

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- \* \$5.8M is a Critical Figure
- \* 2012 DHS Legislation
- \* BPRP Implemented and Making an Impact

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# Across DHS: Island to Island

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2

SUMMER 2012

## From the Director Patricia McManaman

The Summer 2012 edition of *Across DHS: Island to Island* is filled with stories that highlight your “can-do” values and dedication to serving the people of Hawai'i. Throughout DHS, from office to office and division to division, your leadership is reshaping the Department and moving us forward towards a New Day.

Your successes are many. The BESSD staff continues to reduce the benefit application backlogs and to roll out the Division's business processing re-engineering program (BPRP). While providing essential services to adult and child victims of abuse and neglect, SSD is also working hard to implement proposals to extend voluntary foster care though age 21 and Medicaid coverage for aged out foster youth to age 26.

Despite needing to achieve \$75 million in savings as required by the state biennium budget, MQD staff preserved essential services for all of its clients. The Division also continues to move forward on its new eligibility system and to lead Hawai'i toward the January 1, 2014 Affordable Care Act launch date.

Long needed capital improvements are underway at Ho'opono under VR leadership. Earlier this year VR also played a principal role in implementation of the Individualized Supports (DEIS) Project. Administered by the Center on Disability Studies at UH-Manoa, the DEIS provides vocational counseling and financial support for tuition and books, and sponsoring workshop development activities for VR students on O'ahu and in Hilo.

HPHA has renovated and made available dozens of apartments at Mayor Wright Housing, and other units throughout the State. This is just part of HPHA's effort to improve access to public housing in Hawai'i, and to revitalize the community.

Together with DDIR Barbara Yamashita, I hope to see many of you over the summer as we visit Neighbor Island and Oahu offices to listen to your concerns and advice. I value those visits and appreciate your input and feedback regarding your work and the larger mission of the Department.

As always, thank you for your commitment to the DHS. You are a lifeline for our clients and their families. I continue to be inspired by your work, vision, and dedication to serving the people of Hawai'i.




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## DHS Receives Critical Funding for Staff Positions

Following a successful 2012 legislative session, the Department of Human Services (DHS) is gaining 55 staff positions. A \$5.8 million appropriation in the Department's Supplemental Budget will fund 22 restored positions in the Med-QUEST and BESSD divisions, as well as DHS payroll shortfalls. New positions for Vocational Rehab and the Public Housing Authority will be federally funded. Richard Carlson, Supervisor of the Management Services Offices' Budget Staff says, "This is the closest the DHS has ever come to having fully funded personnel services. It's a testament to the legislature's support of DHS and its administrators."

Under the leadership of Carlson, Budget staff spent weeks reviewing and calculating the Department's actual Personnel Services Requirements. DHS Director Patricia McManaman says, "Filling those positions will help the DHS reduce application backlogs, and improve program integrity."

The Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division (BESSD) is restoring seven positions across the state. Three people will be placed in the training office, and two BESSD child care positions are being restored to audit child care subsidy cases. State General Funds, TANF and CCDF are the sources of federal funds for these positions.

Restored BESSD positions also include two closed case files clerks on the neighbor islands. Maui and Kona are the only two Sections without closed file clerks. State General Funds, and SNAP and TANF federal funds (on

cost allocation basis) are the source of federal funds for these positions.

The Med-QUEST Division (MQD) is restoring 15 of 33 eligibility branch positions cut or frozen during the 2008 RIF. Meantime, enrollment in QUEST programs has since increased 36%. Administrator Dr. Kenny Fink says, "The restored positions will help improve timeliness of eligibility determinations, improve public access to eligibility-related issues and information, and improve program integrity by identifying individuals who are no longer eligible." By the end of 2011, an estimated 272,000 Hawai'i residents were receiving health care coverage through the MQD. Federal funding for this program comes from the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services.

Restoring positions to BESSD and MQD was proposed "only after we plugged the numbers into the \$5.8 million budget worksheet" said Carlson. "After doing all the calculations we had \$325,000 remaining, and that was enough to restore and fund 22 critical positions in BESSD and MQD."

The Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA) gained 19 positions. Hakim Ouansafi, Executive Director of HPHA said, "The new staff positions will help create a more equitable distribution of responsibilities among managers by creating new asset management projects and reducing the number of units some managers are currently supervising." The positions include public housing supervisors and specialists, carpenters, electricians and plumbers that might create new licensed trade employment opportunities following a recent union decision. Funding comes from the HUD operating subsidy, and rents from Federal public housing.

Ten new temporary positions also were created for Vocational Rehab (VR) to assist individuals with disabilities return to work. Seven of those full time case managers will be employed at the Oahu Branch to assist VR recipients become employed, meet work performance requirements and progress towards self-sufficiency. Each case manager will handle an average of 20+ VR clients per month. Services will include: identifying the client's needs and/or readiness for employment; developing a viable employment plan; and providing the services or coordinating referral to the appropriate provider of services. Direct services to VR recipients include work readiness; work attainment; and work maintenance skills training.



*DIR Pat McManaman and Budget's Richard Carlson and Joe Deponio celebrate a \$5.8 million appropriation and a successful legislative session*

*(Continued on page 9)*

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## 2012 DHS-Related Bills Signed by the Governor

**SB2798 SD1 HD1 - ACT 95** - RELATING TO INSURER REQUIREMENTS - Requires all commercial health care insurers operating in Hawai'i to share with the Department of Human Services, a listing of their members for Medicaid eligibility determination.

**SB2126 SD1 HD1 - ACT 93** - RELATING TO HEALTH CARE—Consolidates the authority, duties, responsibilities, and jurisdiction of the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health by transferring the programs of the Department of Human Services relating to home and community-based case management, community care foster family homes, and adult day care to the Department of Health on July 1, 2014.

**SB2709 HD2 - ACT 86** - RELATING TO FURNISHING THE DATE OF VITAL EVENTS TO GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITHIN THE STATE OF HAWAII THAT REQUEST VERIFICATION. Amends section 338-18, HRS, to allow the DOH to disclose dates of vital events to governmental agencies within the State of Hawai'i seeking verification of information contained in vital statistics records for purposes of updating official lists

**HB2539 HD1 - ACT 41** - RELATING TO ADULT ABUSE PERPETRATOR CHECKS FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS - Allows the Department of Human Services to conduct adult abuse perpetrator checks on legally exempt providers who care for children receiving child care subsidies from the department, applicants who want to operate a child care facility, prospective employees of the applicant, licensed child care providers and new employees of the registered or licensed provider.

**HB2540 HD2 SD1 CD1 - ACT 161** - RELATING TO FEES FOR CHILD CARE LICENSING AND REGISTRATION - Allows the Department of Human Services to charge reasonable fees to obtain a child care license or certificate of registration. Establishes a special fund.

**SB2804 SD2 HD1 CD1 - ACT 105** - RELATING TO THE HAWAII INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS - Establishes the Hawai'i Interagency Council on Homelessness to be administratively attached to the Department of Human Services; makes an appropriation for administrative expenses.

**HB2547 HD1 - ACT 40** - MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES—Emergency appropriation of the general revenues of the State of Hawai'i the sum of \$736,478 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2011-2012 to be used for general assistance payments.

**SB2808 - ACT 31** - MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FOR HEALTH CARE PAYMENTS - To appropriate \$11,881,157 in general funds for an emergency appropriation for fiscal year 2011-2012 for health care payments (HMS 401) to address a funding shortfall in the Medicaid program.

**HB2533 HD2 - ACT 28** - RELATING TO THE DEFINITION OF AGGRAVATED CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE CHILD PROTECTIVE ACT - To ensure that the definition of "aggravated circumstances" in chapter 587A, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, is consistent with recent changes to the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act provisions.

**SB2796 SD1- ACT 62** - RELATING TO DEATH BENEFITS - Makes permanent the decreased funeral benefit for medical and financial assistance recipients. And to establish that the Department of Human Services is responsible for the payment of the crematory and mortuary services for unclaimed dead human bodies after approving the determination that a dead human body is unclaimed.

**SB2797 SD1 HD1 CD1 - ACT 120** - RELATING TO PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATIONS IN MEDICAID - Allows the substitution of generic anti-anxiety and antidepressant medications in Medicaid to continue by repealing the sunset date.

**HB2537 HD2 - ACT 91**- RELATING TO DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS CONCERNING APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS OF HUMAN SERVICES AFTER AN IN CAMERA REVIEW BY THE COURT—Allows the Department of Human Services to disclose confidential records pursuant to a court order, after an in camera review of the records by the court, upon a showing of good cause by the party seeking the release of the records.

**SB2800 SD1 HD1 CD1 – ACT 163** - RELATING TO EXEMPTIONS FROM CHILD CARE LICENSING - Adds exemptions for any kindergarten, school, or program licensed by the Charter School Review Panel, the Hawai'i Council of Private Schools, or any federal agency from child care licensing by the Department of Human Services.

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**SB2803 SD2 - ACT 60** - RELATING TO CONTRACT PROPOSALS FOR CHILD CARE - Allows an exception to allow for proposals to be received from organizations that are not yet licensed to operate a child care program at a facility specified in the request for proposals.

**SB2810 SD1 HD1 CD1 - ACT 157** - RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT EXEMPTION FOR DOMESTIC SERVICES AUTHORIZED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES - To clarify and make consistent the wording relating to the exclusion of home and community based and attendant care services from the definition of "employment" for purposes of workers' compensation, temporary disability insurance, and the Prepaid Health Care Act.

**SB2466 SD2 HD2 CD1 - ACT 156** - RELATING TO LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES. Establishes the nursing facility sustainability program special fund into which nursing facility sustainability fees shall be deposited. Requires DHS to charge and collect a provider fee on health care items or services provided by nursing facilities. Effective 07/01/2050.

**HB2012 HD1 SD1 CD1 - ACT 106** - RELATING TO STATE BUDGET

**HB755 HD3 SD2 - ACT 160** - RELATING TO PUBLIC HOUSING. Conforms public housing eviction procedural requirements to federal law. Deletes requirement of establishing at least one eviction board in each county. Decreases the minimum member requirement of the eviction board. Allows eviction boards to use video conferencing to conduct hearings. (SD2)

**HB1398 HD1 SD1 CD1 - ACT 164** - RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY. Authorizes Hawai'i Public Housing Authority to develop public housing projects under a partnership or development agreement with a private party. Provides exemptions from chapters 103 and 103D, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, if not prohibited by federal law or regulation. Requires annual report to the Legislature. Effective July 1, 2012. (HB1398 CD1)

**HB2302 HD2 SD1 CD1 - ACT 159** - RELATING TO CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS. Exempts temporarily from state civil service, persons hired or contracted to repair and maintain vacant state housing units. Effective July 1, 2012.

**B2435 SD1 HD1 CD1 - ACT 199** - RELATING TO INFORMATION ACCESS. Appropriates funds for the vocational rehabilitation and services for the blind division of the department of human services to contract for a telephone-based service to provide access to timely print media.

**HB2415 HD2 SD1 CD1 - ACT 200** - RELATING TO MEDICAID. Establishes a joint legislative task force to assist the Department of Human Services in exploring the development and possible implementation of a Medicaid buy-in program for working individuals with disabilities.

**HB2448 HD2 SD2 CD1 - ACT 211** - RELATING TO MEDICAID—Attorney General Administration bill that will enhance Medicaid recovery and program integrity. Recovered \$2.3 million in FY 2011 from third party liens.

**HB2775 SD2 CD1 - ACT 217** - RELATING TO HOSPITALS—Provider assessments are commonly used to generate revenue for a state by leveraging federal funds through Medicaid. The DHS and stakeholders recognize that the provider fee would provide the State an opportunity to obtain additional federal matching funds which could be used to help reduce hospital losses resulting from uncompensated care costs and provide the State with revenues to support the Medicaid programs.

**HB2545 SD2 HD2 CD1 - ACT 106** - RELATING TO EDUCATION—The DHS does have a concern regarding the repeal of the junior kindergarten program. Services and programs need to be made available for these late-born children. There may be some fiscal impact to the DHS if there are no specific programs or funding available for those late-born five year old children when the junior kindergarten program is repealed. Annual costs for child care for these children through the DHS could be between \$1-2 million per month.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO BESSD

Remarkable, Awesome, Well Done and Outstanding! Those are just a few of the words to describe the wonderful accomplishments of the BESSD offices that have implemented the Business Process Reengineering Project (BPRP). The DHS eligibility staff is now meeting the 95% federal timeliness standard for SNAP benefit issuance. That's a significant improvement over seven months ago when some units were reporting 29% timeliness. BESSD implemented BPRP in late 2011 to address a significant application backlog cited in a federal injunction. BPRP has improved the timeliness of eligibility reviews and shortened the waiting period for applicants applying for SNAP benefits.

All benefits offices should be on line with BPRP by the end of September 2012. The last locations to launch the program are the KPT, Waianae and Wahiawa Processing Centers on Oahu. BESSD will continue to analyze and review BPRP processes and operations, including policies, procedures, and future system needs.

Meantime, BESSD received a letter from the USDA in June 2012 commending Hawai'i for its continued commitment to achieving SNAP payment accuracy rates that have consistently been better than the national average.

Congratulations to BESSD and eligibility staff across the state for a job well done!

### Timeliness Statistics for June 2012

#### **Maui**

State Building Processing Center	95.5%
Lunalilo Building Processing Center	97.3%
Total	95.8%

#### **Hilo**

North Hilo Processing Center	99.3%
South Hilo Processing Center	97.1%
Total	98.2%

#### **Kauai**

West Processing Center	71.4%
East Processing Center	95.8%
Total:	95.4%

#### **Oahu (Kapolei, OR&L and Pohulani)**

Kapolei Processing Center	95.3%
OR&L Processing Center	81.5%
Pohulani Processing Center	89.0%
Total	88.8%

<b>Statewide</b> Timeliness Rate	90.1%
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## Ho'opono Donation

Jacob Kamaunu recently donated \$10,000 to the Friends of Ho'opono as a result of winning a 2011 grant from the Weinberg Foundation. Jacob has Sarcosis and Vogt-Koyanagi-Harada Syndrome which caused his vision loss. In a letter he wrote to the Ho'opono staff he refers to the New Visions program, administered by the Vocational Rehab Division. Its mission is to create an environment where students gain the knowledge, skills and positive attitude they need to achieve success in life. Jacob entered New Visions because he was doing nothing with his life, and his eye condition was getting progressively worse. As the father of five children and the primary source of income for his family, Jacob needed to find a way to remain productive in life. He relocated to Washington State to be closer with his children, and is now working as a marble tile mason. He sent the below letter to the Ho'opono Staff:

Aloha Lea (Gruppen) and staff of Ho'opono,

It was my honor to choose Ho'opono as the recipient of this (\$10,000) donation because of everything the agency and staff has done for me through my time there and beyond. The program gave me confidence, independence and inspirational experience along with financial support. I pray the same will be given to other students, so they may gain the same qualities and share the same experiences toward growth in overcoming blindness. I am highly pleased to be able to give back to the blind community, a dream two years prior that actually came true and exceeded my expectations. You have definitely changed my life and for that I am eternally grateful!

~ Mahalo Jacob Kamaunu

### DHS 'Ohana Updates

#### **Welcome:**

June 2012—**Colin Kippen**, Coordinator Homelessness Program

#### **Promotions**

April 2102—**Scott Nakasone**, Self-Sufficiency and Support Services Assistant Administrator (Assistant Division Administrator for BESSD)

April 2012—**Julie Morita**, Self-Sufficiency and Support Services Manager (BESSD Oahu Branch Administrator)

#### **A Fond Aloha (Retirement)**

June 2012—**Linda Tsark**, SNAP Administrator

June 2012—**Luanne Murakami**, Neighbor Island Branch Administrator

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## Supporting Hawai'i's Foster Youth

It's no secret that raising children requires stable financial and emotional resources, organizational skills, patience and creativity. But, what about children who can't rely on a biological family member to provide those basic needs? Hopefully, the child's foster family, with support from non-profit organizations and the State of Hawai'i, will fill the gaps.

Twice a year, all those resources co-locate at a single event held especially for foster youth 14 – 16 years old. Called Teen Day, organizers introduce the teens to a variety of community resources that will help them transition to adulthood. Youth advocates also emphasize the importance of youth attending their court hearings.

Event coordinators gather feedback from youth through evaluation forms and one-on-one conversations. Committee member Malia Malufau is a former foster youth and 2011 college graduate who currently works for the DHS. She said, "Based on previous comments, this year we felt it was important to focus Teen Day on developing social capital to sustain youth after foster care."

The overarching theme for Teen Day is "Dream4Real." Malia and Judith Wilhoite (Family Advocate, Teen Day coordinator, and former resource caregiver) agree the inherent needs of foster youth have not changed much in recent years. Youth still need to know how important they are, and to really know they have strengths that non-foster youth don't. They need to hear positive things like "You're great" or "You're an amazing singer," because they may not hear that otherwise. Those same youth need the opportunity to participate in meaningful activities, sports and community committees, acquire work experience, and develop social capital.

At Teen Day, youth who successfully transitioned to adulthood offer inspirational speeches, and share the importance of planning and mapping out one's short and long term goals. All adults involved in the youth's life (social worker, guardian ad litem (GAL), and resource caregivers) are invited to participate in Teen Day activities. They also are encouraged to participate in the youth's *circle of care* to learn about available youth programs and opportunities. That same information can be passed on to the youth under their supervision.

When compared to youth raised in more stable households, foster youth face a different set of challenges. The Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of For-

mer Foster Youth (2010) reports that of former foster youth ages 23 and 24:

- 24% were homeless at some point in their lives;
- 25% felt self-sufficient when they exited foster care;
- 20% less likely than their counterparts to earn a college degree;
- 50% less likely than their counterparts to complete any college education;
- 48% were employed.

Adults who work with foster youth must continuously educate themselves about new resources that improve youths' quality of life. Malia says, "Advances in technology and a greater reliance on social networking require that we communicate with youth in a different way. We must provide youth with the tools and resources to respond to us through familiar means, and prepare them to navigate, function and succeed in society. The Department is doing a good job in catching up with current technology through the use of social media as means of reaching youth to ensure they know about our programs and resources."

*(Continued on page 7)*



*Malia Malufau (Former Foster Youth & Youth Advocate), Judith Wilhoite (Family Advocate), Gernani Yutob (Former Foster Youth and Youth Advocate)*

(Youth continued from page 6)

The 2012 Teen Day was held at the Ronald T.Y. Moon Courthouse in Kapolei and is an initiative of the Judiciary's Standing Committee on Children in Family Court. Organized by the Judiciary's Court Improvement Program, with the help of Family Programs Hawai'i and a planning committee composed of the Department of Human Services, the Judiciary, and guardians ad litem, participating organizations included: Big Brothers Big Sisters of Honolulu, Bridge to Hope, Boys and Girls Club of Maui, Hawai'i Association for College Admission Counseling, Children's Alliance of Hawai'i, DHS ShakaTown!, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Epic 'Ohana Youth Circles, former foster youth at the University of Hawai'i, Gear Up, Hale Kipa, Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition, Hawai'i Conservation Youth Corp, Hawai'i Youth Opportunities Initiative, Honolulu Young Parents Program, Project Visitation, Job Corps, Leeward Community College, 'Ohana Connections, Upward Bound, WIA Youth Program, Youthbuild Honolulu, 'Imi 'Ike, Mentoring Connections, and the Hawai'i Association for College Admission Counseling.

Teen Day 2012 was the first to include neighbor island youth. Sixteen youth from Maui and Hawai'i Island attended the event and joined an equal number of Oahu youth to network and learn together. It's Malia's dream that Teen Days will soon take place statewide.

Teen Day committee members include: Gordean Akiona, Faye Kimura, Judge Alexa Fujise, Cynthia Goss, Lee Dean, Nicole Isa-Iijima, Judith Wilhoite, Kevin Adaniya, Malcolm Hong, Malia Malufau

The next Teen Day is planned for December 2012.



Part of the Teen Day Committee L > R: Faye Kimura (Court Improvement Project, Richardson Law School), Kayle Perez (DHS), Malcolm Hong (Attorney, GAL), Malia Malufau (Youth Advocate) Judith Wilhoite (Family Advocate), Judge Mark Browning (Senior Family Court Judge)

## DHS Employees Give Big to the Food Bank



Hawai'i's hungry residents can continue to access hot meals thanks to the 2012 Food Bank campaign and donations from the DHS. Divisions, units and offices across the State donated \$3,812.15 and 695 pounds of food.

Lori Kaya is the Grants & Communications Manager for the Hawai'i Foodbank. She says, "I've had the privilege of working with state employees for 10 years now. They are generous supporters of the Foodbank and major contributors to our Annual Food Drive each year. A big Mahalo to all who participated this year."

On average, State agencies and employees donate about 13% of all the food collected, says Kaya, and 28% of the cash donated to the Food Bank. An estimated 250 non-profit agencies distribute the food to people who need it.

## INVO Celebrates 10 Years on the Job

The Investigations Office (INVO) in BESSD is charged with identifying public assistance beneficiaries who are parole violators, or who have outstanding felony arrest warrants. These populations are ineligible for financial and SNAP assistance.

Since November 2002 the Fleeing Felon Program has closed 1,790 financial/SNAP cases, generating a total savings of \$10.9 million. INVO Chief Investigator Don Selle says, "The success of Hawai'i's Fleeing Felon Program is due to the daily efforts of Investigator Tony Borboa and the INVO Restitution Control Staff." Investigator Borboa is the assigned contact person for daily inquires from Eligibility Workers and benefit recipients requesting information on how to clear outstanding arrest warrants.

The Fleeing Felon Program identifies ineligible beneficiaries by comparing data from Hawai'i's HAWI system and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC).

The list of Fleeing Felons is further verified with the law enforcement agencies that issue the warrants. Agencies that want to arrest/extradite an assailant rely on INVO for help locating suspects and coordinating with the police department. The Fleeing Felon Project is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

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## Meet the New Deputy Director



Barbara Yamashita has a diverse career in both the government and private not-for-profit sectors. Our new Deputy Director (DDIR) came to DHS in February 2012 from the Department of Health where she served as Chief of the Maternal and Child Health Branch and the Community Health Division. Her work there included oversight of the Public Health Nursing Branch and the Chronic Disease Management and Control Branch, Domestic Violence, Family Planning and Adolescent Health programs

Barbara says 25 years of experience in the public and private health sectors prepared her to serve as DDIR at DHS. "Being at DHS is very special. It is the State agency that serves the most number of needy and vulnerable people. And as a social worker, it means a lot to be here at this time in my career. I hope that I can work alongside others at the Department to make a difference."

It's not the first time Barbara has worked with DHS. In previous years she conducted adoption home studies, and served as the initial coordinator for the Rotary Club of Honolulu/DHS partnership program "Friends of Foster Kids." She says, "Working at DHS is also like 'coming home' for a social worker. It's an honor to be a part of DHS."

In the public sector, Barbara also worked as a Criminal Justice Planner for the Department of the Attorney General, and a Comprehensive Health Planner for the State Health Planning Office.

In the private sector, Barbara served as a hospital administrator, a director of a child abuse prevention program, and youth services program. She also worked as a crisis outreach worker for the Suicide and Crisis program on the island of Oahu and worked as a group counselor for victims of sexual abuse.

Barbara holds a Masters degree in Social Work from the University of Hawai'i and has completed several certificated courses on leadership and management. She is a faculty member at the University of Phoenix, and has taught at the University of Hawai'i School of Social Work.

## Mayor Wright Homes Update from HPHA

Governor Neil Abercrombie toured Mayor Wright Homes (MWH) in May to view improvements made since his March 2011 visit to the community. At that time, the Governor publicly expressed concern over security and safety issues.

To address those concerns the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA) Board of Directors appointed Hakim Ouansafi as Executive Director. He said, "HPHA has invested in a number of significant site improvements at Mayor Wright Homes as part of our commitment to improving the safety and security of our residents, consistent with our Governor's New Day Plan."

Changes at MWH include additional lighting, resident identification cards, new security services, fencing upgrades, traffic and visitor management, improved tenant and visitor parking areas. The estimated cost for these improvements is \$700,000. HPHA staff and volunteers also worked weekends to perform minor repair and maintenance work that included painting, cleaning and landscaping.

"These improvements have resulted in residents feeling a sense of security and safety that was missing at Mayor Wright Homes," the Governor said. "Hakim, his staff, and volunteers have done a wonderful job in listening to the residents and making sure that a change for the better occurs. I thank all of them for working overtime as a team to get things done."

The HPHA is the sole public housing agency for the State of Hawai'i, that provides safe, decent, sanitary and temporary housing to low income families. The agency administers over 6,000 State and Federal public housing units on five islands, and over 1,800 rental assistance vouchers on O'ahu.



*Volunteers renovating Mayor Wright Homes units.  
Photo credit: Office of the Governor*

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## Recognition for DHS Staff and Programs



*Family Advocacy Program, Marty Oliphant MSW, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, Honorable Maui Mayor Alan M. Arakawa, Scott K.C. Seto, Section Supervisor Department of Human Services, Maui/Moloka'i/Lana'i Adult Protective and Community Services. Gail Gnazzo, Maui Representative, National Association of Social Workers.*

On March 23, 2012, at the Kaulana of Maui Building, the Honorable Maui Mayor Alan Arakawa proclaimed March 2012 as "Professional Social Work Month" in Maui County. Mayor Arakawa called upon Citizens' of Maui County to "Join the National Association of Social Workers in celebration and support of the Social Work Profession and their commitment and dedication to service, delivery, education and research."

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### *Funding (continued from page 2)*

Two full time work readiness and life skills trainers, plus an assistant, will be employed at Ho'opono, Services for the Blind Branch. The teachers will assist VR recipients with personal and group adjustment activities in the Ho'opono training center. Direct services include training in blind/visual impairment or deaf/blind communication activities, daily living activities, orientation and mobility activities, home economics, Braille, cane travel, and assistive technology awareness. The goal is for the VR recipients to gain a positive attitude while learning self-sufficiency in a safe environment.

"Gaining 55 critical DHS positions is big news", says Carlson. "These are the best results I've seen since I began working for DHS more than 30 years ago."

### **"Fostering CommUNITY: Connecting Our 'Ohana"**

The Child Welfare Services (CWS) Branch recently conducted statewide trainings on the enhancement of 'Ohana Time procedures (formerly known as Visitation between children and birth parents). This was part of the Federal Program Improvement Plan 2-PIP2 to continue improving our outcomes and working with our children, youth and families. The enhancements were to increase the frequency and quality of 'Ohana Time. Some of the key strategies are to increase the partnerships with resource caregivers, and to increase frequency and flexibility in scheduling. ~Lynne Kazama

Meantime, May was National Foster Care Month in Hawai'i, and Governor Neil Abercrombie recognized the occasion with a ceremony and signed proclamation. He said, "This is an opportunity to raise awareness of the urgent need for resource caregivers who provide valuable care and support for these children and their families who face tremendous challenges. Hawai'i's foster families and other resource caregivers deserve our appreciation and aloha for continuing to open their homes and accept youth as members of their families, even in challenging times." The proclamation also pays tribute to the many stakeholders, advocates, child welfare professionals and organizations, schools, churches, government agencies and communities for their dedication and support.



*Governor Abercrombie recognized representatives of Hale Kipa, Inc., Partners in Development Foundation, resource caregivers and foster youth on May 9*

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## CWS' New Offices on Hawai'i Island AND Position Openings

The Child Welfare Services (CWS) Branch is expanding its Hawai'i Island footprint. Two new offices are scheduled to open in Waimea and Ka'u in the near future.

"A CWS presence in Waimea and Ka'u will provide better protection for our keiki by decreasing response time, assuring access to services, and expanding our connection to the local pulse of the community," said CWS Administrator Kayle Perez. "We are rebuilding the staff base on Hawai'i Island after having many positions cut during the 2009 reduction in force."

To meet staffing needs of the new offices and to rebuild staff across the State, the CWS is actively recruiting for Social Workers III and IV, and Human Service Professionals III and IV. These professionals "engage families in building protective capacity through a network of informal and formal resources coupled with community engagement with our families," said Perez.

An estimated 3,324 cases of child abuse or neglect were reported to CWS in FY 2011, down from 4,199 the previous year. More than half (58%) of 2011 reports were from Oahu, followed by Hawai'i Island (22%).

Less than half of the reported cases (1,345) were confirmed for child abuse, neglect or threatened harm. An annual review of 2011 DHS program data identifies *Inability to Cope with Parenting Responsibilities* (66%) as the number one precipitating factor to an incident of abuse or neglect.

CWS deputy administrator Cynthia Goss stated, "While social work can be challenging, it's also a profession filled with reward and wonderful outcomes. Seeing a smiling child in the arms of their parents following CWS' successful engagement with the family is a wonderful experience that makes the work worthwhile and fulfilling."

The Social Worker and Human Service Professionals positions are on continuous recruitment through the Department of Human Resources Development. To apply, visit [www.hawaii.gov/hrd/main/esd/](http://www.hawaii.gov/hrd/main/esd/). For additional information call the DHS Personnel office on Oahu at (808) 586-4969.

## Extra Special Mother's Day

Service providers and legal groups joined forces this past Mother's Day to ensure that needy children across the state had a gift for their special someone. The DHS Child Welfare Services Branch (CWS), Hawai'i Women's Legal Foundation (HWLF) and Hawai'i Women Lawyers (HWL) distributed 2,300 gift bags across the state.

CWS staff delivered the gift bags to clients during home visits, so foster children could give them to their mothers and to their resource parents. If a mother had four children who are in foster care, CWS gave each child a gift bag to give their mother. The bags contained toiletries and cosmetics donated by individuals and companies.

"We do this for the children," said Karen Char, HWLF and HWL's Mother's Day Project Coordinator. "We want the children to have gifts to give on Mother's Day."

For the past decade HWLF and HWL have been collecting and organizing the donations in Char's home. Char says it takes eight weekends to complete the gift bags. This year 90 people from the legal community and John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) volunteered to sort and stuff the 2,300 gift bags. The JABSOM volunteers delivered gift bags to the Kaka'ako Next Step homeless shelter where they also hold clinics.

Hawaiian Air Cargo also supports the Mother's Day Project. This year it shipped, free of charge to the neighbor islands, 22 boxes with 557 gift bags so that mothers there could receive a gift.

One of those mothers was Mrs. S who lives in Kona and picks coffee. For the first time in years, all eight of her children - ranging in age from 2 to 13 years old - were home to celebrate Mother's Day. Seven of the children spent time in foster care and the last two returned to the family home in April 2012. Thanks to the Mother's Day Project all six girls and both boys said they were very excited and eager to "surprise" their mother.

The all-volunteer Mother's Day Project was the brainchild of former Department of Human Services Deputy Director Elizabeth Kent, who said, "We're giving a gift to a child who gives it away. There's so much giving, and this is the best way to share, pass on and leverage resources."

To date, the Mother's Day Project has distributed about 19,000 gift bags to needy children throughout Hawai'i.

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## Senior Companion Program

Studies have found that when older adults give back to the community, their personal benefits include improved physical health, higher levels of happiness, and reduced stress. This past April, 80 Hawai'i seniors, including one companion who has volunteered for 24 years, were recognized at the Pagoda Hotel on Oahu for their community contributions. On any given day, 284 elderly individuals in Hawai'i receive services from senior companions.

In early May, Mayor Bernard Carvalho Jr. launched Kauai's Senior Corp Week campaign by signing a proclamation and leading the group in singing "Hele on to Kauai". Later, representatives from the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) and Senior Companion Program (SCP) took to the streets of Lihue to offer traffic safety messages. Heavily traveled intersections on Kauai do not have traffic signals.

The seniors traversed Rice Street waving signs to remind drivers to watch for pedestrians, obey speed limits, and stay off cell phones. This is a busy section of Kauai where many businesses and government offices are located. As a result, motorists and pedestrians converge at all hours of the day to complete transactions.

The Senior Companion Program is a statewide part-time volunteer program that engages eligible low-income seniors. Volunteers provide in-home companionship and limited personal care to frail elders, and respite for caregivers. Senior Corp's three programs—RSVP, FGP and SCP have provided services in Hawai'i for more than four decades. The programs are sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service and have the goal of engaging Americans, age 55 and older, in public service. Over an entire year, Senior Corps volunteers provide more than 650,850 hours of service to help maintain and improve the lives of Hawai'i's most vulnerable populations – children and seniors.



*Senior Companions Celebrated at the Pagoda Hotel*



*Kauai SOS: Seniors promoting road safety*

## Vocational Rehabilitation Operates “With One Purpose”



*Alison Lee (VR Hawai'i Branch Administrator), Pina Lemusu (VR Transition Section Supervisor) Eleanor MacDonald (VR Program Specialist) and Kathryn Yamamoto (University of Hawai'i, Director of DEIS Project)*

Mindful of the direct connection between college participation and positive employment outcomes, Hawai'i's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Division has begun collaborating with the new Dual Enrollment with Individualized Supports (DEIS) Project. Administered by the Center on Disability Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, the DEIS Project is designed to support students with intellectual disabilities as they transition to an inclusive post-secondary college experience. This past year, VR played a principal role in the implementation of the DEIS project by providing vocational counseling and financial support for tuition and books, and sponsoring workshop development activities for students on O'ahu and in Hilo.

During the first year of the project, four students enrolled at Honolulu Community College and each successfully completed three to five courses. In the upcoming Fall 2012 semester, four students will be enrolling at Hawai'i Community College and a second cohort of five students will be enrolling at Honolulu Community College. Student outcomes in the first year of the project reflect academic gains and developments in self-esteem. One student said: "I used to feel bad about myself because I couldn't do the work. Now I feel happy in college because I know if I study hard, I can do the work. College has helped me

grow up. I feel independent and confident." When asked what she enjoyed about going to college, another student reflected that she is no longer stigmatized by the label of disability: "I like going to college, because other people don't know I'm a SPED [Special Education] student."

On May 30, 2012, VR and DEIS staff presented their results at the National Transition Conference in Washington D.C. They were warmly received by the audience, which included VR counselors, post-secondary faculty, and program personnel from other states. Most impressive was the presentation by a student from the DEIS project who spoke of his journey from high school to college and saw college as a means to reaching his potential.

For many students with intellectual disability, college presents barriers that are sometimes insurmountable to overcome. With the support of VR and the DEIS project students recognize challenges as opportunities to explore and learn.

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### The Hawai'i Commission on Fatherhood

Governor Abercrombie recently appointed four new members to the Hawai'i Commission on Fatherhood.



*Commission members met in June 2012. From L > R Front row: Carl Makino (new), Walter Yoshimitsu (new), Chet Adessa (new), Barbara Yamashita (ex-officio)*

*Back row L > R: Gordon Miyamoto, Bruce Shimoda (new), Russell Suzuki (ex-officio), Russ Awakuni, Bruce Berger (new), Greg Farstrup. (Darren Sato not pictured).*



## Across DHS: From Island to Island

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