

Cyclone Winston: Six Dead After Record-Breaking Storm Hits Fiji

Most of Fiji is without electricity in the wake of a ferocious cyclone that left at least six people dead. Winds from Cyclone Winston, which tore through the Pacific Island chain over the weekend, reached 180 mph winds, making it the strongest storm in the Southern Hemisphere since record-keeping began. NBC News



Smaller villages have suffered the most, given their infrastructures would be too weak to withstand the power of a category 5 cyclone,” said Alice Clements, a spokeswoman for UNICEF in the Pacific. “Families have lost their homes and crops, therefore leaving them without shelter, food and a livelihood, CNN



The Dream Machine Foundation has provided rural Fiji with cyclone relief for 17 years. The island chain is in the cyclone belt and are struck by a category 4 cyclone ever 3 to 4 years. The immediate need is fresh water, food, and medical attention. Image to left is 1 of 5 disaster relief food drops we made after the last category 4 cyclone. Stage II of our efforts is to provide gardening tools, seeds and starter roots.

The Fijians are most appreciative of the shovels, hoes, and rakes, which allow them to layout more effective gardens. In rural Fiji, a digging stick was used to make a hole and a seed or root was dropped into it. That means for the price of a tool we can help the Fijians to help themselves. In rural Fiji they rely on the rainforest, farms and the ocean to provide for their family’s income as well as food.



The cyclones have a horrific impact on rural villages and schools. Winds and waves destroy homes and small businesses. Trees are stripped of their fruit, gardens are washed away by high waves, and what is left is contaminated by overflowing septic tanks, particularly in the coastal villages. Cholera walks in the wake of cyclones in Fiji; however, in Buca Bay we only had one case of cholera after the last disaster. It is because we have taken steps to prevent this needless loss of life.



In the rural schools and villages, we have built cement walkways in low laying areas to keep little feet out of contaminated waters. Working with Engineers Without Borders we have put in septic systems that will not flood or overflow. Roger Lutz, the Project Manager for the DMF has built dozens of slow-sand water filtration systems that provide clean water without filters or chemicals. This is critical for helping the Fijians to maintain them without undue expense.



Above is one of Roger's water filters at a public school.

The Dream Machine Foundation urgently needs your support to provide immediate assistance to rural Fiji; not only to respond to this devastation, but for our ongoing work in Fiji. We specialize in doing mobile clinics to rural villages and schools, and work closely with the Fiji Ministry of Health; they refer to us as their partners in rural outreach. Since 2006, we have worked under a ministry mandate to visit all the public schools of Northern Fiji as the direct representatives of the Ministries of Health and Education. These ministries have asked us to take a leadership role in rural fresh water management and health education. We are working with the villages to set up roving teams of water inspectors and to extend slow-sand filtration systems into a greater area. Our clinics over the last 17 years have saved hundreds of lives and treated over 33,000 Fijians for free. In Buca Bay, cholera, hepatitis, and leptospirosis have all been greatly reduced from our efforts.

The Dream Machine Foundation is a federally approved non-profit, both in the USA and in Fiji. All donations are tax deductible. To help please visit our webpage (below) to make secure credit card donations or mail it to: DMF, PO Box 3234, Paradise, CA 95967

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