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- [Home](#)
- [Fiji News](#)
- [Sport](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Features](#)
- [Editorial](#)
- [Letters](#)
- [Your Say](#)
- [Weather](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Galleries](#)
- [Classifieds](#)
- [Comment?](#)

/ [Front page](#) / [Features](#)

In the name of the father

Saturday, April 21, 2007

CHILD star Nestor Whippy makes no bones about his musical aspirations.

The 11-year-old wants to be a singer in a band.

The Tacirua Fijian School Class Five student who has already released an album goes further this week.

He headlines a benefit concert for victims of the tsunami that struck the Solomon Islands early this month after an undersea earthquake.

Thirty-two people died in that horror and Nestor is determined to do something to help.

That is why he joins dad and veteran musician Jojo Whippy and his Rai-Ki-Vi Boys group for a Red Cross endorsed show that features living legend Tom Mawi and Friends and reggae pioneers, Exodus, with their street sounds, among others.

The concert will be held in Sukuna Park, in central Suva, from 11am to 3pm on Friday.

The show, with the blessings of the relief agency and the Suva City Council, is the initiative of the Fiji Live Musicians Association a group of die-hard music makers determined to chant down disco once and for all.

All the musicians are giving their time and showcasing their talent for free.

And, Nestor made a special appeal to the people of Suva this week to think of the children of the Solomons.

He says with school breaking up for the first term holidays, students can donate some of their holiday spending money to his worthy cause.

His dad went further, saying people can do that by donating items for school.

"It can be stationery, books clothes, food anything that will make a child happy," said Jojo, who is originally from Kasavu, Savusavu.

"Watching on TV, we saw many mothers and children looking shocked at their experience.

"So we make a special appeal for things like powdered milk for babies, canned food and school items books, pencils," Jojo said.

"We are having it in Sukuna Park because it is central.

"The show will be free but Red Cross volunteers will be carrying around buckets where people can donate money or the items they bring."

He made a special plea for people not to throw old clothes in just for the sake of it.

"We don't want to send them rags. We want the children of the Solomons to know the people of Fiji care for them."

Nestor, who already has an album and a classy video clip of a Bob Marley cover he did, burst onto the scene three years ago.

He turned up at a talent quest at JJ's On the Park and stole the show.

The eight-year-old Nestor had to stand on a speaker so the audience could see him when it was his turn on stage.

His rendition of the K C and the Sunshine Band classic Boogie Shoes left the other contestants in the dark.

With the spotlight on him, Nestor was mobbed by fans wishing him well.

"We went there and I had only \$30 in my pocket," said Jojo.

"By the time Nestor had finished his time on stage, people had walked up and put money in his pockets. When we counted it, it came to \$350," Jojo said.

It is the kind of generous spontaneity he hopes will be evident at the park.

"All the children in Fiji will be in a happy mood because the holidays are starting, so we are confident of doing well," Jojo said.

After two failed attempts to hold the Helpem Wantok Disaster Appeal Concert, everyone is hoping the weather clears up this week.

The Helpem Wantok, a joint effort by police, the military and musicians, has been rescheduled for the Suva Foreshore Park on Wednesday, May 2.

For two successive Saturdays, heavy rains have put paid to plans for a live jam for tsunami victims and attention switches to the Live Musicians Association-organised gig donations from which will be collected, transported to the Solomons and distributed by the Fiji Red Cross.



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Your Say

Fiji is awash in public holidays. Recent weeks have yielded 5 public holidays, most recently National Youth Day. With the economy in such bad shape can the nation really afford so many non-productive days? Should we abolish all but the essential religious holidays to increase the nation's collective output? Is there a better way of celebrating young people than a public holiday?

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