

NEWS

# Sick culture shared in new book

A Samoan man who has spent a large amount of his life in hospital recounts his experiences. He spoke with *Sharu Delilkan*

**A**fter five open-heart surgeries due to a misdiagnosis more than 25 years ago, Andrew Fiu has decided to share his journey in his first book.

*Purple Heart* is the story of his hospital years after contracting rheumatic fever, the wisdom he has learnt from his fellow patients, and the medical miracles performed by cardiac surgeon Dr Alan Kerr.

"It's not just about having heart operations but about growing up in New Zealand back in the days when we were dawn raided," he says.

The 40-year-old Samoan says he has been the butt of racism over the years, particularly when he was forced to share a room with "an outright racist" at the age of 14.

"The name-calling would start first thing in the morning and go on until we went to bed at night. He called me everything from a nigger to a coconut.

"At first I didn't have a clue about what racism or a bigot was but I caught on fast and began to answer back."

He practically grew up in hospital amidst the name-calling and "telling me and my family to go back to Tonga or Fiji or wherever you come from.

"I was also the bearer of bad news as a teenager because I had to translate the

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ANDREW FIU

doctors' advice to my parents. I remember my mother's reaction when I had to tell her that I needed a particular operation to keep me from dying."

The book injects humour and details the numerous misunderstandings because the then teenager was unable to translate medical jargon or "purely because certain English words do not exist in Samoan".

Although it's only been three years since Mr Fiu's last operation, he is optimistic his plight can only improve with the miracles of modern science.

He hopes that the book will reach out to his fellow Pacific Islanders and to other Kiwis "to help them appreciate what we went through.

"And if nothing else, I hope the book will inspire other youth to say 'I can do that too'.

"After all, if I could do it with the glitches in my academic life, anyone can."

■ ***Purple Heart* will be in book stores from August 4.**



AUTHOR ANDREW FIU

PHOTO: KELLIE BLIZARD

## Sutton Park School in record-breaking jump for heart

by Sharu Delilkan

Mangere's Sutton Park School will go down in history as the school that has raised a record breaking \$10,000 for the National Heart Foundation of New Zealand's Jump Rope for Heart programme.

Jump Rope for Heart is a primary and intermediate school-based programme that encourages physical activity and heart healthy lifestyles through age-appropriate and curriculum-linked skipping skills and activities.

The school's relentless efforts over a

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SHARLAINE CHEE

12-week period has made it Jump Rope for Heart's top fundraising school since the programme started in 1985.

The school will be given a rebate from this fundraising, which is usually used to buy physical education equipment.

Jump Rope for Heart programme manager Sharlaine Chee says:

"With public attention increasingly drawn to the issue of childhood obesity and inactivity, these students have shown that taking regular exercise can be easy, enjoyable and beneficial to their long term heart health."



**Q. WHO DO YOU THINK USED MORE ELECTRICITY AND GAS LAST MONTH?**

