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
Ola Fou Clinic
Saleufi Medical Clinic
Pacific Heart

TO ENGAGE IS TO INSPIRE
TO ENGAGE IS TO COMMIT
TO ENGAGE IS TO VOICE WHAT NEEDS TO BE VOICED
TO ENGAGE IS TO CREATE A COMMUNITY THAT SUPPORTS EACH OTHER

Sponsored by:
SVSG has engaged the support of the Little Angels Foundation of New Zealand to provide welfare assistance to our vulnerable children.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF BEING ENGAGED:

Dear Siliniu Lina and SVSG family,

Many thanks for the latest SVSG newsletter and all the wonderful information about the Nofotane Project. It has been wonderful to visit villages where the project has held workshops and to see how excited and productive the participants have been in response!

Warm regards and congratulations,

Papalii Mele Maualivaoo
UN Women Country Program Coordinator

Greetings Lina!!

Malo faafetai for your continuous great work for the less fortunate in our country. Appreciate all your time and generosity. You have a great heart, Lina.

The Lord sees your hard work and shall reward you abundantly. Not to worry about the negative people in this world. We do what is right and necessary for those in need.

Faafetai le agalelei.

God Bless
Peta, Ross and girls.

Thank you for sharing this, I look forward to reading it

Sheldon Yett
UNICEF Representative, Pacific Island Countries:

Thank you for a wonderful report

May God continue to bless your work and the people you serve.

Ia manuia

Pesio Ah Honi
National Director Pacific Services
Mapu Maia
FINANCIAL & IN KIND DONATION
The extent of SVSG’s support services for the people of Samoa 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 sincere appreciation the following donors:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Donors</th>
<th>Donation for:</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Peace Chapel Christian Fellowship</td>
<td>Court Office Support</td>
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<td>Tatupu Saena</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
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<td>Alex &amp; Jill Stanley</td>
<td>Office</td>
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In Kind:
- Alatina Filipo of Vailima – 1 box of chicken, 1 bag rice
- Joanne Groves & Jan Blerkin of Queenstown NZ – 4 bags bra
- Anonymous donor – 1 bag of clothes
- Carol Vanderman of Petra’s Closet – 6 large bags of clothes
- Sarai Stowers of Lotopa – 1 box of chicken, 1 box of noodles
- Michelle Copstake of Whangaparaoa NZ – 1 bag of shoes, 1 bag of clothes
- Sinaupualofa Trust – 24 Samoan Bibles, 20 bags rice, 20 cartons of fish
- Tauiliili Joe Fruean – 100 popo for the Campus
- Rev. Siaosi & Pele Leleimailefaga, CCCS Vailoa Palauxi – 15 sleeping mats
- Rev. Faamanuia Faaliga, CCCS Papa Puleia – 1 ctn. corned beef
- Rev. Elder Faaluuga & Maima Matautia, CCCS Talimaunu - large pork

A special thank you to SVSG’s ongoing partners assisting with their daily 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 Tuato & Anna Ryan for the children’s Sunday toanai & bread supplies
- To Lote Lam Yuen of Siusega donating bread for the children;
- 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.

Talofa Lava
It is always a pleasure to present SVSG’s support services to the people of Samoa through our Newsletter Editions. 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.

For April, the most notable achievement for SVSG’s work was Feagaiga Stowers, one of Samoa’s Gold Medallist at the Commonwealth Games at the Gold Coast in Australia.

It was an achievement that speaks of endurance and perseverance as a child survivor. It appeals to the heart of the donors and supporters of SVSG’s work, while it boosted the morale of the SVSG leaders, the workers and its volunteers.

It was also an achievement for all the children survivors of life’s unfortunate circumstances out there in the community, as much as it was for the children cared for at the Campus of Hope, because it highlighted the hope for a better tomorrow.

As the Chair of the SVSG Board, I join the SVSG family of supporters in congratulating Feagaiga Stowers for her achievement, and for being a grounded young lady, who remained humbled through it all.

Thank you to each and every one of our supporters here and afar, for supporting SVSG’s work in April.

Blessings

Georgina Lui
Chair, SVSG Board
1. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
As one of the main actors in the current system and services addressing domestic violence in Samoa, SVSG has been providing critical support to family violence survivors, seeking to meet their immediate needs while addressing the causes of family violence to prevent future harm and suffering.

The challenge however is indeed a monumental one, having to deal with a huge demand for support that the prevalence of family violence dictates.

And from experience, SVSG has seen the worst that family violence can bring, specifically intimate partner violence which is not only becoming more prevalent, but the nature of it is becoming more abhorrent. The SVSG President expressed this concern during the National Public Inquiry into Family Violence conducted by the National Human Rights Institute of Samoa – the Ombudsman’s Office. During the National Inquiry, the SVSG President noted that:

“Today, the nature of violence is more serious and perpetrators are becoming more innovative in the way they carry out violent acts. In the old days it was just a case of scaring their wife but now it is about killing them.

We have come across really horrific cases of violence, especially on women and children. Injuries you would never even imagine when you think about our cultural and religious values. This includes burning children with irons and cigarettes, knife injuries and more.”

Siliniu Lina Chang, President of SVSG

SVSG assisted a total of 60 new cases in April inclusive of cases lodged with the SVSG office at Tuasivi. From these 60 cases, 10 children were directly affected by violence, while 90 children were indirectly affected. Majority of the cases at 70% were domestic violence.

Four of the cases requested assistance via SVSG’s email and we were able to assist them accordingly.

7. SVSG JUNIOR
The SVSG (Junior), the youth sub-group of Samoa Victim Support Group continues to lead by example, as it rolls out its community program, based on the identified need for support from youth in village communities.

With the assistance of the SVSG (Junior) partners such as the Rotary Club of Apia, Transam Samoa Limited and fundraising activities, the Faleasiu library project was officially handed over to Pastor Alofa Fauimuina & faletua of the Assembly of God Faleasiu.

8. GLOBAL UPDATES
SVSG (Auckland)
The first international sub-group for SVSG to be established was in Auckland in 2009. The idea came about at the time when the sons and daughters of Samoa residing in Auckland New Zealand wanted to give back to the community through the work of SVSG in Samoa, but didn’t know how to.

As the years go by, the initial supporters of the SVSG (Auckland) migrated while new ones came along. Included in this new generation of supporters was Levā Aati-Schuster who became the Director of the SVSG (Auckland) and took up her leadership role with dignity.

Levā and her team of volunteers continued to support the work of SVSG through fundraising activities and community support, the latest being The Alofa Charitable Trust (TACT), providing financial support to cover school fees and other educational needs for children from underprivileged families.

Thank you so much Levā and the team of volunteers for staying committed to the cause for all this time. As you look at how you can all better serve our Samoan community in Auckland as a Social Service organisation in New Zealand, you have our full support. Fa’afetai le loto nuu. Fa’amalo le tautua fa’atamali.
3. **Pearl MedSpa Fundraising**

April saw the second time in a row that Carol Robbins and Leuso McKenzie of the Pearl MedSpa in Portland Oregon and Scottsdale Arizona have successfully hosted a fundraising event for the Campus of Hope. According to the woman behind the success of Pearl MedSpa, Ms Carol Robbins “All of us grown-ups are just fine, the children are why we put the effort in these fundraising events. Sending prayers and love to the children at the Campus.”

In addition, the Child Protection Team of the New Zealand Police requested SVSG’s assistance in following up with a child victim who they assisted while in New Zealand, and is now residing in Samoa. SVSG was able to follow through with this request from the New Zealand Police and reported back to them accordingly.

Highlighted below are some of the cases SVSG supported during April:

19/04/18

A 49-year-old mother of eight (8) children sought SVSG’s help regarding her abusive and jealous husband of 22 years. She requested if her husband could attend the SVSG Men Advocacy program as she has heard how the program is now assisting abusive men. She has had enough of her husband’s abuse especially when he does it around their children and exposing them to danger. The mother was counselled, before SVSG accompanied her to the Police Domestic Violence Unit to file a complaint against her husband. SVSG applied to the Courts for an Interim Protection Order for the mother and accompanied her to the Courts to be sworn in.

27/04/18

A 28-year-old mother of three (3) children came into SVSG seeking assistance in regards to her late husband and his family who accused of her husband’s death. She is 9 months pregnant with her fourth child and she has been very depressed.

The husband was residing and working in Australia whereas the 28 year old mother lives with her children with the husband’s family where she was mentally abused. When the husband returned home, he was aggressive and abusive towards the wife. It was during one of his abusive acts that he broke the windows of their home and sustained serious injuries. Upon arrival at the hospital, he has died and the wife was blame. While dealing with her husband’s death, the wife and the children were not allowed to attend his funeral, but were instead accused of his death. The mother was counselled accordingly.

“Be strong, courageous and firm, fear not nor be in terror before them, for it is the Lord your god who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you”

**Deuteronomy 31:6**

4. **Counselling Skills Training for Social Services**

SVSG Staff and volunteer facilitator for the Advocacy program attended the week-long training coordinated by SUNGO on counselling skills for social services. The training was part of the training needs identified by SVSG during its Training Needs Analysis in 2017. The aim is to improve staff and volunteer capacity in counselling so that it will better support the community deal with issues relating to married, family issues, domestic violence, suicide and mental illness.

5. **Lupe Faalele – Soaring Doves Premieres**

A film by Daniel Pouesi, one of SVSG’s supporters was premiered at the Harkins Theatre in California in April. Lupe Faalele” translated as “Soaring Doves” boldly brings light to real stories of real Christians who have suffered sexual, monetary and psychological abuse at the hands of their pastors, the people they trust the most. Pouesi’s documentary about the abuse perpetrated by Samoan clergy of Samoan Christians is enlightening. A portion of the proceeds from the film premiere will benefit SVSG.

6. **SUNGO Annual General Meeting**

As a registered member of the Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organisations (SUNGO), SVSG was represented at the SUNGO AGM held in April. Tafatoa Samuel Fruean, SVSG’s Financial Controller is now one of SUNGO’s Executive Committee members.
30/04/18
A worried aunt brought a young mother of 21 years old with her 1-month-old baby into SVSG’s for their safety. The 21 was brutally beaten by her husband where she sustained severe injuries on her chest and arms. SVSG’s staff immediately accompanied the mother and child to the Police to file a complaint against her husband before SVSG filed for an application for an Interim Protection Order. They were also taken to the hospital before admission into the Campus of Hope until the matter related to her circumstances was settled.

For immediate support, please call the 800-7874 Help Line.
It is FREE and it is a 24-hour service.
OR
If you witness domestic violence and wants to do something about it, call the Help Line

Information Source for Research on Domestic Violence
One of the most notable trends on domestic violence in April was the magnitude and the extent of the interest both locally and internationally on SVSG’s work, data and information.

- We had a student enrolled as an International Relations in Parahyangan Catholic University in Indonesia, requesting information from SVSG on its work with the UN Women Pacific Fund in 2015 on the 24 hour Help-line that helps promote non-violence against women in Samoa;
- Then we had a student from the Linnaeus university in Sweden who came to Samoa to interview the SVSG President as part of his research in Samoa regarding the increasing amount of reports on violence against women;
- Local students from the USP Campus at Alafua, National University of Samoa or the colleges, requesting SVSG statistics on child abuse;
- Then we had students from local Theological College requesting data on incest cases to assist with their presentations as part of their studies.

And in its advocacy role, SVSG is glad to assist the students and the academics in their quest to find solutions to the ever increasing problem of domestic violence that is now prevalent in our community.

6. EVENTS

1. Wyong Christian Community School Visited
It has been 6 years now since 2012 when Wyong Christian Community School from New South Wales Australia has entered into a partnership with the Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG), to best love and support the children.

It has been a partnership based on mutual understanding, as both the Wyong and the SVSG share a strong foundation based on Christian values and beliefs, ingrained in the respective work of the two organisations. In April, Mr. Liney has brought a different group of students to fellowship with the children at the Campus of Hope.

Culminating the visit at the Campus of Hope was a tour at the Skill Building Centre for child vendors located on campus and built with funding from the Wyong Christian Community School. It has been a Centre borne of the gifts from the students of Wyong, which will now see uneducated, underprivileged children being empowered with a skill for their livelihood.

2. The Kindest Cut
Ms. Coralie Allen, owner of The Kindest Cut salon in Sydney Australia for over 14 years, was at the Campus of Hope in April for the second time this year. Together with her brother Robbie and a good fried Uso, the trio treated the children to free haircuts.

And that was not all. Coralie also got the support of her church in Sydney, the Faith City Canterbury, friends and supporters, to fundraise and to donate towards food and other supplies to assist with the children’s daily needs. Changing Lives One Haircut, One Conversation, One Prayer at a time is Coralie Allen’s mission. Thank you so much Coralie for the fellowship with the children, the free haircuts, the donation of $600 and lastly, the trip to the community as part of SVSG’s welfare assistance. We look forward to seeing you at the Campus again, hopefully soon.
4. **Alfred Fong of the United States of America**
He volunteers at the Campus to assist with the children’s rehabilitation through the spiritual counselling and bible studies. In addition, Alfred cooks for the children and in April, we acknowledge the yummy chop suey and the curry lunches for the children. Thank you Alfred for being a father figure to the children, and for always making them smile with your spiritual programs.

5. **Moamoa Theological College**
As SVSG entered into a partnership with the Moamoa Theological College, upcoming deacons and their wives continued to visit the Campus as part of their practical learning program. SVSG President acknowledges the beautiful sharing on the importance of Easter, from Deacon Mikaele & Lotte Fonoti of Vaimoso.

6. **Dr. Jason Lo Tam of Queensland Australia**
For the second time in a row, Dr. Jason has included a visit at the Campus as part of his family’s trip to Samoa. In April, Dr. Jason provided the basic medical supplies for the children’s injuries as well as a check-up for all the children. His wife Jane played her role in the partnership by distributing hand-made Rosaries for the children. Thank you Dr. Jason and Jane for visiting the children while you were in the country.

**Paula Snowden of the Problem Gambling Foundation NZ Revisited**
Through a newly established partnership in March an order of 550 lopa lanyards for the Cutting Edge Conference in New Zealand has been placed with the producers of lopa accessories. While visiting Samoa in April, Paula Snowden, CEO of the Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand took some of the samples of the lopa lanyards already made by the Nofotane women of Manono-tai. Thank you Paula for donating $400 for the Campus which we spent on topping up the Campus cashpower.

**LDS Upolu West Stake**
In keeping up with its partnership commitment to support the daily needs of the children at the Campus of Hope, the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints continued with its welfare support. In April, the Upolu West Stake, led by its President Sam had their turn to clean up the grounds and provided food supplies for the children. It was humbling to see President Sam, joined by Bishop Vaatuitui, Bishop Satele, Bishop Vaimalu, Bishop Leasi, Bishop Filifili and Bishop Auapa’au, at the clean-up. This simply shows how much these church leaders love the children and we appreciate the support.

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2. **CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES**

Violence against children, of widely varying degrees, is commonplace across the South Pacific region. Recent Pacific research undertaken by UNICEF and UNFPA, found there is a strong correlation between violence perpetrated against children and violence perpetrated against adult women, particularly in the home.

SVSG is one of the strong advocates for the protection of children and their rights amongst long time child rights advocate in Samoa, and current sitting member on the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva, Justice Vui Clarence Nelson.

With funding support from UNICEF, SVSG now has a full-time Child Protection Team made up of 3 staff. UNICEF also provides technical support around child protection training and procedures. To date, the extension of SVSG’s child protection services to the vulnerable children outside the Campus of Hope (such as the Hot Soup training initiative), and the magnitude of the success of the rehabilitation programs we provided the children, speak volume about SVSG’s commitment to being a child protection service provider.

2.1 **Campus of Hope**

The highlight for the Campus in April was the success story of Feagaiga Stowers in the international arena of weightlifting, the Commonwealth Golden girl in the Gold Coast. Feagaiga’s success highlighted a victory for all the children survivors of violence, and a confirmation that the pathway to a successful reintegration lies on effective rehabilitation program.

Through Feagaiga’s rise to stardom, we pay tribute to the young survivors of violence and sexual abuse that continued to enter the Campus of Hope, lost, broken and suicidal, just like our Golden Girl Feagaiga. Because it is through their stories of hardships that we realise the trauma, the emotion and the pain that we deal with on a daily basis, that even all the money in the world cannot buy.
Fishermen’s talks save one father’s prey – Losa’s story

Mom left while I was very young then my father looked after me. I don’t remember much of my younger age but I have a brother, who’s older than me, we have the same father. Mom had left us for another man from a village to the eastern side of Upolu, and she had more children from that man.

Living with my father was part of my life’s ugly memories, one that I would rather not remember. Because it was a very fearful situation, especially when my father started to sexually abuse me. I was 16 years old.

I went to one of the Colleges in Upolu, and watching other girls being happy, and live normal lives, makes me longed for my mother’s love.

I was not allowed to socialize with other people. I was only to go to school then back at home. It was his way of isolating me from the world until he robbed me of my virginity and sexually abused me until I got pregnant. He dictated me to do exactly what he wanted me to do or say. My brother was aware of what was happening. I had a feeling then that the village people were also aware of our situation.

He accused his nephew of my pregnancy. However, he had forbidden me the whole time he abused me sexually inside our own home, never to mention our relationship to anyone, or speak to anybody. My father always insisted, “If you love me, then told tell anyone.” And I kept it that way, out of fear, of confusion.

Until some strangers rescued me while my father wasn’t home. How these people found out about my situation, that’s through the works of the Holy Spirit on the fishermen, who felt my desperation, and started talking about my weird relationship with my father. They must have been the ones that sounded the alarm on a father preying on his only daughter. I don’t ever want to see him. If he is in jail, serves him right. Right now I am at peace with my new family, new mother and lots of sisters and brothers. God is my father. Living inside the Campus for the last three years, I feel loved. I go to school, learn to cook, learn to love and help others, and now learning how to survive on my own, by experimenting with plastic rubbish to make beautiful bags. I am learning how to make money and become someone I want. I would love to become a rugby player for the Manu Sina.

Continuation of Partnerships:

1. Malua Theological College (MTC)

The third year students of the MTC continued with its Faamasani Program or Practical Pastoral Care at the Campus of Hope since 2011. The arrangement not only benefited the future pastors and their wives, but also the children at the Campus, as it gave them the opportunity to open up and improve on their confidence in dealing with people. Food donations were also presented by the third year students during their programs in April.

2. APTC

During April the APTC Hospitality students visited the children, bringing with them 8 cakes that they baked at the school, a gift from the heart. Thank you so much for always looking out for the children at the Campus. Thank you also to the following students for your promise to always remember the children of hope in your prayers: Belinda Karae, Karen Yanhambath, Allen Jill Mala and Marylianna of Vanuatu; Mary Tarawa, Seno Malagela and Knowles of the Solomons.

3. Mark Tofilau of Impressive Security Australia

The partnership with the big-hearted Mark Tofilau, the General Manager of the Impressive Security Australia Pty Limited in Parramatta NSW, did not happen like all normal partnerships do. It started by a mere conversation between the SVSG President and Mark at the airport 2 years ago and to date, Mark kept to his promise to help out with the food supplies for the children at the shelter. In addition, last year saw the extension of Mark’s contribution by financing the salaries of the security guard at the Campus.

In April, Mark visited the children at the Campus with gifts and much needed supplies. Accompanying Mark was his mother, who got to see for the first time, the extent of his son’s love for the people of Samoa, through the children of Hope. Donation of $500 received from Mark in April helped us finance food supplies for the children as well as salaries for the Security Guard at the Campus.
5. APRIL PARTNERSHIPS
As April brought additional organizations to work in partnership with SVSG, the established partners continued with their commitment and we acknowledged with appreciation our achievement in April:

New Partnerships Formed:
1. South Pacific Development Corporation
SVSG signed a Memorandum of Understanding in April with the SPDC, a registered NGO in Portland United States, to facilitate the receipt of a grant totaling USD8,725 from One Sky Giving in the USA, to SVSG. The South Pacific Development Corporation President Mr. Makerusa Porotesano was in Samoa in April, and managed to signed the MoU during his visit.

2. Salvation Army
SVSG President met with Rod Carey and the team from the Salvation Army in April, discussing the opportunity to share together on how SVSG and the Salvation Army may be able to partner together going forward.

One of the areas proposed by The Salvation Army for this partnership with SVSG is with regards to its Alcohol and Drug Addictions Programme where SVSG can refer clients to The Salvation Army, and likewise, The Salvation Army can refer clients on its programmes who need support in dealing with violence against women and children issues. A draft MoU has been drawn up to officiate this new partnership.

3. Loma Linda University
April saw the beginning of talks between SVSG and the Loma Linda University in California, exploring the possibility of having behavioural health students from the university as interns at SVSG.

The Director of the Field of Education for the Social Work Department at Loma Linda University, Talolo Lepale, accompanied the 3-membered team from the University. One of SVSG’s founding members represented SVSG during the meeting, clarifying the specific areas in which SVSG will be supported through the internship.

Sione, the punching bag
When there was not enough money to look after our family, my father becomes frustrated and angry, resulting in my beatings on a daily basis. It started when I was 5 years old. I was the punching bag. The trunk of a banana tree was used to show my father’s anger as well as a Samoan broom. I felt frightened every time I heard my father’s voice outside our home. Other family members including my mother would not stop the beatings for fear of the repercussions. They would stand around while I danced to the brooms tune or carried on with whatever they were doing as if nothing was happening.

One time my sister was the cause of trouble at home but instead of disciplining my sister, again I copped the beatings because I was the punching bag. He was drunk a lot and this contributed to the scars shining like stars on my head, or the ugly bruises on my body. Each scars represented painful memories. One day, I was so scared that after being beaten up so badly, I took refuge at an aunt’s house. It was there that the Police were called and they took me to the SVSG shelter. I was 10 years old.

Since staying at the Campus, I no longer dance to the tune of a broom, my body is healing physically. I am clothed, fed, slept and educated well. I am loved by my family at the Campus, I confided to other children who became my brothers and sisters at the Campus, and who have also been the punching bags of their frustrated parents.

Sadly, my father’s beatings have left an ugly mark on my personality. There are times when I cannot control my anger which led to fighting with other children. I am a kid at 10 years old, and I am still trying to overcome this bad habit. In time, I hope I will be able to forgive my father, but for now, the memories are still painful. I pray every night for God’s protection and I know He will heal my inner wounds. One day I hope to become a fire knife dancer, and who know, it could be my future. But for now, my days as the punching bag for my father are over.

“David said, The Lord who delivered me out of the claw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hands of this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Go and the Lord be with you”
1 Samuel 17: 37
“Lifting such a heavy bar is my way of healing, of letting go. The heavier it gets the better.”

These were the words of a survivor of violence who went on to become one of Samoa’s youngest female gold medalists in weightlifting, in the Commonwealth Games. Her achievement speaks volume of her resilience, of the hopeful story any child that has gone through the Campus of Hope can relate to. She is none other than Feagaiga Stowers, and herewith is her story:

I am Feagaiga Stowers, going on to 18 years old this coming November. I am the living proof that with God, there is hope.

My story dates back in 2013, when I was first brought to SVSG. At the time, I did not think about anything else, but living day by day. I went through the routines at the shelter like all the other children: eat, school, bible studies, programs, play, sleep, and the routine continues. Nothing makes sense.

I kept to myself, and at times, I did not want to live anymore. I did not want to feel the pain, the anger, the confusion, the feeling of hopelessness which makes me sick to the point that I was often hospitalized.

It was in 2015 when a group of visitors came to the Campus. As usual, I just went with the flow, so to speak. It was not until afterwards, when Mama Lina talked to us about weightlifting that something within me snapped. For some reason, the mention of the words ‘sisiti mea mamafa’ translated into ‘weightlifting’ caught my attention. And I put my hand up for the training. The rest, like they said, is history.

But from 2015 to 2018, I put all my energy into weightlifting. I don’t like the sport but I just like the feeling that overcomes me every time I lifted the bar. It’s like I am lifting my whole world of sadness and confusion. It was my way of healing.

And the reality of the economic empowerment of the nofotane women reached by the project is apparent by the demand for their products by the visiting families and friends of SVSG during April:

Dr. Jason Lo Tam and his family from Queensland Australia did all their gifts shopping at the Nofotane stall inside SVSG’s office. Thank you Jason and Jane

More and more visitors were drawn to the Nofotane stall during the WIBDI’s Night Market at the STA Fale in April.

Thank you Judge Talasa for entrusting the printing and the sewing of the Pacific Judicial Conference 2018 bags to the nofotane women.

“Everybody can be great ... because anybody can serve. You don’t have to have a college degree to serve. You don’t have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love”

D Martin Luther King Jr
As the 2-years Nofotane Project winds down to its official closing on 20 July 2018, Samoa Victim Support Group, in partnership with UN Women Fund for Gender Equality, will share with you ‘The Voices of the Empowered Nofotane Women’

While each story tells of the different gender equality issues these women used to face, they however highlight strong women who have found their voices from being empowered.

**Inosia Taivao – Pata Falelatai - Ula lopa,  ula sisi, hand bags**

A mother of three (3) from Pata Falelatai, Inosia saw the struggles with not having enough money to help their family. Inosia was encouraged by her husband to join the Nofotane Project on 19th April 2018.

Inosia learnt to make red seed necklaces (lopa), shell necklaces (ula sisi) hand bags made out of recycled paper.

At 52 years of age, Inosia has seen great improvements in her family. She has since given up smoking to concentrate on her business that has helped to support her children and family.

**Faauutupu Patea- Tafitoala - Sandwich & Hot Dogs**

Faauutupu Patea has experienced the challenge of not having enough income to meet the growing needs of her family. When SVSG visited Faauutupu, she is a happy woman as she counted her blessings since she attended the Nofotane program. As a mother of 2, Faauutupu was curious when the livelihood training was announced to be held at Fusi Safata. But her curiosity has now empowered her with a positive mentality that if other women can do it, so can she.

During the Nofotane Project, Faauutupu was inspired to start a small business so that her family could earn a steady income. She started making sandwiches to sell at the school canteen, then she added hotdogs and other goodies for the children. According to Faauutupu, “Life is hard but things are starting to get better. We are trying to be a better family and all is well.”

As I stood there while they sang Samoa’s national anthem at the Commonwealth Games in April this year, it finally hit me that I did not have to go all the way to Australia or across the Pacific lifting such heavy weights, to let go of my feeling of hopelessness. As God is my hope, I alone had the key to let go.

Since my return from the Commonwealth Games, I have visited my brothers and sisters at the Campus. And their smiles reaffirmed my belief that we have been rescued. Despite our ugly pasts, God had saved us.

Mama Lina, as a naïve child, trying to find herself within the safety of the Campus, I took everything on face value, not realizing the meaning of it all. Oh how I now appreciated the motherly talks; the genuine concern for my future, the worried look when I am late back from trainings, or our small talks about God’s plan for my future, even in the cramped hotels that we stayed in when you attended the regional weightlifting tournaments with me. You are my vision of Hope, Mama Lina.

I am stronger now and I have returned, to hopefully become a blessing to my brothers and sisters at the Campus of Hope. If through my story I will be able to save a child’s life, then glory be to God for His plans on my life.

“I will never Quit
I will never Give up
I will never say, No Way”

CONGRATULATIONS FEAGAIGA
Levaatuamaaana Aati-Schuster Levatoatuamaaana.Aati-
Schuster@ot.govt.nz

Malo le ta‘i Siliniu, faapea le aiga SVSG
E LELEI LE ATUA!!!
Please forward our FAAMALO to Feagaiga and her achieving success at the Commonwealth Games – GOLD MEDAL!!

Malo le galue, loto alofa ma le lagolagosua I le fanau.
Alofa atu.
Leva Aati-Schuster

Global Award globalaward@starsfoundation.org.uk

Hi Lina,

Once again, we are inspired by the stories of resilience, change and empowerment you share with us. Congratulations to Feagaiga!

And congratulations to you and your team too for the outstanding work you continue doing and we are fortunate to support.

Best,
Stefano

4. THE NOFOTANE PROJECT

The livelihood training of the Nofotane project reached 565 unemployed nofotane women from the Gagaemauga No. 2, Gagaemauga No. 3, Gagaifomauga No. 1, Gagaifomauga No. 2, Palauli le Falefa, Palauli East, Falelatai & Samatau and Vaimauga West during April. It was a huge coverage which highlighted the increased interest from the community.

While handicraft was the most popular trade with the older nofotane women, the young ones were more innovative in their creations as they experienced with different colours for the elei printing and the weaving of plastic trash to make ladies hand bags.

One of the greatest challenges in advancing gender equality in Samoa is a deeply ingrained cultural perception that men are generally more important than women.

Men have complete access to leadership in the village, education, and are valued for their contribution to the community.

SVSG believes that success does not lie in extinguishing our cultural values, but rather, it is to balance them through education and advocacy, that our culture may be enhanced. The presence of the nofotane women’s husbands during the Safotu session, supporting and cheering their wives on, therefore highlighted a progress in the right direction for the project.
Family Violence Court Judge visit

During April, the FVC Judge Talasa Atoa – Saaga and the FVC Register paid a visit to the Men’s Advocacy Program to observe the program while in session. The Judge sat with the group of 11 men who were perpetrators of domestic violence case.

During the end of the session, Judge Talasa expressed her gratitude to the facilitators and to the SVSG team, highlighting the importance of SVSG’s role in changing behaviours of the offenders of violence. The Judge further noted SVSG’s assistance not only to the FVC but also to the Supreme Court.

Thank you so much Judge for the donation of $200 which helped us buy cash power for the House of Hope in April.

Advocacy Alumni

The Alumni continued to maintain momentum leading up to its official launch in May, by conducting regular meetings of its members. The Alumni office elected by the members included: Chairman – Ps Pepe Ofisa, Vice Chairman – Sefo Fiu, Secretary – Pamata Afoa, Vice Secretary – Leitulua Ropati.

SVSG Advocacy Program Alumni have over 700 members. They are ready to move out into the community to promote peace and harmony in families.

2.2 School of Hope

The School of Hope welcomed Mr. Alfred Fong in April as part of the volunteers helping out at the school. Alfred provided that father figure to the children during his bible study sessions. Sister Kinghorn continues with the English lessons for the older girls Tuesdays to Thursdays. Two other full time teachers are responsible for the pre-school level and the primary level students.

For extra-curriculum activities, April saw the continuation of the Peace Garden initiative for the new children admitted to the Campus who were interested in the healing process provided by the peace gardens.

If you would like to be a part of the difference we are making in the lives of these very special children, please give us a call on telephone 25392 or email svsginsamo@gmail.com for further information.

2.3 Child Vendors – The Hot Soup Skill Building Training

They rise up in the morning to a box of goodies to be delivered around town for a living. Others rise up to the stench from the Tafaigata Landfill as they look for food and for any useful items that can still be of any use to their families, even the expired goods dumped from wholesale companies are a luxury.

During April, the Hot Soup Skill Building Training continues to make progress as the child vendors from the Tafaigata Landfill and the Vaitele Industrial Area, learnt how to write their names and read the alphabet in the mornings, then started on their skill building training in the afternoon.

They have learnt how to earn a living from the work of their hands, such as handicraft, carving, carpentry, fabric printing, the opportunities are endless. Their enthusiastic in being educated, trained and fed saw them staying up late at the Campus to finish their work, having their soup, and enjoying each other’s company in a positive environment. It takes them away from being exposed in violent situations while being child vendors. SVSG’s support services to target the root causes of crimes and related social issues, through education, through teaching these children how to fish, rather than just giving them fish for the day.
2.4 With and For Girls Award

What started out as a personal form of rehabilitation by one of the sexually abused survivors had turned into a popular initiative amongst the young girls at the Campus of Hope.

The creator of the Peace Garden at the Campus came to SVSG as an angry child, sullen and bad tempered. She isolated herself due to her inability to trust anyone. Who could have blamed her when at 9 years old, she became another statistic as a victim of incest rape.

But through one child’s peaceful healing, others have found working the land and seeing how each plant grows, as a way of finding peace within themselves.

Thank you to the awards funding provided by the NoVo Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation which enabled SVSG to expand its rehabilitation programs for the older girls at the shelter. Thank you also to the Star Foundation for the vote of confidence as per the With and Girls Award for SVSG in 2016.

2.5 ECPAT International

When SVSG became an affiliated member of the End Child Pornography and Trafficking (ECPAT) in 2015, it knew exactly where it was heading.

This is an extension of SVSG’s Child Protection work for abused and commercial sexually exploited children (SEC). It further attests to SVSG’s commitment to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals towards ending SEC, including specific SDG targets applicable to Samoa such as:

- **SDG target 5.2:** Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation; and
- **SDG target 16.2:** End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children [by 2030].

In April, the SVSG President received an invitation to attend the 7th ECPAT International Assembly to be held at Bogota Colombia from 5 – 7 June 2018. Every 3 years they meet as the International Assembly which is the highest decision-making body of the organisation.

3. ADVOCACY PROGRAMS FOR OFFENDERS OF VIOLENCE

There were 10 men and 4 women in the Advocacy groups in the beginning of April 2018. There were 10 new referrals – 8 men and 2 women. There were couple of new referral cases involving in-laws, one of assault, causing injuries and armed with a dangerous weapon. The other matter was insulting words via phone texted messages.

Eight new referrals to the Men’s Advocacy Group were mostly cases involving family members such as cousins and aunts, one against the wife and 2 involving children. This one case involving an 8-year-old girl who is currently cared under SVSG’s shelter since her stepfather has continuously abuses her at home. The 8 year old ran away from home due to her abusive environment and her name was publicised on local radios and televisions searching for her whereabouts. The Police found her and immediately referred her to SVSG for her safety. The stepfather is attending the Men Advocacy Group for 6 weeks.

10 cases were sentenced in April – 5 men and 5 women. Two of these 10 cases involving 2 IPOs and were both set aside when respondents were successfully completed their programs and sentenced. There were also 2 cases involving 3 children age under 12 years old sheltered at campus of Hope until cases with their perpetrators completed their programs and sentenced. Children were released back to their family as per ordered by the FVC Judge and assessed by SVSG and Probation. Most Offenders referred to the Program mostly due to insulting words and physical assault. The victims of these offences are most likely the wives.

There were 4 couples undertook couple counselling in April which covered “Parenting skills and Strengthening Family Relationship”. These special fixture Programs were highly recommended by the Family Court for husbands and wives to be involved in Couple or Family Counselling. These counselling programs scheduled for every Tuesday and Thursday at 10am – 11am and in the afternoon at 2pm to 3pm.

The majority of the referrals from the Family Court were the cases that have reported into SVSG firstly in lodging their cases in regards to Domestic Violence. These cases usually referred to Police DVU to file criminal complaint and referred back into SVSG to file application for IPO. The respondents of these IPOs or the Offenders of these criminal cases often referred back to SVSG’s Advocacy Program.