinda Lucas, the Gender & Social Inclusion Advisor for the Private Sector Development Programme consolidated by the New Zealand government to support private sector development in Samoa, sought an opportunity to meet with SVSG in April.

Interestingly, the Advisor has learnt of SVSG’s work with nofotane women and their economic empowerment, and as such, wanted to hear from SVSG on how it was able to achieve gender equality and social inclusion, for the nofotane women.

Data Collection for the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action

The one day workshop coordinated by the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development aimed at facilitating the collection and verification of information and data to assist the completion of Samoa’s report responding to the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action.

SVSG provided the relevant data as per its work with nofotane women (economic empowerment and protection for domestic workers), girl survivors of gender based violence (their education and rehabilitation) and poverty alleviation as per the nofotane project.
7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SVSG’s engagement with the community is important to ensure that its members have access to valued social settings and activities, while contributing meaningfully to the social development of the country in its role as a support service provider.

During April, SVSG’s community engagement extended to include international participation to forums and seminars, relevant to its work.

Highlighted below are some of these engagements:

Meeting with UN Women Specialist

The SVSG’s Management Team met up with the UN Women Prevention Specialist Farrah Louise Kelly who was in Samoa for a scoping mission from April 8-10.

According to the UN Women Country Programme Coordinator (Samoa), Papalii Mele Maualaivao who coordinated the meeting, “As we will be working more closely with the Family Court/Family Violence and MJCA this year, I hope you can make time to meet with Farrah and share with her how SVSG deliver support to perpetrators and survivors who have been through the justice system.

The meeting discussed UN Women’s focus on EVAW being:

- **Primary Prevention** – looking at (1) the power of faith; (2) engagement through sports & youth; and (3) community mobilisation; and

- **Access to essential services**

SVSG’s sharing was on prevention and response to violence against women and girls by tackling social norm change, especially norms affecting victims of violence.

In April, SVSG had the opportunity to meet with the UNICEF Regional Consultant Shelley Casey in April, to discuss child safeguard services. This is vital given SVSG’s being the only provider of Residential Services for children in Samoa.

Thank you so much Shelley for taking the time to thoroughly go over with us the Child Protection Risks and Risk Mitigation to strengthen SVSG’s Child Protection Policy 2018. We look forward to the revised version of the SVSG CP Policy following your review.

SVSG also acknowledges the commitment from the UNICEF Child Protection Officer Tupepepa Esara-Aumua, in ensuring that SVSG’s child protection service is getting all the support it needs.

2.1 Campus of Hope

The Campus remains the only shelter facility available in Samoa for children survivors of gender based violence, neglect and more recently, children and new born babies from underprivileged families who continued to bear children under very poor conditions.

Sometimes, people questioned the rationale behind the setting up of such a facility. However, whenever we get a new admission, there lies the answer. Because where will these children be if there was no shelter; if they are no longer safe in their homes, or children being malnourished due to poverty.

SVSG’s standing remains; that the Campus of Hope is merely a temporary shelter for the children’s safety and rehabilitation while pursuing justice for the wrongs committed against them or while extended family members are sought to take up the carer role for the neglect and the underprivileged. At the end of the day, the children will be placed back to the community, whether it will be with their immediate or extended families.

During April, there were 4 new admissions to the shelter including a new born baby girl from an underprivileged family. By the end of April, 3 girls have been successfully reintegrated leaving a total of 81 children; 10 boys and 71 girls, ranging from new born to 19 years old.
Providing for the daily needs of the children and implementing the relevant rehabilitation programs have been made possible through the 2-year partnership with the UNICEF Pacific, and the assistance from local and overseas donors for the children’s daily needs.

The older girls including the pregnant ones are kept fit through their daily walks in the morning.

The babies get fresh air when they are placed on their mats in the children’s open house.

Others love to spend their free time by themselves, for instance playing puzzles which help them develop basic skills such as shape recognition, concentration, goal setting, patience and a sense of achievement.

At the Campus, we also see children building relationships with each other children; a loving nurturing relationship where children help each other as siblings.

As for the young boys, they are more outdoor; helping out with the gardening or making the ‘saka’ boiled taro or banana, for their evening meals.

The SVSG Juniors also accompanied the Just Jesus Ministry from Australia, to visit the children at the Campus while the Group was in Samoa during April.

Sharing to the children on the word of God and His love for everyone was just as inspiring to the youth as it was to the children.

Once a month, the SVSG Juniors gathered at the Campus for a Working Bee, cleaning up the Campus while having fun networking with members from different youth groups under its umbrella.

For April, the SVSG Juniors acknowledged the commitment from Japanese volunteer Ms. Junko.

During April, Junko registered all the donated books received from the community for its Book Drive initiative. Junko also volunteered to make colorful paper stands for the Easter eggs.

The SVSG Juniors had fun hosting an Easter Egg Hunt for the children, acknowledging the support from all the church youth groups that donated eggs and their time, to carry out this activity.
As one of the colleges visited by the Positive Movement Campaign in April, members of the SVSG Juniors joined the Awareness Team at the Faleata College.

The young speakers encouraged the students to think positive and live positive lives not only for themselves but also for their families.

Youth groups from the SDA Faleula uta and the SDA Faleula tai gathered together on a Sunday evening to hear from the SVSG Juniors on the work of SVSG.

The youth groups from the Seventh Day Adventist Faleula now join the Catholic youth of St. Andrews Faleula under the umbrella of the SVSG Juniors.

As one of the partners for the Samoa Faafafine Association, the SVSG Junior Coordinator represented the Group to the 1st Quarterly SFA Stakeholder & Allies Informal Dialogue held in April.

The Informal Dialogue updated the stakeholders on the work of the Association specific to Health, Human Rights, Community Disaster and Climate Risk Management.

"Offer each other a helping hand."
- Galatians 6:2 -

The daily life of the children at the Campus of Hope therefore form part of SVSG’s psychosocial support because through their engagement in verbal and non-verbal activities, the children are assisted in feeling safer and expressing themselves more comfortably.

Even having Hugh Taylor-Pati and Ms. Fausaga of Digicel, spending time at the Campus during the Easter holidays, to set up an outdoor screen for the children’s movie night, highlighted a child-friendly attitude that contributes to the children’s recovery and healing. Thank you so much the Board of Directors, Management and Staff of Digicel Samoa for always going that extra mile to cater for the children’s needs.

CeCe Theodor: Love this...great work Digicel.

Sri Chinmoy Oneness Home Peace Run
The Sri Chinmoy Oneness-Home Peace Run reached the Campus of Hope early April, as part of the global torch relay that embodies humanity’s universal aspiration for peace.

Coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Sports & Culture, the torch symbolises hopes and dreams for better and brighter future, as per the aspirations of all the children survivors of gender based violence at the Campus of Hope.

According to the organizers of the event, “People from all walks of life hold the symbolic torch to wish for a peaceful world. Passing the torch from one person to the next unites us together in our common aspiration to offer something positive to our world – together we can make a difference!”
Sing Samoa Visit

A group of enthusiastic musicians with diverse backgrounds as Teachers, Doctors and Administration from Tasmania, Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne put up a singing and dancing entertainment for the children of hope.

The group is part of the Sing Samoa 2019 Tour coordinated by Mellisa V. Silaga, the Director of Know Your Roots, who is very active in her efforts to shed light on Pacific Islanders. With strong roots to Samoa, she prides herself in serving others.

The children of hope treated the visitors to their popular rendition of ‘Making Melodies’ which got them all on their feet.

Thank you so much to the Sing Samoa Tour 2019 for spending time entertaining the children as well as the donation of stationery and sweets presented during your visit. Thank you also to Mellisa V Silaga for reaching out to SVSG on behalf of the Sing Samoa Tour 2019.

A Sexual Survivor Reaches Out

“Hi my partner and I are travelling over to Samoa in April. He is originally from Samoa. We want to enquire about making a visit and to also bring some supplies over for the kids. How many children live at the home?” A simple message yet, it was her way of reaching out as a survivor.

Traveling from New Zealand, Brianna Grant and her partner Tufatu Nanai’s visit to the Campus of Hope was healing onto itself. Prior to the visit, Brianna openly shared on her life as a sexual abused victim.

“At 10 years old I was taken away from my family when my stepfather did something terrible to me. My mother left us after tolerating the abuse from my stepfather for so long. She escaped and I didn’t have the chance to be taken with her.”

Thank you so much Brianna for opening your heart to the children. Your bravery is an inspiration to the children that there is always hope.

6. SVSG JUNIORS

Following on the footsteps of the main group, the SVSG Juniors have on the move from the beginning to the end of April. Their projects and activities included:

- The implementation of the Clean Water Project at Faleula;
- Taking part in the Positive Movement Campaign at the Faleata College;
- Conducting a service provider awareness session for the Faleula Youth;
- Attending meetings and workshops on behalf of the Youths;
- Establishing networks with international visiting youth groups;
- Cleaning up the Campus; and
- Coordinating rehabilitation programs for the children of hope

Highlighted below are some of the youth group’s work in April:

A family from Faleula under SVSG’s welfare assistance was visited in April to ensure that they are benefiting from accessing clean water at all times.

Thanks to the donation from the Chan Mow & Company Limited, the SVSG Juniors was able to purchase a 1,000 litre water tank for this Faleula family.
Primary & College Awareness:
The program visited 1 pre-school, 1 college and 9 primary schools in April, reaching 2,000+ girls and 4,000+ boys, and close to 1,000 parents and teachers.

Malie Primary School

Vaitele Uta Primary School

St. Joseph’s Primary Leauvaa

Utualii Primary School

Girl Survivor Joins International Summit on Trauma
The children survivors of sexual offending cared for at the Campus of Hope were proudly represented at the 16th Hawai’i International Summit on Trauma by one of its very own, a 15 year old Girl Survivor. Our Girl Survivor found herself amongst international professionals working to tackle violence, abuse and trauma; some of the situations she related very well to.

And she has come a long way from a 15 year old sexual abused victim to an international advocate as a Girl Survivor. Upon returning home, our Girl Survivor will be enrolled at one of the Private Schools as her journey begins in achieving her dream of becoming a lawyer:

“As soon as I saw all the children at the Campus, I didn’t want to leave anymore. I said to myself, that I will fight and I will become a lawyer so that I can help young girls like me that have been abused (physically and sexually) from their homes. As a lawyer, I can stand in court and seek justice for the children of hope. I can be another helper like Mama Lina and my big SVSG family.” Girl Survivor

Coralie Allen : Love this post Lina Chang you are amazing how you support and love the children that come into your care. I love you Sera it’s so awesome to see you travelling and being a part of this. God bless you and your dreams to become a lawyer .

Sexual Abuse Survivor and the MyRivr Platform
Also attending the 16th Hawai’i International Summit on Trauma was Mr Akerei Maresala-Thomson, the Chief Executive Officer of MyRivr in New Zealand.

As a child sexual abuse survivor Maresala-Thomson wants people to use their voice and get help because help has never been more accessible.

Maresala-Thomson was abused as a child but he turned his nightmare into a dream job as a Chief Executive Officer of MyRivr, a life-saving social services app used to help people share their voice.
Our Golden Girl Has Done it Again

Weightlifting at the 12th Arafura Games held in Darwin in April concluded with many Oceania records broken along the way.

Amongst the winners and the records maintained was our own Golden Girl Feagaiga Stowers who snatched the Gold Medal for the +87kg ahead of fellow Samoan lifter Iuniarra Sipaia.

Humbled as always, Feagaiga returned home to her siblings at the Campus of Hope, who continued to inspire her to lift the weights as if lifting the burden associated with their abuse.

Up next is the Junior World Champions in Suva Fiji in June, where our champion will defend her title during her final competition in the Junior category; before our Golden Girl will compete in the Pacific Games in July.

Sanarosa:
For our dear Sanarosa, whose life was cut short at 18, due to the complications surrounding her sexual abuse, her ‘Message of Hope’ is now portrayed by signboards along the road. As promised Rosa, we will continue to share your message to save another child’s life.

“Let what happened to me ends with me. In a Christian nation, children should grow up safely within their own family environment. I wasn’t. As such, I’m calling on all the parents to love your children.” Sanarosa

Brianna Grant:
“Being able to meet the other children who have been abused in Samoa and share my own personal experience of sexual abuse was so liberating and helped me heal in ways I didn’t know I needed healing in.

Over the years I have come to realise that there are still too many people out there who are too afraid to speak up about sexual abuse as families tend to cover up the incident so it does not bring “shame” to the family name.

My two abusers left me hating every part of my body, I felt like my body had somehow let me down which resulted in me having an eating disorder (bulimia) and two suicide attempts of taking my life. Not only did it affect how I viewed my body on the outside it infected my mind and my self-worth. I felt the problem all along was me, was I was somehow sending signals out that I wanted this to happen? Is this my fault? It took me years to change my way of thinking, I was too afraid of speaking out in case rumours spread and I got the blame. If speaking out and telling my story can help someone else to get the courage to stand up to it, then I didn’t go all through that for nothing. #if I can, you can too.”

Tufatu Nanai proudly supporting his partner Brianna Grant’s as she joins SVSG’s Positive Movement Campaign

2.2 School of Hope
April saw the students of the School of Hope identifying different aspects of learning that they are interested to pursue.

While some are into reading, skills building and music, others are more into academic studies such as our Girl Survivors who dreams of one day becoming a lawyer.

For some of the students, their after school activities included skill building, creating different products from broken furniture, tyres and even plastic bags. One of their new creations for April were candle holders that have proven popular with visiting families and friends.

A total of 77 students attended the School of Hope in April: 8 male and 69 female inclusive of 4 children with disabilities and 3 pregnant girls. The teaching staff included 3 full time teachers and 3 skill trainers.
April also marked the nofotane women’s product reaching the New Zealand market through the SSAB Sei Oriana Gift Shop in Mangere Auckland.

A space has now being created for the nofotane products in the heart of Auckland, right next to the Samoan Fale which house the Consulate-General of Samoa.

Pale fuiono, a head piece for a taupou’s Samoan siva, mats, clustered lopa sets, fans and other beauty accessories were some of the nofotane products now available at the SSAB Sei Oriana Gift Shop. In April SVSG received on behalf of the nofotane women ST882.00 for their products now on sale at the Sei Oriana Gift Shop.

Thank you so much Aumua Ming & Tofilau Fiti Leung Wai for always looking out for ways to support SVSG and its work.

6. **ONE SKY GIVING CIRCLE**

**The Positive Movement**

The extent of the support for the Positive Movement Campaign in April has been phenomenon. With funding support from the One Sky Giving Circle of California United States of America, the ‘We Can, You Can’ slogan has now a global audience.

While the awareness campaign continues for Primary and College students in Upolu, visiting families and friends took to the social media with their powerful testimonies of survival and healing.

Meeting with the US Embassy Charge de Affaire & Peace Corps Director

When the Chargé d’Affaires for the US Embassy in Samoa, Antone Greubel introduced Gini Wilderson the Country Director of Peace Corps in Samoa, during a meeting with SVSG in April, it was an opportunity to improve on the teaching staff for the School of Hope.

Through a partnership with the US Peace Corps in Samoa, the children survivors of gender based violence attending the School of Hope will be adequately supported with their continuing education while on Campus.

Thank you Tony and Gini for opening up avenues for volunteer teaching support at the School of Hope in the new year.

**Moamoa Missionary Infant Pre-School**

Early April saw students from the Moamoa Missionary Infant Pre-School visiting the School of Hope as part of an interschool partnership that started in 2018.

The school trips and educational visits are powerful, positive teaching tools that help enhance the social, personal and emotional development of all students.

Thank you so much Sister Palepa, the sisters, teachers and the parents who helped in coordinating the interschool get together and the donation of food supplies presented during the visit.

**St. Anne’s Catholic School of Whanganui New Zealand**

A group of three women (Susan, Kerry and Joanne) from the St. Anne’s Catholic School have been setting aside money weekly to donate to a good cause.

Together with money raised from a coin trail by the students of St. Anne’s, a total of NZD1,740.00 was presented for the House and School of Hope when the three women and their families visited.
A former resident of the Campus / student of the School of Hope who currently attends the St. Anne’s Catholic School is the connection between the two schools.

Thank you so much Susan Andrews, the Administration Manager for the School as well as Kerry and Joanne for the heart to support the students of the School of Hope.

Sacred Heart College of Auckland New Zealand

A group of students, parents and teachers from the Sacred Heart College, a Catholic Marist College from Auckland New Zealand, visited the children at the Campus of Hope in April.

The visit is in accordance with the school’s vision ‘to prepare each student to leave the College well-grounded in his faith, and ready and able to participate in a complex and changing world.’

And the students at the School of Hope were appreciative of the Sacred Heart students putting up a cultural performance to pay tribute to their Samoan heritage as well as the famous Haka.

For a first time visit, there was an immediate connection between the students as the fellowship offered different cultural experiences and created a social bond between students.

Thank you so much to the students, teachers and the parents for coordinating such a beautiful fellowship.

Thank you also for the donation of ST2,000 plus an assortment of in kind donation for the children.

We look forward to seeing you again during your next visit to Samoa.

Pacific Women Regional Learning Forum on Women’s Economic Empowerment, 27-30 May 2019, Suva, Fiji

April saw an application by an SVSG staff to attend the Pacific Women’s Economic Empowerment Forum in Fiji being successful.

This is part and partial of SVSG’s capacity building for staff development, necessary to improve on SVSG’s work for our community in need. SVSG’s participation to the WEE Regional Learning Forum is fitting given the work in progress SVSG has made for the empowered nofotane women under its program.

Thank you so much Kymberley Kepore, Team Leader, Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development Support Unit for accepting SVSG’s expression of interest for the WEE program.

Ina Swim of Australia

An inquiry from a children’s wear label in Australia, Ina Swim, for an order of 200 very specific hats, saw the nofotane weaver artisans discussing diameters and circumference, fumigation and shipping costs, in preparation for this opening in the Australian market.

Close to 10 star weavers are now tasked with weaving samples of the product to ensure that it meet the market requirements.

Through the MECHTA VAN BOOGERT AWARD, Ms. Nicole Penman, currently undertaking a PhD study at the University of Queensland Australian, on Women’s Entrepreneurship in the Pacific, has been working with star nofotane earners since February. The whole idea of this project is to begin an ethical online marketplace, sourcing artisan goods from the Pacific and selling them as on-trend accessories to women primarily in Australia.
Through our network of community volunteers, we are able to look after vulnerable populations such as children, underprivileged families, elderly and disabled people throughout Samoa.

Faafetai! Faafetai! Faafetai lava mo la outou galuega fitā.

5. THE NOFOTANE WOMEN

April saw the official existence of the empowered nofotane women on their own without the support of any projects.

It was a perfect time for SVSG to assess the sustainability of the empowered nofotane women in light of Samoa’s economy and its enabling business environment.

And we are happy to report on some steady progress we have made for the empowered nofotane women in April:

Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth Representatives

The empowered nofotane women were invited to showcase their work of art during a Commonwealth delegation visit at the Samoa Culture Centre at Tafaigata in April.

Our nofotane women were on a league of their own, as they worked through making the siapo, weaving, and creating handbags from trash, at the amazement of the Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth Representatives

The visitors were in Samoa as regional and international development partners, for the 5th Global Biennial Conference on Small States (GBCSS) under the theme ‘Building Resilience through Disaster Risk Reduction.’ Thank you so much Maulolo Tavita Amosa, the Director of the Samoa Culture Centre for inviting the nofotane women to participate in this event.

Jason Swann: Faafetai tele lava for hosting Fatu Paia Sacred Heart College and sharing your story and beautiful hospitality, songs and dances. A truly humbling and wonderful experience. As a group we were all very much blessed to have shared the time we had together. May God continue to walk alongside you in the important work you all do. Manuia le vaiaso. God bless.

Ana Leilua: What a humbling and blessed experience not only for our boys but for us as parents to see the wonderful work you do for our children. God Bless you all for your ministry and may He bless our children and keep them safe.

2.3 Child Vendors – The Hot Soup Skill Building Training

The young boys attending the Hot Soup Skill Building Training were seen hard at work putting the finishing touches to coffee tables and chairs they have produced in April.

Once referred to as child vendors, illiterate and uneducated, the young boys are now learning to read and write, and in the afternoons, learnt a few livelihood skills to support themselves and their families.

The 12 months project funded by the US Embassy Apia has proven beneficial for the children; putting close to 20 child vendors back to the classroom in the mainstream education, while continuing to clear up the streets of the Vaitele Industrial area from child vendors.

There is a lot more work to be done in order to address the growing child labour problem in Samoa, and while the current program takes the children out of the streets, SVSG is looking at holding the parents accountable for the well-being of their families, while the children attend school as they rightly deserve.

“I will bless you with a future filled with hope.”
- Jeremiah 29:11 -
2.4 ECPAT International
As a facilitator of data collection in Samoa for the ECPAT International survey on the sexual exploitation of children in the Pacific region, there were lessons learnt from the survey process.

In Samoa alone, SVSG noted more than 12 frontline workers representing different government ministries and civil society, whose work directly involved children. What was unclear was the level of understanding and how the frontline workers differentiate between cases involving children and cases directly involving the sexual exploitation of children (SEC).

SVSG is looking forward at the results from the survey to assist the network in formulating an advocacy plan for awareness-raising on SEC and further research in this domain.

3. ADVOCACY PROGRAMS FOR OFFENDERS OF VIOLENCE

SVSG’s Advocacy Program for April started off with a total of 30 participants: 6 youth, 7 women and 17 men.

There were 18 new referrals to the relevant advocacy programs in Upolu; 10 to the Men’s Advocacy, 7 to the Tina Faufautua program and 1 young offender to the Youth Empowerment Program.

There were 29 new referrals to the relevant advocacy programs in Savaii; 19 to the Men’s Advocacy and 10 to the Tina Faufautua program.

For the first time since SVGS’s Advocacy Programs for court referred offenders of violence started in 2014, close to 100 men, women and young offenders have attended the relevant programs; 45 in Upolu and 32 in Savaii.

It was therefore interesting to see the reaction from the men when the facilitators introduced the masculinity views which somehow influences their behaviour towards their wives and children.

This is part of SVSG’s involvement with the Breaking the Cycle of Violence: Men and Boys Engage to End Violence Against Women and to Promote Gender Equality Project where men are encouraged to change mindsets about masculinity while getting them to become part of the solution.

This is challenging given the social norms of men living up to the expectations of masculinity where characteristics such as being tough, aggressive, dominant and strong, are accepted and promoted.

However, for the men, women and young offenders of violence who have been given a second chance through rehabilitation under the SVSG Advocacy Programs, changing mindsets, attitudes and behaviour towards domestic violence are necessary step towards violence free families and communities.

4. SVSG VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVES

At Samoa Victims Support Group (SVSG), we help the whole family and work to prevent violence through comprehensive community engagement.

Since the recruitment of village and church leaders as SVSG village representatives in 2010, SVSG was able to organize a well-trained network of close to 800 volunteer village representatives who facilitate social welfare services for families in need and provide training and support to end family violence. These village reps give us access and credibility in every corner of Samoa.

They provide mediation for families as well as anger management courses for the Court referred offenders of violence under SVSG’s Advocacy Program. They connect us with schools, churches, and community groups to provide trainings and resources to identify and prevent domestic violence. In April, these community connections include the Positive Movement Campaign, the SVSG Juniors community library and clean water projects, not forgetting the daily referral of cases to SVSG and facilitating support through the Help Line.