

WINNING POEM POETRY SLAM CONTEST, FIJI

YPCNFiji offers our hearty congratulations to all participants of the Poetry Slam contest held recently on Friday 13th June, 2008 @ AUSAID Building, Theatre Space, USP Campus. **GARY ROUNDS** won the 1st prize for the Contest and it is with great pride we present his winning POEM. Gary says this poem is based on the constant battle that he has in regards to his mind...

Our only hope is that you take heed if of this message

we are gonna keep on walking !!!

contemplate on this message

we are gonna keep on walking !!!

revise this message

we are gonna keep on walking !!!

be advocates of this message

we are gonna keep on walking !!!

spread the gospel of this message

we are gonna keep on walking !!!

you uneducated, unsympathetic, hypocritical definition of me and other's like me are: crazy, wacko, psycho, lialia, pagla, nut, mental, ulukau, etc, etc

but we are gonna keep on walking !!!

today, tonight,

we're gonna **expose**;

.....**remove**;

.....**annihilate**;

.....**this stigma**,

.....**this facade**,

.....**this deception**,

.....that perpetuates the discrimination

.....& stereotype definitions

and we are gonna keep on walking !!!

i'm no doctor;

i'm no **psychologist**;

i'm no **psychiatrist**;

i just the voice of another psychiatric survivor shouting

we are gonna keep on walking !!!

having crossed to the other side and back,

i now appreciate & acknowledge

.....**my mental illness**

.....**my mental health**

.....**my sanity**

and i'm gonna keep on walking !!!

There was this one time, i stayed home for 6 whole months, i was of the thought that people, once they saw me,

.....they'd start gossiping about me

.....spread rumors about me;

.....spread lies about me;

.....laugh about me;

.....laugh at me;

.....tease me;

.....be out to get me;

i was having a static moment and i could move because of this stigma

.....**this mark of shame !!!**

.....**this scarlett letter !!!**

.....**this mark of cain !!!**

my past was keeping me hostage from my future;

i couldn't face those challenges in life

but then one day

.....**one day !!!**

.....**one day !!!**

.....**and on that day !!!**

i stepped out of my comfort zone into, once know, the world unknown

.....**and i went for a walk !!!**

i had to face my enemy;

my enemy is my mind;

and the battlefield is my mind

.....**so i kept on walking !!!**

nokonoko rd, jerusalem rd, fletcher rd, drivers, passengers, all eyes on me

.....**but i kept on walking !!!**

thru bhindi subdivision, grantham rd, up, down, up milverton rd,

why are you looking at me? stop staring at me

.....**but i kept on walking !!!**

rewa st, flagstaff, laucala bay rd,

the odd look, the persevering stare,

the pregnant pause glimpse,

.....**but i kept on walking !!!**

And for the first time in my life i walk from one end of fletcher road to the other

.... **and i kept on walking !!!**

jerusalem rd and all the way home

....**i kept on walking !!!**

and to this very day i am still walking !!!

standing here before all of you tonight

....**i am still walking !!!**

yes, i'm a prisoner of my own mind but my words will set me free and help you see

that those who are mentally challenged are also human,

....who don't need your curses

....who don't need your judgment

....who don't need your verbal gim-

micks

....but they need your acceptance

....they need your love

....they need your support

i know you have a loved one

who is mentally impaired

....who are fringed

....who are shunned

....who are mocked

....who are disrespected

....who are discredited

our only hope is that you take heed of this message

**WE ARE GONNA KEEP ON WALK-
ING !!!**