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Vasiti's cooking proves a winner

(Monday, April 21, 2008)

SINCE the Tribe Wanted group started on Vorovoro Island two years ago, Vasiti Matanawa has been the woman behind the preparation of the tasty and delicious food — as the members put it.

Starting off as a volunteer at the group's camp has paid off as Vasiti now earns good money.

"I started off as a volunteer when I came to the island for a holiday with my grandchildren as my daughter's husband is from Vorovoro Village," she said.

"And during that time, my daughter and her in-laws had to go to Labasa for a church gathering and they asked me to come and look after the members of Tribe Wanted and cook their food," Mrs Matanawa said.

Without hesitation, she joined the group and started as their chef.

"I was a volunteer then and cooked for the group starting off with basic Fijian dishes which most of them enjoyed and loved.

"I enjoyed my job so much because I had to tell them what every root crop was and the different kinds of vegetables that I cook for them and amazingly, their favourite vegetable was rourou," Mrs Matanawa said.

She said the visitors who travelled from all parts of the world enjoyed fish miti.

"Almost every time they will ask me to cook fish miti and dalo or cassava and they will finish it because it is their favourite.

"For breakfast, I had to make buns and topoi and babakau and pancake as it was their favourite breakfast meals," Mrs Matanawa said.

Being a retired school teacher, mingling with the young members has not been a difficult task to achieve.

"They are nice people and very easy to get on with and to teach our Fijian culture.

"I am happy that I have been part of their lives since they arrived on the island," Mrs Matanawa said.

A retired primary school headteacher, Mrs Matanawa has not regretted taking up the post as a volunteer.

"I started off as a volunteer chef and they paid me later.

"I have enjoyed my job since then and I like explaining to them the different kinds of Fijian food.



Vasiti Matanawa finds joy and earns decent money cooking for the Tribe Wanted Group on Vorovoro Island

"I plan to stay here with them for as long as they want me to because I have enjoyed every minute with them," Mrs Matanawa said.

The Tribe Wanted project started in September 2006 after a group of visiting students from England approached villagers to lease part of their island so they could live the rustic life while learning the Fijian culture and language.

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