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 as it continues being the voice of our people in need:

Mari’s Bakery
Ola Fou Clinic
Saleufi Medical Clinic

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.

A LOOK AT SVSG’S WORK DURING MAY AND JUNE 2017

The Nofotane Project: Multi-Media Campaign & Public Days
In Kind Donations:

In kind donations received during this period range from food supplies to clothing to reams of A4 papers. Some we have to request from our families and friends, others, were just dropped off at our Office to assist with our work. However big or small your donation may be we are grateful because that ream of paper enabled us to print our work for the day, or that donation of food, assisted with the daily caring of the sheltered children.

Thank you for sharing your blessings with us and may you be blessed in abundance.

Meals were dropped off at SVSG’s office from Inalani’s catering in June

Le Aute Gas sponsored gas refill for the House of Blessings every month while Felise Sam Chong and the Team at Origin Energy have been supplying gas for free for the House of Hope and the Ray of Hope.

Thank you also to Ken Newton and the family at the CCK Trading for the regular supplies of coffee and clothing for the children.

Thank you also to Greg & Maria Meredith for the long time commitment to supplying loaves of bread daily for the children’s breakfast.

Last but not the least, thank you to Elder Meliula Fata and Elder Danny Afualo of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints for coordinating the monthly donation of food and toiletry supplies for the shelter as well as the ongoing maintenance of the grounds by the different Stakes throughout Upolu and Savaii.

Talofa Lava

As we’ve come half way through our journey for 2017, let us pause and give thanks to our Heavenly Father for all that He has done for us.

It is always a pleasure for Samoa Victim Support Group to share with its family of supporters, donors and friends, the progress of its work. It is not a must, but it is inherent in the accountability and transparency principles that mandated the work of SVSG. So sit back, relax and enjoy this 3rd Engage Edition.

For this period, SVSG’s work has been marked by two important shifts:

♦ the degree by which the violent acts (both physically and sexually) have been committed against the children and women; and

♦ the approach SVSG is now taking to counter this shift, with the support of the rehabilitated children survivors cared for at the Campus of Hope, the reformed men offenders of violence who have completed counseling programs and the empowered nofotane women survivors of violence.

The whole idea is for our support services to be one step ahead through our prevention programs, to counter the innovative ways in which perpetrators are now committing violent acts. And we are mindful that such diligence and perseverance is costly in terms of time and resources. But that is a test of our faith, of our commitment to make a difference, of a family united in its stance to be the voice of the voiceless.

Engaging the community is now part of this new approach to SVSG’s support services. Thank you to each and every one of our supporting partners, both here and abroad, for commenting on the Engage Editions we have been distributing. Your comments have helped us strengthen our work as well as our reporting on the challenges and the achievements.

It has been an honour being a part of this Group and I hope you and your families have been blessed by your contribution, one way or another.

Until our next Engage Edition, be safe everyone.

God bless!

Georgina Lui
CHAIR - SVSG BOARD
I. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Six months now into 2017, an analysis of SVSG’s casework database highlighted an increase of 15%, in domestic violence cases lodged with SVSG from:

- 139 cases (January to June 2016); to
- 160 cases (January to June 2017)

Community awareness raising, advocacy counselling programs for offenders of violence, as well as the economic empowerment of women are some of the preventative programs that SVSG continues to implement to address family violence.

The most notable change and a cause for concern for SVSG with regards to violence cases lodged during May and June is that the degree of violent acts is getting worst and worst, as per some of the cases highlighted below. SVSG’s concern is the innovative ways the perpetrators are going about these violent behaviours, which only means, that the trauma in which the survivors go through is twice as hard.

The challenge for SVSG at this stage is therefore to be one step ahead of these innovative violent acts and this can only be achieved as a community, not as an organisation. Through the Engage Edition, SVSG hopes this will be a form of communication where various members of the community are engaged into discussions, gained better understanding of the social issues affecting our community, and become involved in the solutions.

Case Highlights – Family Violence & Child Abuse
A Pacific islander teaching at a school here in Samoa was referred from the school for assistance. Her husband has been abusing her physically and verbally, not only at home and witnessed by their children, but also at school while the students watched. SVSG applied for an Interim Protection Order for the teacher which is now final against her husband. The emotional harm to the children at home and the students at school is the short term effect of such violent acts; the continuous cycle impact where the children and the students grow and perpetuate what they believe is acceptable to society because they grew up in it, is the long term effect that we, as a society, must deal with.

FINANCIAL & IN KIND DONATIONS

SVSG has been blessed with financial and in kind donations during May and June from various donors both locally and internationally.

Thank you for your contribution to the sustainability of the support services we provide to the victims and our community in need.

Financial Donations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donors</th>
<th>Donation for:</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peace Chapel Christian Fellowship</td>
<td>Office</td>
<td>600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAC Supplies</td>
<td>Office</td>
<td>90.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex &amp; Jill Stanley</td>
<td>Office</td>
<td>1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations for Office</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,690.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge Talasa Saaga</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burwood Girls High School</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>909.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Tofilau</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>140.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations for Shelter</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,250.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the total donations of $2,940.41 received during May and June, $1,250.41 was specifically donated for the shelters; and $1,690.00 was donated to assist with running the SVSG office.

Despite the struggle to make ends meet with the limited funds we receive, we continued to be grateful for all the love and support we have been receiving from our supporters.

“You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.”

2 Corinthians 9:11
UPCOMING EVENTS

September: Classroom’ Extension for the School of Hope [18 – 28 Sept]
Funded by the Helensvale State High School, Queensland
Constructed by Rotary Club of Surfers Sunrise, Queensland
Coordinated by the SVSG (Queensland)

October: SVSG (Melbourne) Dinner of Hope [14 Oct]
Caregivers Graduation [19 Oct]
SVSG (Auckland) Dinner of Hope [21 Oct]
SVSG (Sydney) Dinner of Hope [28 Oct]

November: Men Advocacy Group Graduation [2 Nov]
UNICEF Sponsored Training: Child Protection Issues [3-5 Nov]

SVSG JUNIORS

Community Outreach Program

Being young advocates of violence free families, the SVSG Junior members knew exactly what shapes a child, having progressed from being children themselves.

They likened the children to ‘photographers’, capturing everything that goes around their environment, both the good and the bad. In June, the SVSG Juniors kick started their community outreach program on the theme ‘It takes a village to raise a child’.

The program started at the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints at Sataoa, appealing to all aspects of a child’s environment, from the village council, the churches, the women’s committee, the untitled men and ladies groups and the families, in a community effort to raise a child to become a strong and successful adult.

Some of the older girls from the Campus of Hope have joined the SVSG Juniors during their community outreach program. For these girls, sharing their story is a way of encouraging other young girls who continued to suffer the abuse in silence, to speak out and seek assistance.

A 10 year old boy has been suffering abuse in the hands of his step father for 5 years. A neighbour who had witnessed this violent behaviour on numerous occasions could no longer remain silent. He called up the Help Line and later dropped the child off in front of SVSG’s main office. The child is now safe as SVSG applied for a Protection Order against his step father; he is now cared for at the Campus of Hope. The informer remained unknown to us, and we respect his decision to remain anonymous. We are grateful because if the informer did not act on his conscious to seek help for the abused child, the child would still be suffering to date. The step father has been referred from the Family Court to SVSG’s anger management counselling program for 6 weeks, and through SVG’s holistic approach to addressing family violence, we are working to break the cycle of violence for this family.

Case Highlights – Sexual Abuse

Being raped by not just one but a couple of men at age 13 has just about taken its toll on this young girls life. The severity of the trauma is evidence by her silence as she came to us mute and continues to remain as such for weeks. She stares out of space, lost in thoughts that we can only image, involved the ugliness of the circumstances surrounding the sexual assault on her. The Police referred her to SVSG in June for shelter care while they are continuing with their investigation. To date, we are slowly seeing the progress in her recovery; she is slowly opening up to the other children at the Campus, she is not so lost in her own world like when she was first brought to us, however, there are times when we caught her just staring at nothing. As a family, we are counselling our young survivor with love that one day, will overcome the ugliness of her experience.

In the last Engage Edition, we highlighted a case involving sisters age 10 and 13, who were raped by relatives; the mother’s brother and the father’s cousin. The sisters have been cared for at the Campus of Hope since March. However, in June, the parents of the girls, together with four other siblings were banished from their village, for speaking out, for seeking justice for their daughters. The mother and the 4 children joined their 2 girls at the shelter while the father secured a temporary place to stay. They were released later in June while the 2 girls remained at the Campus awaiting the hearing of their cases scheduled for November.
In all the highlighted cases, the degree of violent acts is getting worst, and so too is the effect such violent acts have on the victims. And in the pursuit for justice, informers and concerned members of the community have been the voice of the voiceless.

**For immediate support, please call the 800-7874 Help Line.**

It is FREE and it is a 24-hour service.

In summary, people who have sought SVSG’s assistance total 105 during May and June 2017:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>May 2017</th>
<th>June 2017</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 Interim Protection Orders providing protection for 30 children and 1 father and 19 mothers;</td>
<td>5 Interim Protection Orders providing protection for 13 children and 5 mothers;</td>
<td>A total of 25 Interim Protection Orders were applied for during May &amp; June providing protection for 43 children, 1 father and 24 mothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 out of 20 were Protection Orders for cases referred from Police</td>
<td>All of the 5 IPOs were for cases referred from the Police</td>
<td>14 of these IPOs were for cases referred from the Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 cases were referred to Police: 9 to the Domestic Violence unit; 1 to the Criminal Investigation division and 3 to General Policing.</td>
<td>8 cases were referred to Police: 6 to the Domestic Violence unit; to General Policing and 1 to a Police Outpost</td>
<td>A total of 21 cases were referred to Police during May and June 2017.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 cases referred to the Ministry of Justice (2 custody &amp; 3 maintenance)</td>
<td>1 maintenance case was referred to the Ministry of Justice</td>
<td>A total of 6 cases were referred to the Ministry of Justice: (2 custody &amp; 4 maintenance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 children ages 5, 6, 13 and 17 were admitted to the shelter facilities in May: 2 sexually abused cases and 2 domestic violence cases</td>
<td>1 mother and her 4 children were sheltered in June, all victims of domestic violence; In addition, 2 sexually abused victims age13 and 14 were also admitted to the shelter facilities in June</td>
<td>A total of 10 children and 1 mother were admitted to the shelter facilities in May &amp; June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A total of 56 cases were assisted with in May</td>
<td>A total of 49 cases were assisted with in June</td>
<td>A total of 105 cases were assisted with in May &amp; June 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SVSG GLOBAL UPDATES

SVSG’s Global Aiga in Auckland, Christchurch, Sydney, Queensland and Melbourne have been busy not only in raising awareness in their respective communities on SVSG’s work here in Samoa, but also in fundraising to support our work.

In May, SVSG acquitted to SVSG (Christchurch) ST10,000 received in October 2016 to assist with funding the salaries and allowances of the matrons tasked with looking after the children at the Campus of Hope. Thank you to Pastor Jeremy and Shelley Faumuinā for your continuous support.

♦ In June, SVSG (Sydney) has been coordinating visits to the shelter for the families of some of its volunteers.
♦ SVSG (Melbourne) held the ‘Voice for the Voiceless 2017 Concert’ to raise funds for the House of Strength project.
♦ SVSG (Queensland) hosted a movie night to raise funds to send donations to Samoa.

Thank you to the Directors of our sub-groups for your commitment to support our children at the shelter as well as SVSG’s support services to our people in need.

“Blessed is the man who is patient under trial and stands up under temptation, for when he has stood the test and been approved, he will receive the victor’s crown of life which God has promised to those who love Him.”

James 1:12

2. COURT SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ABUSE

2.1 Supreme Court

♦ Father jailed for rape of 12-year-old
♦ Uncle jailed for raping niece
♦ Father slammed for sex, betrayal

Some of the ugly headlines note above are frequenting the local newspapers today. Behind these headlines are the stories of the many children survivors of sexual abuse cared for at the Campus of Hope or those living in fear in their own homes. SVSG support services extend beyond the daily caring, the medical check-ups and the counselling. It involves walking with these children to court.

During May & June, 3 of our sheltered girls battled it out in court with their biological mothers, fathers, step fathers and uncles in the ugly battle for rape and indecency committed against them. One case was victorious landing 3 people in jail; a mother for 2 years imprison as party to rape; the step father and the perpetrator to 6 years imprison for rape and indecency. Two other cases have been adjourned to later this year.

The success and effectiveness of the rehabilitation programs the girls went through at the Campus of Hope is measured by their resilience and the strong individuals they have become. As ambassadors for victims of sexual abuse, our survivors are making the following headlines in the local newspapers, turning the ugliness of their experiences to success stories:

♦ Young people promote the message of peace
♦ Victim breaks her silence, offers hope

SVSG has not only become an advocate of safer families and stronger communities, but it has also rehabilitated the children who were once victims to become survivors and advocates themselves, for those being sexually violated within their homes. The young survivors are therefore engaged in the fight to end violence in the homes. This is a challenge for all of us to see how we can be engaged in the discussions or in the services to advocate for violence free communities.
2.2 Family Court
During the period of May and June 2017, SVSG lodged with the Family Court 25 applications for family protection orders, for 43 children, 1 father and 24 mothers. A total of 68 abused mothers, a father and vulnerable children were advocated for by SVSG with the Courts during the period. 56% of the 25 applications for family protection orders lodged with the Court were for cases of violence referred from the Police Domestic Violence Unit for SVSG to apply for protection orders.

3. CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

3.1 Campus of Hope
The home for the abused, the abandoned and the vulnerable children of Samoa, the Campus of Hope, continue to operate with so much love and blessing. While 10 children and 1 mother were admitted into the shelter during May & June, the amount of partnerships, families and supporters we have established, necessary to keep the shelter operation going, have been doubled.

This is the merciful love of God, as we continue to walk in faith, knowing that He will always provide. The highlights on the partnerships established during May and June is evidence of God’s love, as we see the different denominations, the groups and the families come together as one to lend a helping hand.

We only have to look around the Campus to see for ourselves how things are just flourishing; the children run around free and happy inside the security of the compound, the volunteers are never ending, the crops just blossom and the required work to maintain the facilities have been adequately sponsored.

One such work included the installation of a new septic and a drainage system for the House of Dreams and removing the old septic system. Thanks to the generosity of SVSG’s good friend from the Gold Coast, we were able to get funding of more than ST60,000.00 to get this work done.

Volunteering as a Family
Staff have been volunteering to carry this work through after hours, during the weekends and on public holidays. We call it our family moments, as our children joined us in our work to help others.

Whether it is at the shelter or at the office, we kept the volunteer spirit alive as a family.

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”
Ephesians 2:10
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN OUR SERVICE

Mental Illness & Suicide Risk Awareness
Mr. David Sutton, a psychiatric nurse from New Zealand and volunteering for SVSG, conducted awareness training for staff and facilitators of SVSG’s advocacy program in June.

The training covered mental illness awareness and suicide risk, from the New Zealand perspective, and accepting that the experience of mental illness may be different in Samoa.

Mother’s Day Commemoration
A healthy working environment is a must for the workers at the Samoa Victim Support Group.

In May, the male staff treated the female staff to a lovely breakfast for Mother’s Day.

The gesture might be small, but it highlighted a family environment that celebrates its successes, remain united in time of challenges and a source of encouragement to one another.

3.2 Rehabilitation Story: A Pathway to Successful Reintegration
Our girls’ rehabilitation stories form part of the success of our support services. However, we sometimes spend so much time dealing with the challenges that we tend to forget our little successes that make this work worthwhile. Here is a look at one of our success stories:

Our Sporting Ambassador
Some of sheltered girls who have taken up weightlifting have represented Samoa in regional and international tournaments since the Commonwealth Youth Games in 2016. While some of them have returned home following their court cases, others continue to train with the Samoa Weightlifting Federation.

These girls have found peace in lifting weights, and have excelled in weightlifting as a sport. SVSG celebrate with them their achievements and will continue to support their future as sports ambassadors.

3.3 School of Hope
A total of 76 children ages 5 to 18 have enrolled at the School of Hope by the end of June. The criteria is simple, you have to be a survivor of violence or sexual abuse to attend this special school. It is an inclusive school for children with disabilities and the young pregnant survivors of rape.

In June, SVSG received an annual financial assistance of ST61,912.23 from the government under the School Fee Grant Scheme, to cover salaries of the teachers and the trainers of the children’s livelihood programs.

The success of the school is measured by the ease by which the children, upon their reintegration, will continue with their schooling in the mainstream education, or their ability to find employment following their time at the Campus. Four of the girls who have returned home during the period, have re-enrolled with their old schools based on reports from the School of Hope. One other older girl continued to pursue her talent in weightlifting with the support of her family. And this is the practicality of the School of Hope as an alternative form of education for the children while under SVSG’s care.
4. ADVOCACY PROGRAMS FOR OFFENDERS OF VIOLENCE
SVSG had received a total of 17 referrals from the Family Court for 7 female and 10 male offenders of violence, to undertake counselling rehabilitation under SVSG’s Advocacy Program.

So while the protection orders applied for to the Courts ensure the protection of the survivors of violence, the rehabilitated programs produce reformed men and women offenders of violence. This is part and partial of the holistic approach to address family violence, with the sustainability of this approach guaranteed by a violence free family.

5. SVSG VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVES
An increased interest from church and village leaders to become registered SVSG village representatives has been noted during May and June. This is despite the SVSG Village Rep being a volunteer position. And this shows how much our church and village leaders are embracing this support service as their own.

For May and June, the SVSG Village Representatives have been the force behind the successful completion of two main activities for the Nofotane Project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>May-17</th>
<th>June-17</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 female offenders of violence</td>
<td>5 female offenders of violence</td>
<td>7 female offenders of violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 male offenders of violence</td>
<td>7 male offenders of violence</td>
<td>10 male offenders of violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A total of 5 referrals from the Family Court were recorded for May 2017</td>
<td>A total of 11 referrals from the Family Court were recorded for June 2017</td>
<td>A total of 17 referrals from the Family Court were recorded for May &amp; June 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. STAR FOUNDATION: With and For Girls Award
The young female survivors of violence and sexual abuse cared for at the Campus of Hope continued to make positive progress during May and June:

- Some have excelled in sports and are pursuing sports as a future endeavour;
- Others are continuing with livelihood trainings on Campus, and have used the skills to earn themselves a living for those who have been reintegrated;
- Others have advocated for support for the young female survivors of sexual abuse out in the community, who are silence by fear;
- Still others are taking part in community outreach programs carried out by the SVSG Juniors, to address family violence.

Thank you to the Star Foundation for the confidence in SVSG as per the ‘With and For Girls’ Award, and your feedback on the progress of our work with the young girls at the Campus means a lot. Thank you Stefano and the Team.

Hello Lina,
Thank you for sharing your report, as always we are impressed with all the exceptional projects you carry out.

I’m also glad you highlighted some positive examples of change you have brought in the community, especially your engagement of youth as part of your outreach programmes.

I am sure all your efforts will continue to positive affect girls and their enabling environment in all of Samoa, we are very proud to be able to support you in this!

Send our greeting to all your team too and best of luck with your work,

Best,

Stefano
With the overall progress the Nofotane Project has made to date, SVSG’s stance remain according to SVSG President. “A nofotane woman will always be a nofotane; the project is not attempting to change this cultural aspect of the FaaSamoa. The project merely aims to improve the economic empowerment of women and to increase their participation in domestic and community matters.”

The success of all the advocacy work and the multi-media campaign will be measured by the number of nofotane women with improved economic empowerment from livelihood trainings. This will be implemented in July so stay tuned.

UNICEF Pacific: Child Protection Project
SVSG’s Child Protection Team had assisted a total of 73 children during the two months of May and June:

- 43 children through Protection Order application;
- 10 children through shelter assistance;
- 20 children through advocating for their cases to the Ministry of Police and to the Ministry of Justice; and
- The children’s age ranges from 11 months to 18 years old with 52 female and 21 male.

There is no denying the fact that the ease by which the Child Protection Team has been able to attend to these cases and continued to monitor the progress of the children, is due to the effectiveness of the team made up of the Case Officer, the Court Support Officer and the Child Protection Officer.

When comparing this to only 1 staff that was doing all these work prior to the securing the funding from UNICEF, we could only wonder at how we managed to do that. Thank you so much to Tupe Esera-Aumua, the Child Protection Officer for Samoa, Tokelau and Tuvalu, for lobbying with the UNICEF to support SVSG’s work. We look forward to working together with the new head of the UNICEF Pacific to address child protection issues affecting the children of Samoa.

These village representatives have spoken up publicly in support of the economic empowerment of nofotane women. They are on posters and signboards, and have hosted radio and television programs on the project.

“I am a nofotane woman. And I want to be a role model to other women in the village.”
ANIYA SAUFIO LEVI SALEIMOA

“AND I HAVE BEEN A CONSTANT EXAMPLE OF HOW YOU CAN HELP THOSE IN NEED BY WORKING HARD. YOU SHOULD REMEMBER THE WORDS OF THE LORD JESUS: ‘IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE.’”
Acts 20:35
CHALLENGES

Time and time again, we continue to voice the major challenge that we face as a non-governmental organisation, which is funding. And we will not be tired of advocating for support because to do so, will cost the victims of crime the support that they rightly deserve.

With Samoa having no formal support system for victims of crime or victims who undergo the legal justice system, SVSG was established in 2005 to fill this hole and provide the necessary support within the limited resources it has. Twelve years not, the hole in the system continues to exist, and SVSG through its limited resources, continue to try and provide for victims of crime as best as it can.

Then there is the challenge of the lack of institutions in the Government that provide for or recognize victims of crime or their rights. Many Government services appear to have much familiarity with rights of the offenders but have very little recognition for the rights of victims. Therefore, much of our time is taken in advocating these rights with Government offices so that victims are treated with dignity and fairness.

One example is a situation where an officer of the Government disbelieves a victim and due to her opinion of the victim, she treated the victim with hostility and very little respect to the extent where she slapped the victim. A complaint has been lodged with the relevant Government Ministry and hopefully with some results.

SVSG is grateful to the funding agencies such as:

- the UN Women Fund for Gender Equality for addressing domestic violence through the economic empowerment of women;
- the UNICEF for funding 3 important staff who deal with children’s cases on a daily basis and advocate for these cases to court; and
- the With and For Girls Award for supporting the livelihood activities of the girls at the shelter as well as capacity building for SVSG.

PROJECTS UPDATE

UN Women Fund for Gender Equality: Nofotane Project

The magnitude of the progress made by the project during May & June is marked by a continuous change in traditional mind-sets, especially of the local influential leaders, the village leaders.

With the completion of training sessions for SVSG village representatives to advocate for the Nofotane Project, the multi-media campaign had extended the advocacy work of the village decision makers through:

- 2 public forums; 1 at the TATTE Conference Centre for Upolu and 1 at the Methodist Hall at Salelologa for Savaii. The UN Women Country Program Coordinator, representatives from MCIL as well as WIBDI were part of the panel during these forums;
- Radio and television programs and press conferences hosted by SVSG village representatives; and
- Information booths set up at various public places both in Upolu and Savaii;

The impacts of the advocacy work of village leaders and the multi-media campaign have started conversations as the nofotane women:

- have been a topic of discussion in 2 Parliament sessions on 21st and 23 June 2017;
- have become a topic of discussion during family meals according to 69% of the general public who responded to the awareness questionnaire on the FGE Project;
- have been discussed on more than one occasion during village council meetings of the 175 out of the total 182 villages reached by the Project;
- have been part of the church minister’s sermon in 75 churches
- have been discussed during friends informal gatherings according to 15% of the general public who responded to the awareness questionnaire on the FGE Project; and
- have reached 3,750 people who have reacted to the Nofotane posts on the social media, majority are Samoans living abroad.
David Sutton & Kathy Basire

David is a psychiatric nurse from New Zealand while his wife Kathy is a criminal lawyer who has spent ten years as a Crown Prosecutor in Christchurch. Both took time out from work to volunteer for SVSG.

While David conducted trainings for staff and volunteers on mental illness awareness and suicide risk, Kathy has been working in the office assisting with case work, court support, document preparation for the Nofotane project as well as training the SVSG Juniors on supporting sexual violence victims.

The Chair of the SVSG Board, Mrs. Georgina Lui and the Board, hosted a farewell dinner for David and Kathy to acknowledge their volunteering work for SVSG.

Local and international followers of SVSG’s work have also expressed an interest to volunteer such as Katalina Kose, a 4th year student at the University of Wellington studying Law and Education.

According to Katalina “I have been following SVSG for quite some time now. I am just so amazed by the hard work that you all do in order to protect our children and people of Samoa, and speak up for the voiceless. It is this kind of work that I am looking forward to doing and would love to pop round and see first-hand the struggles and the hardships these amazing children to through and also lend a hand where I can.”

Volunteer support is always welcomed at SVSG whether to assist with the children’s school at the School of Hope, to look after the babies or the children with disabilities at the Campus of Hope, answering calls or general administration work at the office or facilitate the advocacy programs for offenders of violence.

Feel free to email: svsgvolunteers@gmail.com or stop by SVSG’s main office next to the Police to find out how you can help out as a volunteer.

MAY & JUNE PARTNERSHIPS

Congregational Christian Church of Samoa in Malie

Reverend Savelio Leota and the congregation of the CCCS Malie hosted the children from the Campus of Hope for Mother’s Day Sunday.

The invitation from the congregation proved to be a blessed experience not only for the children survivors, but more so for the mothers of the congregation as Rev. Savelio in delivering his sermon encouraged everyone to work together to ensure peaceful homes. The visit to the CCCS Malie has now extended the support network for SVSG’s work necessary for the sustainability of its shelter services.

Sam Atoa & Family of Utah

A family tradition of visiting and donating for the children survivors at the Campus of Hope saw Sam Atoa and family at the Campus in May.

With bulk supplies of the food and toiletries, Sam knew exactly what SVSG needed to cater for the daily needs of the vulnerable and abused children finding refuge at the Campus.

Back in 2011, Sam and his children first visited SVSG and donated for the work. Six years now, Sam Atoa and family continued with this tradition of blessing others with what God has blessed their family with.

Supporters on SVSG’s Givealittle Page

Earlier in May this year, a mother and her 5 year old child Roslyn, sought SVSG’s support for assistance towards their airfare to New Zealand. Roslyn required urgent medical treatment as she was diagnosed with otitis media in the left ear and was slowly affecting her brains.

Donations received via SVSG’s Givealittle page from Kerrie Keen Shoesmith and Soteria Lauvi Sopoaga from Australia enabled SVSG to pay for the return airfares for the mother and her child.
As we go to print, SVSG had received the good news that Roslyn had completed two operations on both ears, and both operations were successful. “God is good, all the time.” This is Roslyn’s praises as she is counting her blessings while recovering in Auckland New Zealand, thanks to the generosity of the Good Samaritans Kerrie Keen Shoesmith and Soteria Lauvi Sopoaga.

Queensland Reds Rugby Team
‘Seeing is believing’, best sums up the eye opening experience for some of the rugby stars from the Queensland Reds Rugby team, who visited the Campus of Hope in June.

With household names in rugby such as Quade Cooper holding babies and playing with the younger boys, it was amazing how humanity brings out the best in all of us.

While at the Campus, the players also go to see an ambulance donated by the Queensland government ambulance service for SVSG and its work. For some of the rugby stars, they wanted to come back as they felt a connection with the children, and being part of the extended SVSG family of supporters.

Seventh Day Adventist Church Women’s Fellowship - Faleono District
The Women’s Fellowship from the Seventh Day Adventist Church for the Faleono District is now on board as a supporting partner for SVSG.

In June, the beautiful mothers from the SDA Faleono District made up of Maagiagi, Vailele, Vailoa Saoluafata and Fusi Saoluafata, visited the children at the Campus of Hope, and presented food supplies and monetary donations of $500.00

The children were blessed as the mothers encouraged them to remain strong in faith through prayer.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT
As a non-governmental organization, SVSG and its work depends so much on volunteer support. relied upon to fill the gap in the human resources required to keep things moving. And we have been blessed with local and international volunteers in different fields; some are qualified in their field of work and have taken time out to help SVSG, others are working towards completing a qualification, and have chosen to take up internship with SVSG.

Regardless of who they are or what they do, what we have in common with our volunteer family of supporters is the passion to lend a hand. Meet the enthusiastic volunteers with SVSG during May & June:

Simone de Vries
A young intern who travelled all the way from the Netherlands to take up a 3-months internship with SVSG, towards her Social Work education at the HZ University of Applied Sciences.

Asked her why she chose a faraway place like Samoa, and her answer was simple, “I was drawn to the work of SVSG from an internet search and here I am.”

Simone volunteered at the School of Hope and later at the main office assisting with documenting the outcomes of the Nofotane Project. She has returned home and continues to keep in touch with SVSG.

“Thank you so much again for the opportunity of working with SVSG. I loved it and I’ll probably look back on this for the rest of my life as such a good experience.

“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”
Galatians 6:9