



THE NEW YEAR USHERS IN CHANGES IN THE KUKUI CENTER

As we start a new decade, it's time for good news! Within the walls of the Kukui Center, so much is happening and we wanted to share some of the many stories of success.

Thanks to our wonderful and talented community partners, Kat and Tim Bradley of Take 2 Productions, our website now has an updated video that explains the many ways the Kukui Center is unique in its approach to delivering social services. We hope you will visit (www.kukuicenter.org) and watch to learn more about us. The website also lists job opportunities to join the Kukui Center ohana. We are a great place to work—one person has worked for 3 different programs within the center.

They say the only constant is change and that is certainly true at the Kukui Center. We will be bidding a fond aloha to the staff of the



Staff of the Mediation Center
strong collaboration with fellow tenants, MCP flourished and has grown tremendously in the past 10 years. Since moving in, the number of people we served increased by nearly 40%. In the domestic area, the number of divorcing and unmarried couples with children who are assisted annually has doubled”, says Executive Director Tracey Wiltgen. We truly value what they have contributed including training for KC staff on problem resolution, working to help individual

families referred to them by our other programs and very importantly their copier and postage meter!

We are also saying aloha to Suzanne Skjold, the Executive Director of Hawaii Literacy for the last 15 years, eight of which have been at the Kukui Center. Another



Suzanne Skjold and Jill Takasaki Canfield

strong advocate of collaboration, she practiced what she preached including visiting Family Promise of Hawaii to work with their children and bringing their Bookmobile to our parking lot. At the same time, we welcome Jill Takasaki Canfield, their new executive director. Jill comes to the program with a varied background in working in the community including her recent position as coordinator of the Chinese language curriculum at Maryknoll School. It was not surprising for her to greet people she already knew working in the Kukui Center. It's a small world.

Last but not least, we are enjoying the presence of our newest program, Hi Rising, a program of Kids Hurt Too Hawaii. This workforce development program for foster youth is a gift shop and snack shop that gives young people the chance to have real life work experiences and develop skills to make them marketable in the real world. Check it out if you are in our neighborhood.

Now it is my turn to give back..

My husband died in a tragic accident while we were stationed in Japan at the Air Force base. We moved back to Hawaii where he wanted to spend the rest of his life.

It was not easy starting life without him, especially moving to a place where I had no family or friends. My children never lived anywhere other than on Military bases. They had to adapt to the new culture quickly and transition into civilian life without their father. My oldest daughter who was 13 cried daily, wanting to quit school. My middle daughter was 10 and felt she was isolated from the others. My youngest one was 5. He did not want to leave my side from the moment his dad died.

We started attending KHTH support group. KHTH brought back smiles and joy into my children's lives. KHTH, the facilitators, and the family members became our Ohana. Now, it is my turn to give back to KHTH and the local communities that helped my family. My daughter and I are becoming facilitators. We want to support other families and let them know they are not alone! *Tia Briggs*, Surviving Spouse of US Air Force SSgt Raymond Briggs



Briggs' Ohana



HAWAII IMMIGRANT JUSTICE CENTER AT LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF HAWAII

HJIC Gets Family Crucial Aid

Shortly after birth, T.F. was diagnosed with an extremely rare chromosomal disorder. As a result of his disorder, T.F. suffers from a visual impairment, hearing impairment, seizure disorder, and more. His mother was forced to leave her job in order to provide 24-hour care for him.

T.F.'s mother applied for children's Supplemental Security Income (SSI) in 2017. Children's SSI is a monthly payment from Social Security to help low income families of disabled children with medical, educational, or basic living necessities. T.F.'s application for SSI was denied despite his disorder and significant impairments. T.F.'s mother appealed this denial and was denied again. She then sought help from Mellissa Wong, a staff attorney at the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii.

Melissa represented T.F., now 2-year's old, and got a hearing before a judge. The judge awarded T.F. monthly SSI as well as awarded back pay from 2017, when T.F. was initially denied.

In 2019, Legal Aid helped T.F. and other disabled children and adults receive \$1.3 million in disability benefits from the Social Security Administration. Although critical aid, the maximum SSI award in Hawaii is \$778.00. In 2018, SSA reported that 1,263 children received SSI in the State of Hawaii with an average benefit amount of \$642.15. In 2017, SSA reported that it awarded only 42% of children applicants SSI. The low approval rate is why children, like T.F., rely on Legal Aid to get disability benefits.



**Tatjana A. Johnson, Esq.
and Mellissa Wong, Esq. of
Hawaii Immigrant Justice
Center**



Hale Kipa

Making Great Strides Toward Independence

Hale Kipa's Independent Living Program (ILP) provides support, life skills, information, and referrals to youth and young adults transitioning out of the foster care system. Youth participating in ILP receive individual case management services to help them gain independence, access community resources, and advocate for themselves in various areas of life, including: housing, education, and employment. Keahi is an ILP participant who is making great strides toward her personal goals of independence.

She graduated from University of Hawaii in Spring 2019 with her Bachelor of Arts



Keahi

degree in Psychology, is continuing to pursue a Master of Social Work degree, and just completed her first semester of the MSW program with a 4.0 GPA. Although Keahi is still attending school, she was eager to start helping others and put her degree to work with employment providing crisis services on Oahu. She has a strong motivation to succeed, a desire to help others, and an ability to advocate for herself that will serve her well in her future endeavors.



Diversion Program Provides Family Needed Skills to Succeed

Alton and Aninie, along with their six children, reached out to Family Promise of Hawai'i for support last year. They were living in an overcrowded apartment with relatives, in need of a safe space for their children. This family did not know where to begin to search for housing. They enrolled in our Diversion program and worked alongside staff to create a housing plan. Through our financial literacy program, Alton and Aninie learned how to budget and increase their savings so they could afford a rental large enough to accommodate their growing family. Alton and Annie had never signed a lease before so we



Alton and Aninie 'Ohana

taught them tenancy education skills, including how to search for housing and how to communicate with prospective landlords. With our help, this family was able to move into a home of their own! Alton and Aninie have said that, "*we couldn't have accomplished this without the help of Family Promise of Hawai'i.*" The truth is that we couldn't have accomplished this without them. They worked extremely hard. Alton and Aninie stated that they are confident they will utilize the skills learned in our Diversion program to find housing in the future.



Divorce and Post-Divorce Mediation: Focusing on the Needs of the Children



Daughter of Marck A.
& Joli N.

One of the major benefits of mediating the terms of a divorce, is the positive impact that it can have on the children. The mediation process is designed to help parents focus on what's best for their children, rather than arguing over who is the more responsible or better parent, when deciding issues about where the child will live, how time-sharing will work and how decisions will be made.

In a recent MCP mediation involving Marck A., Joli N., and their daughter, the couple hadn't spoken to each other in over six months. Instead, they were relying on Joli's aunt as an intermediary to organize pick-ups and drop-offs of their daughter. "We wanted to at least get something on paper," said Joli, "to open communication back up." So they called MCP to mediate. "It was the best choice I ever made," said Marck.

With the help of MCP's mediators, they were able to develop a communication plan and a schedule that worked for both of them. "We're communicating [according to] the terms of the mediation agreement, and everything has been on point," said Marck. "It's been really good for our daughter," he added. If something were to change, or a disagreement about their daughter's care were to arise, they agreed to go back to mediation.

"It definitely saves a lot of headache, creates clear communication, and saves money instead of going to court," said Joli. "I would 100% recommend [mediation] to others."



healthy
mothers
healthy
babies
COALITION
OF HAWAII

Helping Nina Takes the Kukui Center Village

It was late in the afternoon when we were connected to one of our clients Nina through Catholic Charities Hawaii, stating she is in desperate need of support. HMHB quickly got her registered and Nina is now one of our recipients for financial aid to be a part of one of our Piko Pals groups.

Nina and her son David were able to be a part of Piko Pals, grow, and make lasting relationships in their group. Even though English is not Nina's first language, she was able to connect with the other moms by speaking about her highs and lows during the meetings. Another mom even gifted Nina a new baby carrier because she noticed Nina's carrier was not supporting her and David properly. Nina also benefited from our mental health support counselors.



Piko Pals at Ala Moana Beach Park

HMHB also collaborated with Kids Hurt Too's case management services and consulted with Legal Aid for Nina's other specific needs. Nina's successful transition wouldn't have happened if it weren't for the multiple collaborative efforts of the different non-profits in the Kukui Center.

Piko Pals connects and empowers new parents of babies age 0-4 months to build their own village through facilitated discussions in an emotionally and intellectually safe environment. Piko Pals sets the stage for connection and friendship with peers in your community, so you can make lasting relationships to share and celebrate the joys and challenges of new parenthood.



Keiki Thrive as Readers and Beyond

One of our most dedicated program attendees is 11-year-old Seko. Seko regularly visits Hawaii Literacy's Family Literacy Library program at Mayor Wright

public housing. Seko has been an exemplary reader, and his literacy skills have become stronger each month. He also helps at the Library as a Junior Leader, and has continued to amaze us!

Seko's mom says, "My son is doing good in school, he won awards and is the president of his school. I know it's because of this Library. He always talks about how much fun he has at the Library, and that you folks make it fun to learn."

We know that Seko has only just begun—and that it's his hard work and strong reading skills that will take him even further! But we are honored to have played a part in helping Seko and thousands of young learners like him.

Our Mayor Wright Library operates just a block away from the Kukui Center. This popular community library and educational center welcomes low-income families to borrow books, build literacy skills, and have fun in a safe and welcoming learning environment afterschool.



Seko (in red) and other keiki listen as Mrs. Amano-Ige shares a story



Leadership in Disabilities & Achievement of Hawaii

The "A-Ha" Factor

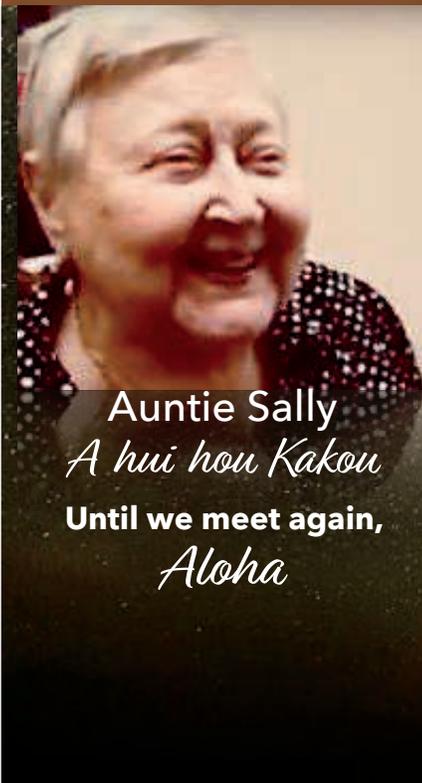
Have you ever experienced an "a-ha" moment? Have you ever watched someone experiencing an "a-ha" moment? The "a-ha" moment according to Dictionary.com means, "a sudden understanding, recognition or resolution used to know how to proceed."

As Hawaii's Parent Training & Information (PTI) Center, LDAH watches parents experience "a-ha" moments daily. The connections are made and parents explode with energy to move forward with developing their advocacy style. It's amazing to see! Lately, LDAH has been making sure our newly developed workshop series are available to parents and professionals statewide by partnering with providers like the Exceptional



Parents at Hawaii's Parent Training & Information Center workshop

Family Member Program (EFMP) through several branches of the military. LDAH presented Hawaii Administrative Rules; Chapter 60 for those families and professionals eager to get their curiosities filled and questions answered about their child's disability and their entitlement to an appropriate education. What a success! Talk about an "a-ha" moment. Every parent and professional who sat through the entire workshop experienced an "a-ha" moment. All of us agreed, "we wish we had more time." To top it all off, parents organized a network of communication among themselves to continue conversations specific to military families in Hawai'i. LDAH sent people home wondering if we can do this again. **We say, YES!**



Auntie Sally
A hui hou Kakou
Until we meet again,
Aloha

"Oli Mahalo"

Uhola ia ka makaloa la
Pu`ai i ke aloha a
Kuka`i ia ka ha loa la
Pawehi mai na lehua
Mai ka ho`oku`i a ka
halawai la
Mahalo e na Akua
Mahalo e na kupuna la ea
Mahalo me ke aloha la
Mahalo me ke aloha la

The makaloa mat has been
unfolded
Food is shared in Love
The great breath is exchanged
The Lehua honors and adores
From zenith to horizon
Gratitude to God
Gratitude to our ancestors
Gratitude with love
Gratitude with love

E Komo Mai

At the close of 2019 the Kukui Center welcomed the following organizations to the Community Partners 'Ohana



Aloha Diaper Bank



Bodhi Massage
Therapy



Kukui Children's Foundation
Board President- John Dwyer, Jr.
with AESolutions LLC



Hawaii Youth
Services
Network



E Noa Corporation



Professional Image
Hawaii



Wendell Elento



HONBLUE



Hawaii Lodging &
Tourism Assn.

Partnerships for Donations of Services

Ace Security and Locksmiths
 Advanced Fencing Solutions
 AESolutionsLLC
 Afterschool Art
 Aloha Diaper Bank
 Alston Hunt Floyd & Ing
 ALTRES Global Business Services
 American Savings Bank
 Anthology Marketing Group
 Bodhi Massage Therapy
 Cushman & Wakefield ChaneyBrooks
 College Directions Hawaii
 Denton US LLP
 DSK Contractors
 E Noa Corporation
 Wendell Elento
 Dennis Kim
 HACBED
 Hawaii Digi Doc
 Hawaii Self Storage
 HawaiiUSA Federal Credit Union
 HONBLUE
 IPR Hawaii
 King's Kustom Tinting
 KFVE Hawaii News Now
 Law Offices of Neal K.Aoki
 Learn to Love Yoga
 Leonui Communications
 Michael J. O'Malley
 'Ohana Komputer
 Pacific Data Services
 Professional Image Hawaii
 Take2 Productions
 The Bead Gallery
 The CPA Collective
 YMCA of Honolulu

Partnerships for Donations of Goods

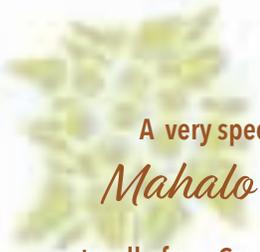
Assn. of Legal Administrators
 Aunty Sally Kanehe
 Aloha Diaper Bank
 Big City Diner
 CS Wo & Sons
 GWizPromotions
 Honolulu Sign Company
 Islander Group
 Junior League Sustainers
 Pepsi Beverages Company
 Servco Pacific
 Soderholm Bus Sales and Leasing
 Soldat Construction
 Trade West
 Vim and Vigor

Partnerships with Volunteers, Service Clubs, Non-Profit Organizations

Arcadia Retirement Residence
 Bruce McEwan
 Habilitat, Inc.
 Hands in Helping Out
 Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Assn.
 Hawaii Youth Services Network
 Harris United Methodist Church
 Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority
 Luke Center for Public Services
 Seymour Kazimirski
 Waikiki Community Center Seniors
 Winners Camp Foundation

Partnerships for Donations of Funds

Aloha United Way
 Evans Fund
 Ili'ili Fund
 Jhamandas Watumull Fund
 Friends of Hawaii Charities
 Izumo Taishakyo Mission of Hawaii
 Na Lei Aloha Foundation
 Women's League of Central Union Church


A very special, heartfelt
Mahalo Nui Loa
to all of our Community Partners
for your unwavering support of the Kukui
Center and its partners. Your countless hours
of volunteerism and donations of much
needed goods and services have greatly
benefitted
the Keiki and 'Ohana at the Kukui Center.

To the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association, *Mahalo Palena 'Ole*,
 for your monetary gift to Healthy Mothers
 Healthy Babies, Family Promise, Hawaii
 Immigrant Justice Center, Hale Kipa,
 Mediation Center of the Pacific, Leadership in
 Disabilities & Achievement in Hawaii, Hawaii
 Literacy and Kids Hurt Too Hawaii.



Judy Lind-Kukui Center, Rosie Rowe-LDAH,
 Mufi Hannemann-Hawaii Lodging
 & Tourism Association

If you know of an individual, non-profit or organization that can offer their support and interested in joining our Community Partners Program, please email mamong@kukuicenter.org.



Harry and Jeanette Weinberg
Kukui Center

A gathering place for those who serve vulnerable children and families

**245 North Kukui Street
 Honolulu, Hawaii 96817**

Spring 2020

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www.kukuicenter.org

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Family Promise of Hawaii

Resources for homeless
 families with children
 (808) 548-7478

www.familypromisehawaii.org

**Hawaii Immigrant
 Justice Center at LASH**

Legal services for immigrant victims
 of abuse and domestic violence
 (808) 536-4302

www.hijcenter.org

Hale Kipa

Outreach services for child abuse
 victims in, or transitioning out of,
 foster care to become independent
 (808) 853-4660

info@halekipa.org

Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies

Advocacy for a child's right to be born
 healthy and raised in a safe
 and nurturing environment

(808) 737-5805

MothersCare Line

(808) 951-6660

info@hmhb-hawaii.org

Hawaii Literacy

Literacy and lifelong
 learning services

(808) 537-6706

www.hawaiiliteracy.org

Kids Hurt Too Hawaii

Support for grieving children
 who have lost a parent
 (808) 545-5683 or (808) 256-3176

www.kidshurtoo.org

**Leadership in Disabilities &
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Training center for parents
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 (808) 536-9684

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