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The Department of Education holds a dedication ceremony for the new Le'atele Elementary Multipurpose Gymnasium.



On Wednesday, March 12, 2025, the American Samoa Department of Education (ASDOE) held a dedication and groundbreaking ceremony at Le'atele Elementary, Fagasa. The dedication marked the opening of the new school multipurpose gymnasium.

The event was attended by the Honorable Governor Pulaali'i Nikolao Pula and First Lady Lois Phillips-Pula, key cabinet members, management, staff, and students of Le'atele Elementary, as well as members of the Fagasa village community.

The ceremony commenced with a blessing prayer led by Reverend Elder Filipino Tu'igamala, followed by the official ribbon-cutting by First Lady Lois Phillips-Pula, marking the grand opening of the multipurpose gymnasium at Le'atele Elementary School.

School Principal Mrs. Ramona Mata'u warmly welcomed the esteemed guests and the community to the joyous occasion before inviting Reverend Fepuari Logoleo to deliver the invocation. Reverend Fepuari expressed gratitude for the occasion, drawing inspiration from the Book of Acts, "The Apostle Paul, formerly known as Saul, was called by God to serve Him and gather souls for the Kingdom of Heaven. Despite his past persecution of Christians, Paul was chosen by God to do His work, shifting his playing field from the physical to the spiritual, winning souls for Heaven." He continued, "Now, with this new playing field, the multipurpose gymnasium, we have an opportunity to nurture and engage our children not only physically but also spiritually. We extend our deepest gratitude to the government for its unwavering commitment to prioritizing the education of our children. May God bless this facility and the many blessings it will bring to our community."

In his keynote address, the Honorable Governor Pulaali'i Nikolao Pula expressed his heartfelt gratitude, stating, "The First Lady and I were watching the children of Fagasa, and she reminded me of the scripture: 'Summon the children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God.' This warms my heart and brings immense joy to both of us to see our children here today. Let us applaud them." The Governor extended his appreciation to the School Principal for inviting the First Lady and himself to this joyous occasion. He also commended the dedication and hard work of the management and staff of Le'atele Elementary School, as well as the outstanding leadership across all sectors of the Fagasa village community. He acknowledged their remarkable support and unwavering commitment to fostering a strong learning environment and enhancing the essential educational facets of the community. Governor Pulaali'i also said, "I must say, this group of students is among the most well-behaved I have ever witnessed. I would like to extend my gratitude to the teachers for their dedication in instilling discipline in our children. This is a true reflection of your commitment and the integrity of your work in fulfilling your calling." The Governor concluded by saying, "My heart is very warm today in being here, to see the faces of these young people because they are the future of not only Fagasa, but American Samoa. Thank you to all the parents for your love and support in encouraging our children to pursue their education. I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to everyone who contributed to this facility, which will serve as a valuable asset for the entire Fagasa community."

Director of the Department of Public Works, Taeaotui Punafo Tinei, provided a brief overview of the project, highlighting its successful collaboration with the Office of Procurement and the American Samoa Department of Education (ASDOE). He noted that construction of the multipurpose gymnasium began in January 2024 and was completed in February 2025. The facility measures 100 feet in length and 70 feet in width, with a total project cost of \$1.1 million. Following his remarks, Director Taeaotui formally presented the Certificate of Occupancy to the ASDOE Director. The consultants and contractors were PIOA Consulting & Engineering and Quality Paint and Constructions.

HTC Atuatasi Seigafo of Quality Painting delivered the contractor's remarks, expressing sincere gratitude to the American Samoa Government for the opportunity to construct this facility. He acknowledged the challenges faced throughout the project but emphasized that, through collective collaboration, they successfully completed the gymnasium. He concluded by highlighting their shared commitment to building for the future of the children.

Village Representative HTC Sili Sataua, speaking on behalf of the Fagasa community, expressed deep appreciation to the government for its continuous support over the past decade. He highlighted several key projects that have significantly benefited the village, including the construction of seawalls, access roads, and school buildings, as well as future planned initiatives aimed at further enhancing the community. Additionally, HTC Sataua emphasized the village's commitment to addressing and eliminating drug-related issues within their community. He underscored the importance of the newly constructed gymnasium, noting that it will serve as a vital space for hosting community activities and developing strategic initiatives to prevent drug use, ultimately creating a safer and healthier environment for all.

ASDOE Director, Maefau Dr. Mary Lauagaia Taufete'e, spoke on behalf of the Department of Education in a brief statement saying, "I would like to thank our government leaders both present and past. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our children's education. We extend our appreciation to the contractors, the principal and staff for contributing to this remarkable effort we are witnessing today." Director Maefau concluded by saying, "We look forward to working together with our educational community and especially the First Lady on different ways we can support the education of our children."

Bishop Kalani Punefu delivered the closing prayer to formally conclude the dedication ceremony, marking the official opening of the multipurpose gymnasium at Le'atele Elementary School.

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