

Launch of ‘Phoenix Candles for Survivors’



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March 8, 2015

Marking International Women’s Day, Hon. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau today launched ‘Phoenix Candles for Survivors’, a new small business created by survivors of sexual violence and their families.

For International Women’s Day, Hon. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau joined members of the Phoenix Survivors Network, Medical Services Pacific/MSP staff and Aspire volunteers, on Friday March 6 to launch Candles for Survivors, a new small business created by women, child and youth survivors of sexual violence, their parents and siblings. Hon. Ratu Nailatikau, President of the Republic of Fiji, is the Patron of Medical Services Pacific.

Initiated and supported by MSP, the Phoenix Survivors Network brings together survivors of sexual violence and their families for counselling, mutual support, and recreational and therapeutic activities. The members chose the name “Phoenix Survivors” for their group to signal “they are rising from the ashes”, inspired by new hope, healing and moving forward.

Candles for Survivors as well as home baked cupcakes were distributed for sale across Suva today. Staff and volunteer teams from MSP and Aspire visited government offices, embassies and high commissions, and a sales booth was set up on Thompson Street across from MHCC. Business was brisk and all the candles and cupcakes were sold within a few hours, exceeding even the highest expectations of the Phoenix Survivors Network. MSP Manager for the Phoenix Survivors Program said “the response has been amazing. We feel so encouraged to know that the public care so much and want to support the survivors and their families”.

Moving forward from today’s successful launch, members of the Phoenix Survivors Network plan to continue to make a steady supply of Candles for Survivors, and to offer them for sale throughout the year. And as well, MSP’s Executive Director, Jennifer Poole, says “we hope to make the sale of

Candles and Cupcakes for Survivors an annual event to mark International Women's Day".

Candles are available for sale at the MSP office at 355 Waimanu Road 9 (Tel. 3630108 or 5640)

All proceeds from the sale of Candles for Survivors will be used to support the Phoenix Survivor's Network, a peer support program, set up by MSP to provide specialized support, counselling and therapeutic activities for child and youth survivors of sexual violence, and their families. The Phoenix Survivor's Network is one component of the Phoenix Survivors Program, a comprehensive set of specialized medical, legal and counselling services offered by Program for survivors of sexual assault. If you see children or youth at risk or if you feel unsafe call the Child Helpline (free call) on 1325.

Background on Phoenix Program for Survivors

Focused on the survivors of sexual assault and gender based violence, the Phoenix Program is an innovative "wrap around" service model, developed by Medical Services Pacific in response to service gaps and the need to respond swiftly and sensitively to cases of sexual assault and physical violence experienced by women, youth and children in Fiji. Building on the "One Stop Shop" clinic in operation at MSP's Suva location since 2010, the Phoenix Program provides and coordinates a full range of services including clinical health care, counselling, legal aid and social services for child and adult survivors and their families.

Recognizing the very special needs and vulnerability of child and youth survivors and their families, the Phoenix Program has expanded to incorporate a full range of therapeutic activities designed to heal and build the resilience of children and their families and to increase their capacity in micro enterprise and self help. In addition to counselling, peer support and group therapy sessions, the survivors and family members are now learning how to plan and run a small business together. They have started Candles for Survivors – both making and selling the candles – and in the process are acquiring new skills in marketing and finance and what it means to be self-employed.

As the first comprehensive, integrated service available for survivors and their families in Suva Fiji, the Phoenix Program has been made possible by the generous support received from donors and partners. Funding for the

Phoenix Program's specialized services has been provided by a grant from the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development Program, funded by Australian Aid program. Partners with whom the Phoenix Program works closely include the Government of Fiji's Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Fiji Police Force.

Find out more about MSP's work via their [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page.