

training in the Pacific region. However, it has also expressed a wish to see efforts being made by the region itself in this area in demonstrating its desire for such training to be established. The opening of the PPMC and the creation of key staff positions to run it represent tangible progress in this area. It is hoped that this will fulfill another key resolution of the 1995 Yanuca Island postgraduate education meeting, that being:

"... the appointment of appropriate staff including a full-time/part-time coordinator for each course".

Currently, such medical specialty Coordinator positions exist at the Fiji School of Medicine in the disciplines of Surgery, Obstetrics, Paediatrics and Anaesthesia. Three of these are contract positions filled by expatriates. These positions need to be strengthened and further positions created in other important medical specialties. Funded, long-term local (i.e. Pacific regional) Coordinator positions are also needed to be created and filled, in each of the key specialties,

including the discipline of General Family & Community Health Practice, so that the expatriate support can be phased out. This will be one of the major goals of the newly-created PPMC over the next few years. Given the progress that has been made in the last year, I am hopeful that a great deal more will be achieved in the next few years.

References

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Remembrance: *Darlene Keju-Johnson*

"Tuak bwe elimaajnono" (face your challenges). This Marshallese phrase which translates literally: "walk into the strong currents between two islands" was the credo of the late Darlene Keju-Johnson, respected Pacific leader in the health field. Her death at age 45 on June 18, 1996, in Majuro from cancer leaves a huge void but also a substantial legacy of self-determination and cultural pride.

Darlene was a rare Marshall Islander, born on the island of Ebeye and raised on her mother's island, Wotje, a northern atoll in the Marshall Islands, downwind of Bikini and Enewetak atolls, the sites of American nuclear tests carried out from 1946 to 1958. The legacy of that nuclear fallout was to eventually, I believe, kill Darlene through cancer, just as it had killed other members of her family. She is credited with bringing world attention to the real plight of medical conditions resulting from exposure to nuclear radiation from the tests. She advocated for nuclear victims without the support of her own government and in the face of denial and objection from the U.S. Government. She conducted speaking tours and in 1983 addressed 10,000 delegates at the World Council of Churches Assembly in Canada. Thirteen years later, her reports have been confirmed by recently declassified U.S. government documents and her comments are now routinely echoed by government officials.

Advocating for nuclear victims represented only one of the "strong currents" in Darlene's brief lifetime. She spent 17 years in Hawai'i going to school, returning home in 1984 with a masters degree in Public Health. At that time her country, at 4.2%, had one of the highest rates of population growth in the world. Facing this challenge, Darlene created the Youth to Youth in Health, a peer-education program which incorporated cul-

tural identity building, health knowledge, music and drama and most important - the Marshallese youth. The program attracted enthusiastic youth volunteers by the dozens and what started as a band of youth volunteers assisting the Family Planning program burgeoned in the early 1990s into a fully-funded non-governmental organization with more than 12 paid staff providing full-time health promotion and services for youth and the community. Her pioneering efforts with Youth to Youth in Health resulted in a drop in the population growth rate to 3.5% and drew wide international recognition and praise from the U.S. Public Health Service to the World Health Organization. Today, the Youth to Youth in Health trains 50 to 75 youth annually, develops primary health projects with the 20 outer island chapters, sends staff out for site visits to remote atolls, develops income-generating projects so outer islanders have an alternative to copra-making, sponsors a health clinic for teenagers--all part of the vision of one extraordinary woman.

Battling cancer was the "strongest current" Darlene faced. As with all challenges, she approached it head on. Though overpowering, it did little to interfere with her goals for the Youth to Youth in Health. Her extraordinary courage kept her working from her bed until the end.

As the largest ocean in the world, the Pacific remains inadequate to hold the tears we shed for this most extraordinary woman, warrior, leader, teacher, mentor, role model and friend.

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