



FALL 2024

BEHIND THE SCENES

We recently highlighted the impressive service numbers of our tenant organizations. Now we turn our focus to the people behind the scenes—the dedicated leaders of the Kukui Center (KC) tenant agencies who tirelessly provide high-quality services to vulnerable children and families.

The Executive Directors of the seven nonprofit agencies co-located at the KC lead with commitment, carrying out their organizations' missions and visions while supporting their staff. Often working without recognition, they are the driving force behind the life-changing services provided at the KC.

This dedication is mirrored by the Kukui Children's Foundation (KCF), which owns and operates the KC. A video on the homepage of our website, kukuicenter.org, showcases the collaborative efforts of these agencies. At the beginning it mentions a "Group of Concerned and Dedicated Citizens" who founded what is now the Kukui Center.

This group, consisting of the KCF Board of Directors, has been devoted to preventing child abuse by supporting the work of the KC agencies. By offering low-cost rent and shared resources, KCF empowers these nonprofits to focus on their direct services, allowing them to reach more children and families.

The KCF's vision led to the purchase and renovation of the building and the creation of this collaborative model that defines the KC today.

You can check out the back page of our newsletter, where the board members are listed, and also visit the KC website to watch the video. You'll be inspired by the impactful work happening here and the dedicated people making it all possible.



*by Lorraine Gershun
Executive Director*

Sunny Chen



healthymothers
healthybabies
COALITION OF HAWAII

Sunny is the Executive Director of Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii. She is a mother to a creative daughter and two rambunctious boys, wife to an active duty Medical Corps Officer and an Army Nurse Corps veteran. She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of San Francisco and holds an MBA from the Paul Merage School of Business, UC Irvine.

As a board certified lactation consultant, she loves to support families during their breastfeeding journey. She is passionate about advocacy and social justice for birthing people. Her nickname is "Baby Whisperer" and in her free time, she loves to cook, learn mandarin and golf.

As a teen, Walker Rowsey experienced the tragic loss of his mother from suicide. This loss started him on his own healing journey from Texas, to an education at University of Sydney in Australia, and eventually all the way to Kids Hurt Too Hawai'i. Walker assumed the reins of Kids Hurt Too from cofounder Cynthia White in April of 2023. During this time, he has utilized his past history of loss and trauma to help guide his work at the organization, allowing KHTH to maintain the heart and soul they have become famous for while also growing to serve more families than ever. His novel approach to leadership and original thinking has gifted the state with its first-ever mobile social-emotional learning unit to serve the families impacted by the Lahaina Wildfire.

Walker uses the memory of his mother to galvanize his dedication to KHT and the families they serve. Through this, he is able to weave together his own mission of ensuring that no youth or family endures the hardship he did on his journey with that of Kids Hurt Too's. Walker is proud to represent and lead Kids Hurt Too, and feels honored to have assumed the responsibility that has been gifted to him. It is his hope to have KHT's services available to all households across the state.



Kids Hurt Too Hawaii
Healing Young Hearts



Walker

rowsey



Jill Takasaki Canfield

Jill brings 25 years of experience in K-12 schools, universities and educational non-profits in Beijing, Honolulu and Denver to her role as Executive Director of Hawaii Literacy, an organization that helps children and adults learn to read and write by providing books, tutors, and the skills needed to break cycles of poverty and under-education.



Prior to joining Hawaii Literacy, Jill served as the Director of Dual Language and International Programs at Maryknoll School where she helped launch Hawaii's first Chinese Immersion Program. Her experience also includes serving as Executive Director of the Pacific and Asian Affairs Council, Project Manager at the University of Denver's Center for China-US Cooperation, Development Director and Community Relations Director at youth organizations in underserved communities in Denver, and teaching ESL, World Values & Culture in International Business and Project Management. She is on the Board of the Pacific and Asian Affairs Council, and has served on the Sister-State Committee, UH CIBER Advisory Board, and 'Olelo Community Media Board.

REBECCA



LEGAL AID
SOCIETY OF HAWAII



LIEBOWITZ

Aloha,

As the managing attorney at the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii's Immigrant Justice Center, I feel very lucky to work with a great team and amazing clients in a welcoming environment supported by the Kukui Center.

This year marks my sixth year at the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii where I started as a housing attorney and then returned to focus on immigration work which was the area I had practiced in before moving to Hawaii in 2017.

Now I practice both immigration and public benefit law with Legal Aid. I work with low-income families in need of legal support and survivors of domestic violence and other serious crimes. I find the work very meaningful and am motivated by the resiliency and strength I see around me on a regular basis. Some of the highlights of my work include opportunities to educate the community on the immigration rights and options available to survivors of domestic violence and helping my clients become US citizens.

When I am not working, I am spending time with my family in Kailua - usually at the beach or volunteering at my kids' sporting events. I also greatly enjoy the pool and open-water swimming.





ROSIE ROWE

Rosie is the Executive Director of Leadership in Disabilities & Achievement of Hawai'i (LDAH), a 501(c)3 organization improving the lives of parents and their children with, or at risk of disabilities to receive an equitable education in the public school system. Before this role, Rosie served as the Education & Training Coordinator where she managed the organization's two major programs, wrote and designed training curriculum for parents and professionals and managed 10 program staff. Rosie holds a master's in business administration/ministry leadership and a certificate in developmental disabilities.

As a sibling of a brother with down syndrome and a mom to three adult daughter's Rosie has over 30 years of expertise in special education as a former Educational Assistant, Teacher and Administrator of a private non-profit center for children and adults with developmental disabilities. In her role as administrator, she assisted with the closure of Hawai'i's State's Institution for the Mentally Retarded in 1999. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her family, walking and staying active.



Leadership
in Disabilities &
Achievement of
Hawai'i



ward BROOKE

Brooke is the Program Manager for Hale Kipa's 'IHI (Interdependent, Higher Education, & Imua Kakou) program. Brooke returned to school after having her two children and was encouraged to attend college by her supervisor at HCAP Head Start. She studied Psychology at Leeward Community College and UH West Oahu, with a double major in Anthropology and a Certificate in Forensic Anthropology.

Brooke studied Counseling Psychology at Chaminade for her master's degree, and during her internship at Wheeler Middle School, she found her passion for working with teenagers. Her first job out of college was with LDAH (Leadership in Disabilities & Achievement of Hawai'i) and her first introduction to the Kukui Center. After leaving LDAH, she worked for COYSA (Central Oahu Youth Services Agency) and discovered her passion for working with foster youth. That experience further directed her passion for helping foster youth and solidified the clients she wanted to work with. She has been with Hale Kipa for the last seven years, originally as the Assistant Program Coordinator and currently as the Program Manager. She enjoys learning from the clients and Case Managers and finding better ways to support and help the young adults and youth participating in the 'IHI program."





RYAN CATALANI



Born and raised in Kāneʻohe, Ryan Catalani has over a decade of experience serving as a nonprofit leader and collaborating with communities to address critical social challenges. He has dedicated much of his career to addressing family homelessness, currently serving as Executive Director of Family Promise of Hawaiʻi (FPH), a nonprofit dedicated to preventing and ending homelessness for children and families. Previously, Ryan served on the FPH Board of Directors, and before moving back to Hawaiʻi, worked at Family Promise of Northern New Castle County, Delaware, another one of over 200 independent, locally based Family Promise affiliates nationwide.

Ryan serves on the Boards of Directors of Pacific Gateway Center, Kualoa-Heʻeia Ecumenical Youth (KEY) Project, and the Association of Fundraising Professionals Aloha Chapter. He is also the Advisory Board Treasurer for Partners in Care and a member of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) Committee of the National Family Promise Board of Directors. Ryan was named one of Hawaiʻi's "40 Under 40" by Pacific Business News, received an "Emerging Leader" award from the Hawaiʻi Alliance of Nonprofit Organizations (HANO), and recognized as "Community Leader of the Year" by the Hawaiʻi Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals Program. He was also a HANO Fellow.

An alum of Punahou School and Emerson College, Ryan also co-founded Bookzingo, an online textbook marketplace, and Mobility Movilidad, a nonprofit collaborating with immigrants and displaced communities through art and storytelling projects. Prior to his current position, Ryan served as Director of Advancement at Hawaiʻi Children's Action Network.



Welina mai i ka 'Ohana

Welcome to our Family of Community Partners

ROTARY CLUB OF HONOLULU

Aloha! The Rotary Club of Honolulu, Hawai'i's oldest Rotary Club, founded in 1915, is guided by the philosophy of "Service Above Self" and the 4-way test: "Is it the Truth; Is it Fair to all concerned; Will it build Goodwill and Better Friendships; Will it be Beneficial to all concerned."

"The Rotary Club of Honolulu focuses on meaningful service projects, including supporting the Kukui Children's Foundation's mission to assist disadvantaged children and families. Recently, we helped Kids Hurt Too Hawai'i paint their mobile social-emotional learning unit to serve the families impacted by the Lahaina wildfire."

Nancy Youngren, Director of Community Service
Rotary Club of Honolulu



Rotary Club of Honolulu also engage in international service projects in countries like the Philippines, Thailand, and Cambodia. Join us for lunch meetings most Tuesdays at noon at the Outrigger Canoe Club. Contact Lee LaBrash at administrator@honolulurotary.com for more information.



DIGITAL VAULT CONSULTING, LLC

We are incredibly grateful to Digital Vault Consulting and its owner, Pono Kraan, for their outstanding support at the Kukui Center. Pono responded immediately to our request for assistance, quickly diagnosing and resolving our computer issues. Within just an hour, everything was back up and running smoothly. Pono not only donated the computer equipment for our conference room but also provided troubleshooting support when we encountered further connectivity issues. His efficiency, expertise, and dedication truly demonstrate his skill and commitment to his work. We sincerely appreciate his prompt and professional service.

Mahalo Nui Loa

COMMUNITY PARTNERS FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF GOODS AND SERVICES

Partnerships for Donations of Services

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Afterschool Art
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Simplicity HR by ALTRES
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Partnerships for Donations of Funds

Aloha United Way
Alapaka Charitable Fund
Altres Foundation
American Savings Bank
Clarence T.C. Ching Foundation
Davis Levin Livingston Charitable Foundation
Ekkebus Charitable Foundation
Evans Fund

Partnerships for Donations of Funds (cont'd)

First Insurance Charitable Foundation
Friends of Hawaii Charities
Ili'ili Fund
Izumo Taishakyo Mission of Hawaii
Jhamandas Watumull Fund
Na Lei Aloha Foundation
Women's League of Central Union Church

Partnerships for Donations of Goods

Aloha Diaper Bank
American T-Shirt Company
Association of Legal Administrators
Beautiful Gifts Hawai'i
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Islander Group
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Soderholm Bus and Mobility
Soldat Construction
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Partnerships with Volunteers, Service Clubs & Non-Profit Organizations

Areadia Retirement Residence
Habilitat, Inc.
Hands in Helping Out
Harris United Methodist Church
Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Assn.
Hawaii Youth Services Network
Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority
Deborah Leimomi Kondo
Luke Center for Public Service
Bruce McEwan
Nanakuli Housing Corporation
Rotary Club of Honolulu
Mary Shimizu, MBA, RA
Seymour Kazimirski-Global Consulting Co.
Waikiki Community Center Seniors
Winners Camp Foundation

To make a donation of goods or services to the agencies at the Kukui Center, please
contact mamong@kukuicenter.org or call 808-343-2700



Harry and Jeanette Weinberg
Kukui Center

A gathering place for those who serve vulnerable children and families

245 North Kukui Street - #103
 Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

III

OUR FAMILY OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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 Marlene Among
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kcf@kukuicenter.org
 www.kukuicenter.org

*If you would like to receive our
 newsletter electronically, send
 your email address to
 mamong@kukuicenter.org*

FAMILY PROMISE OF HAWAII

Preventing and ending
 homelessness for families
 with children
 808-300-0560
 www.familypromisehawaii.org

HALE KPA

Outreach, residential and
 therapeutic services for youth
 and young adults in crisis and
 those transitioning from the
 foster care system into adulthood
 808-589-1829
 www.halekpa.org

HAWAII LITERACY

Literacy and lifelong learning services
 808-537-6706
 www.hawaiiliteracy.org

HAWAII IMMIGRANT JUSTICE CENTER AT LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF HAWAII

Civil legal services for low income
 families and immigrant victims of
 crime, including domestic violence,
 sexual assault and human trafficking
 808-536-4302
 www.legalaidhawaii.org

HEALTHY MOTHERS HEALTHY BABIES

COALITION OF HAWAII

Advocacy and direct services for
 pregnant and birthing people so that
 babies can be born healthy and raised
 in a safe and nurturing environment
 808-737-5805
 www.hmhb-hawaii.org

KIDS HURT TOO HAWAII

Support for grieving and traumatized
 children
 808-545-5683
 www.kidshurttoo.org

LEADERSHIP IN DISABILITIES AND ACHIEVEMENT OF HAWAII

Training and screening center for
 parents of children with or at risk of
 disabilities and the professionals
 that serve them
 808-536-9684
 www.ldahawaii.org



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 MAHALO

