



The Kukui Center Grows

The Kukui Center opened fifteen years ago with the vision to provide a center where abused, vulnerable and disadvantaged children and their families can find the help that they need, all in one place. We are a “one stop shop” where seven human services agencies work collaboratively to provide a variety of crucial services that address housing, health, literacy, education, finances, grief, trauma, and more.

Fifteen years later, our agencies continue to do more for more people. They have expanded their reach statewide to bring the services directly to the community. Collectively, our agencies now serve tens of thousands of clients a year.

If you pull into our parking lot you will see several large vans that each bear the name of one of the KC agencies. These vans make it even easier for people to access what they need, reaching directly into the heart of communities to ensure accessibility for all. Children and families that have travel challenges can also have access. Hawai'i Literacy's Book Mobile runs regular weekly routes in Honolulu and the Leeward Coast. Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies (HMHB) takes their Mana Mama mobile medical unit to clients in need. Leadership in Disabilities and Achievement (LDAH) School Readiness Project operates a mobile screening unit that administers screening for developmental, hearing and vision screening for children ages one to five.



The commitment extends beyond O'ahu, with services now spanning the neighbor islands. Kids Hurt Too Hawai'i offers peer support and mentoring services for grieving and traumatized children on Maui. Hawaii Literacy's Adult Literacy program staffs offices on Hawai'i Island and Kauai. HMHB staffs mobile medical units on Hawai'i Island and Maui. Family Promise of Hawaii has also expanded to Maui to help address the housing needs of families with children. Hale Kipa helps youth in crisis across the state with outreach, shelter, and prevention services.

Welcome to our newsletter. You will find that the following pages illustrate the dedication of our agencies in serving children and families at the KC while, simultaneously, breaking down barriers by taking services directly to communities and individuals in need.



by Lorraine Gershun
Executive Director

Strengthening Communities Through Collaboration



On the morning of Wednesday, March 6, 2024, we stumbled upon key staff from our Kukui Center neighbors. We were all boarding the same flight– Executive Directors and other staff members from Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii, Kids Hurt Too Hawaii, Family Promise of Hawaii, and Hawaii Literacy. Together we converge with a shared mission to uplift and empower families not just on Oahu, but on Maui as well.

At the core of our collaboration is a dedication to serving the diverse needs of Hawaii's families. HMHB focuses on maternal and child health, offering vital resources and support to ensure the well-being of mothers and infants. Kids Hurt Too Hawaii addresses the unique challenges faced by children coping with grief and trauma, providing counseling and therapeutic services to help them heal. Complementing these efforts, Hawaii Literacy works tirelessly to promote literacy and lifelong learning, recognizing education as a fundamental tool for empowerment. Family Promise of Hawaii extends a helping hand to families experiencing homelessness, guiding them towards stability and self-sufficiency through shelter, support, and resources.

Individually, we make a profound impact on our communities, but by pooling all of our resources, expertise, and networks, we can reach even greater heights of impact and effectiveness. Recognizing the urgent need for support on Maui we all mobilized swiftly to extend services to those affected by the Lahaina wildfires. Whether it's providing emergency medical supplies, offering counseling and mental health support, or assisting with housing and relocation efforts, we are committed to helping families rebuild their lives.



New Public Benefit Law for COFA Migrants will help Hawai'i Families Struggling with Food Insecurity

New federal legislation passed in early March of 2024 will make Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits available to migrants from Palau, Micronesia and the Marshall Islands who qualify for the program. The legislation also provides eligibility for many other government programs that once were restricting to Compact of Free Association (COFA) migrants such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Medicaid assistance was already restored to COFA migrants in 2020. Generally, SNAP benefits are available to families and individuals who are food insecure and have low incomes.

Many eligible COFA Migrants who have US citizen children already receive SNAP benefits for their households. However, these benefits were pro-rated in the past to exclude benefits for the COFA migrants themselves. The new legislation means that many families may be eligible for increased benefit payments. Currently, the State of Hawai'i's Department of Human Services (DHS) is working with its federal partners to implement these new changes to the SNAP program. SNAP benefits in Hawai'i are administered by DHS and can be applied for online at <https://pais-benefits.dhs.hawaii.gov/>. Applications can also be made by mail and in person at a DHS Processing Center. The State of Hawai'i provides interpretation services for applicants and participants in the SNAP program.

The Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i may be able to provide legal help to families who have wrongfully been denied benefits or are facing barriers to enrollment.



Never Too Late To Learn!

In this digital age, everything is dependent on technology. You are able to make a fast food order or get a meal delivered to your home right from your computer or smartphone. For some kūpuna this may make doing day to day things a little harder as we move into a completely digitized world. It is important for this age group to have access to knowledge on how to navigate this ever evolving digital climate.

And it's never too late to learn! Clifford, a kūpuna, is one of the students at Hawaii Literacy's Digital literacy class run by the Digital Literacy coordinator, Law Chavez. This class is designed to help even the newest of users to digital literacy, starting with foundational skills like learning how to first locate the power button all the way up to using programs on the computer for word processing and spreadsheets. Clifford's eagerness to learn and use technology to his advantage has helped him quickly advance through the lessons taught. He is endlessly thankful to the staff here at Hawaii Literacy, especially to Law. Clifford is currently working on learning how to use and navigate an Apple MacBook.



Disability Etiquette 101

We don't often think that there is such a thing as disability etiquette unless we are around people with disabilities. When it is a part of your life, you don't think about what's proper, you just do it. Here are some key points to remember for when you happen to be in a supermarket, restaurant, or any public place and you see a person with a disability who needs help. Some times it might be the companion who is escorting the person with a disability who needs help.



1. Don't assume the person with a disability needs help if you see them struggle with a task.
2. When offering assistance, always wait for a response.
3. If assistance is accepted, listen carefully to what they are asking.
4. If a person is in a wheelchair, realize that their wheelchair is part of their personal space, therefore putting your hands on it or touching it will be a concern for them.
5. Some people with disabilities depend on their arms. Grabbing them, even if your intention is to assist, could knock them off balance.
6. Always speak directly to the person with a disability, not to their companion.
7. If you assist someone who is blind, be sure you identify yourself verbally before you make contact with them.

8. Avoid shouting at people who have a hearing loss or are wearing a hearing device.

9. People who have physical disabilities such as a cleft lip, craniofacial disfigurement or skin condition, do not want to be treated like they have a disease that you can catch. Talk to them like you would talk to any person . . . and stop staring!

10. Using baby talk or talking down to a person with a developmental disability is generally impolite. Talk normally as you would for any 5 year old, 15 year old or a 25 year old. Their chronological age is what's important to consider so that they will feel respected.



Kids Hurt Too Hawaii

Healing Young Hearts

Collaboration at Work

Since the devastation of the Lahaina wildfires, KHTH has been working with Pā'ia Elementary to deliver our disaster-adapted services to their students and families through both in and out-of-school activities. Earlier this year, through further partnership with our fellow Kukui Center organization Hawaii Literacy, Kids Hurt Too Hawaii has been able to facilitate the addition of a little library to Pā'ia Elementary on Maui! This library will serve to give the students greater access to literary resources in their school environment, which have been otherwise constrained due to a lack of space on campus. Additionally, KHTH and Hawaii Literacy have worked together to help ensure an ongoing stream of both 'Ōlelo and English books are available to replenish the school's incoming book vending machine. KHTH plans to extend unique opportunities like this to all of the education institutions we work with through continued partnership with the many other nonprofit organizations within our network. It is through this collaboration that we are able to make the greatest impact in the communities that we serve.



Pictured are Dee and Merilee (Principal) of Pā'ia Elementary and Executive Directors Walker (KHTH) and Jill (Hawaii Literacy) of the Kukui Center organizations.



In November 2023, the Kahuali'i Workforce Development Program at Hale Kipa embarked on a new journey by introducing Financial Literacy (Financial Lo'i) programming to youth served by Hale Kipa and those from the wider community. This initiative merges financial concepts with a Hawaiian perspective, fostering a unique and inclusive approach to financial education. This is made possible in partnership with the Waianae Economic Development Council.

In January, following the completion of this inaugural Financial Literacy class, we transitioned youth to Maoliprenuer classes to learn entrepreneurship concepts through a cultural lens and started a 2nd Cohort of Financial Lo'i. We've also initiated Workforce Development Tracks in trades such as: Film, Geo Technology, Car Engineering, Mural Artistry, Freight Farming/Aquaponics, and Lash Extension Certifications.

We are currently generating interest in these trades with Lash Extension Training opportunities to be held in the next several weeks with 3-4 young adults. There is also a plan to partner with other agencies who currently offer workforce trades as another avenue for youth to navigate.

The goal of Kahuali'i Workforce Development Program for our youth and young adults is to equip them with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to succeed in the workforce so that they have the tools and resources in them to earn a livable wage and lead fulfilling lives. For more information please contact: Brandy Akimo, Director 'Ohana Resilience Services at: 808-589-1829 x600 or by email: bakimo@halekipa.org



New Year, New Horizons

In Hawai'i, an estimated one in 30 young children experience homelessness annually, which drives our team to continuously seek ways to grow our programs and end homelessness for more families.

We have expanded our housing-focused case management services to Maui — the first time our organization has had a presence on multiple islands. This new team of six works with survivors of the Maui wildfires to help them find housing and holistically address their challenges, just as we do on O'ahu. Serendipitously, this team is located just a few doors down from the Maui office of one of our O'ahu neighbors and partners, Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies, at the J. Walter Cameron Center in Wailuku.

In February, we hosted our inaugural Brighter Futures Gala, which raised over \$214,000 to support our work to end family homelessness and honored the inaugural recipient of our Luminary Award, Governor Josh Green, M.D. "It is truly an honor to have received the inaugural Luminary Award from Family Promise of Hawai'i," Governor Green said. "Its mission, specializing in serving children and families experiencing homelessness, aligns with my priorities and I am happy to say that both the organization and my administration are making progress every day."

By coming together as a community, we are confident we can transform the lives of many more families as we continue to expand this year. Visit our website to get involved and help end family homelessness: familypromisehawaii.org.



At the Brighter Futures Gala: FPH Board President Jennifer Diesman, First Lady Jaime Green, Governor Josh Green, and FPH Executive Director Ryan Catalani.





mahalo

As the Kukui Center prepares to embark on another year of service to our island community of families, we extend our deepest gratitude to our community partners for their unwavering support. Your generous contributions enable us to carry out our vital work.

We are truly fortunate to have forged a special relationship with you and all our Community Partners, whose generosity has been invaluable, whether through time or donations. Every gesture, no matter how small, has made a meaningful impact on the lives of those we serve.

Our 2024 wish list outlines the much-needed goods and services for our seven non-profits dedicated to serving Hawai'i's vulnerable children and families. Your continued support in fulfilling these needs will enable us to further our mission and make a positive difference in the lives of those in need.

Once again, thank you for your ongoing commitment to our cause. Together, we are making a difference.

Me ke aloha pumehana.
Kukui Center 'Ohana

2024 WISH LIST

The Agencies at the Kukui Center need the following goods and services for the vulnerable children and families they serve. Please kōkua.

Contact: mamong@kukuicenter.org

HALE KIPA

- New tablets & laptops
- Working Condition Microwaves
- New Pillow Cases, Sheets, Furniture

HAWAII IMMIGRANT JUSTICE CENTER

- Volunteers to assist the elderly & disabled families move into housing

HEALTHY MOTHERS HEALTHY BABIES

- New GRACO Pack 'n Play Travel Cribs
- Folding Chairs

FAMILY PROMISE OF HAWAII

- Toiletries
- Air Mattresses
- Household Goods

KIDS HURT TOO HAWAII

- See thru Plastic Bins
- Air Purifier
- Volunteer to digitize & scan documents

HAWAII LITERACY

- Locally Published Books for Keiki (new or gently used)
- School Supplies & Back Packs
- See thru Plastic Bins

LEADERSHIP IN DISABILITIES AND ACHIEVEMENT IN HAWAII

- Gift Cards & School Supplies
- Volunteer Graphic Artist
- Volunteer AV Tech to help with virtual conferences

The Agencies at the Kukui Center need Gift Cards for Keiki Meals.



Mahalo

to our 2024 Community Partners for their continued support of goods and services.

Partnerships for Donations of Services

Ace Security & Locksmith
Advanced Fencing Solutions
AESolutions LLC
Afterschool Art
American Savings Bank
Anthology Marketing Group
Neal Aoki, Attorney at Law
Bodhi Massage Therapy
College Directions Hawaii
Denton US LLP
Foxbilt Electric Company
HACBED
Hawaii Digi Doc
Hawaii USA Federal Credit Union
HONBLUE
IPR Hawaii
Jessica Gong
Kahala Data Services
Dennis Kim
King's Kustom Tinting
Leonui Communications
Michael J. O'Malley
Aaron Ortiz
Ohana Komputer
Michael Powell
Professional Image Hawaii
RSI Roofing & Building Supply
Simplicity HR by ALTRES
Take2 Production
The Bead Gallery
The CPA Collective
The Lightman
YMCA of Honolulu

Partnerships for Donations of Funds

Aloha United Way
Clarence T.C. Ching Foundation
Ekkebus Charitable Foundation
Evans Fund
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 Hawaii
Big City Diner
CS Wo & Sons
GWIZ Promotions
Honolulu Sign Company
Kirk Hovious
Islander Group
Jordan and Cara Odo Scholarship Foundation
Pacific Home and Appliance Distribution
Soderholm Bus and Mobility
Soldat Construction
Vim and Vigor

Partnerships with Volunteers, Service Clubs & Non-Profit Organizations

Arcadia 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
Mary Shimizu, MBA, RA
Seymour Kazimirski-Global Consulting Co.
Waikiki Community Center Seniors
Winners Camp Foundation





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

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From Our 'Ohana to Yours, Mahalo Nui Loa for Your Support

FAMILY PROMISE OF HAWAII

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

HALE KIPA

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
info@halekipa.org

HAWAII LITERACY

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

LEADERSHIP IN DISABILITIES & 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

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

KIDS HURT TOO HAWAII

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