

## **NORTHWEST ISLAND EXPLORER TAMATAM ISLET**

*Lino Joannes – Mayor of Tamatam Municipality; Classroom Teacher*

*Edward Andreas – Principal, Tamatam Elementary School and elder*

*Begonia Danny – Representing women and chief clan; Classroom Teacher*

Tamatam Island and Pollap Island are part of a submerged reef in the western part of Chuuk State. The island community is the smallest in terms of size and population. Like its sister islands in Páttú group (Houk, Polowat, and Pollap), Tamatam is fighting to maintain its indigenous culture amidst a barrage of foreign concepts, practices, and new values. The older people are very concerned that they are losing an integral part of their identity and culture. The sad part is that their children or grandchildren don't seem to share the same concerns. Instead, they are quick to adopt these foreign ways of life and to exhibit behaviors deemed culturally inappropriate by the elders.

Because of these concerns, a group consisting of eight representatives from these social structures - the Catholic Church, women, youth, school, municipal, and clan systems, came together to form the Tamatam ISLET. They decided to embark on a journey of rediscovery of respect, a fundamental value in Tamatam culture. Recognizing that respect is what binds every living and non-living thing to live peacefully and harmoniously together for centuries on their tiny island, Tamatam ISLET decided to conduct various community outreaches to share about this fundamental value. The ISLET was most interested in how respect is shown or exhibited between people, especially male-female siblings – how they conduct themselves in the company of another or what language is used to show their respect for the other person.

The Tamatam ISLET expects that by the end of the outreaches, people of Tamatam will fully understand why respect is important and still applicable today and be willing to perpetuate it for future generations. The ISLET also expects to develop a booklet of all the informal learning tools or resources used or shared during the various community outreaches. The booklet will be a good resource for perpetuating respect.

