



THE CULTURAL SANCTUARIES FOUNDATION

Protecting the Protectors



Te aitua community building at Taipavai on the island of Nuku Hiva

As you know, at the heart of our work is the building of cultural community centers. The importance and power of a physical, tangible, touchable, vibrant and popular focal point for a community's protection and celebration of its culture and home cannot be over-estimated.

At the Marquesan Festival in Nuku Hiva last month, we were bowled over to see the fruit of the work of our local project partners. While they have diligently kept us in the loop on renovation of the site, the delivery of materials and the construction work, nothing beats seeing it all with your own eyes. Phase 1 of the project is complete! The buildings were ready and standing proud for the start of the celebration.

And what a celebration it was. Islanders from the six Marquesan islands gathered on the host island of Nuku Hiva for five days of dancing, singing and feasting. (See @culturalsanctuaries on Instagram for videos and photos of the festivities.) Each island group had spent months preparing their costumes and rehearsing their performances and as much as we already knew about the extraordinary cultural revitalisation on these islands, nothing could have prepared us for the emotional impact of seeing this once dormant culture now so strong and proud. It really is a role model for the world – evidence

that, against almost insurmountable odds, culture and language can survive to thrive again. The sense of community identity and pride was palpable and full of joy. We were swept up in the excitement and in the knowledge that this culture is here to stay and to become ever stronger.

If only more societies could come together like this, in peace and dance and song and joy to focus only on their commonalities, and not their differences, and to celebrate their love for their community and their common home.

We were proud just to be there to see it and to be a small part of it and we are so very grateful for all of you who have supported us and continue to support us. Phase 2 of the project (the creation of a cultural and ocean conservation center, complete with living museum and botanical garden) here we come! Thank you.

The Cultural Sanctuaries team