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Newsletter returns!
- **DHS Director Pat
McManaman**
confirmed by the
Senate
- **DHS Employees**
lend a helping hand
to colleagues

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wants you!

ACROSS DHS

FROM ISLAND TO ISLAND

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

SPRING 2011

A Note from the Director's Office

Welcome back to *ACROSS DHS: From Island to Island*, the official employee newsletter for the Department of Human Services.

After a hiatus of several years, we felt it important to bring the newsletter back to re-emphasize that despite being spread out in over 85 branch offices statewide, we are one ohana at DHS.

As we begin our first year at the helm of this outstanding agency, we would like to thank all of you for your hard work and dedication. Everything we do, all we have accomplished in the past, and will achieve in the future, depend on you.

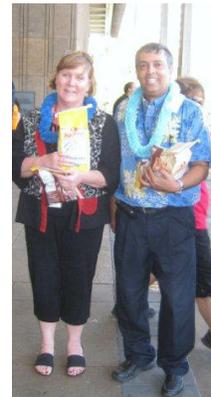
We recently came across an edition of *ACROSS DHS* from 1988, as the Department neared its first full year of operation. Then, as now, the Department and its employees

faced numerous challenges and "crunch periods."

What struck us most, though, were the words of former Director Winona E. Rubin. That first year was one of, "change and tremendously hard work," but also, "the most exciting, challenging, and rewarding of [her] life."

Despite the struggles and obstacles that confront us daily, we must always remember that the heart of our work lies in the empowerment of the most vulnerable members of society. And when we succeed, we have a transformative and tremendously positive impact on people's lives.

To be sure, the road that lies ahead has no shortage of obstacles, but let us be revitalized in the progress and accomplishments we make each day.



Director Pat McManaman & Deputy Dir. Pankaj Bhanot contribute to the AARP Kupuna Rice Collection at the

We call on all of the caring, committed, devoted and hardworking departmental members to find strength in one another and to join forces to make the days ahead our best yet.

Honolulu Cookie Company Helps Foster Kids

The Honolulu Cookie Company brightened Valentine's Day for foster children staying at two emergency placement shelters on Oahu's Leeward coast.

The Honolulu-based company donated a case of about 400 heart-shaped, chocolate-dipped, shortbread cookies for the at-risk children, along with snacks to last for several days.

These shelters provide crisis care for multiple children and sibling groups ranging in age from birth through the teen years.

Foster Children Now Eligible for Free Meals at School



“Ensuring foster children have access to healthy, balanced and nutritious meals...shows our commitment to providing the best quality of life...”

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced in February that children placed into the foster care system by a State or a family court in America are categorically eligible to receive free meals in all USDA child nutrition programs.

This expansion of categorical eligibility to foster children is a component of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 that President Obama signed into law in December. The act is the legislative centerpiece of First Lady Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move” initiative to fight childhood obesity.

“Ensuring all children receive nutritious meals at school and through other child nutrition programs is a top priority for the

Obama Administration and a key step towards ending childhood hunger,” said Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services, Kevin Concannon. “Categorical eligibility is a vital tool to simplify and expedite enrolling eligible children in school meals programs.”

The federal Administration for Children and Families, which partnered with USDA in making the announcement, emphasized the importance of helping foster children and families have better access to school lunches.

“Ensuring foster children have access to healthy, balanced and nutritious meals without the burden of unnecessary eligibility paperwork shows our commitment in providing the best

quality of life for many deserving children and their families,” said David A. Hansell, acting assistant secretary for children and families.

This new provision will help reduce administrative burdens on states, schools and foster care families by certifying eligible foster children for free meals in the National School Lunch and other child nutrition programs without the need for an application. The National School Lunch Program serves nearly 32 million children nutritious and well-balanced meals each school day and is a critical component of the national nutrition safety net that safeguards children against hunger.

Mahalo to Abbot Laboratories for Donating Baby Formula



To help feed infants in State care, the Ross Products Division of Abbot Laboratories in Honolulu generously donated a large supply of bottled and powdered baby formula and other products to our Child Welfare Services Branch.

By making this donation, the company relieved DHS staff of having to find the financial means and a nearby merchant when obtaining baby formula for the emergency care of infants.

If you know of companies or individuals who would like to make a donation to assist clients served by CWWSB, please call Nancy Toyama in the Statewide Section at 832-5048.

Employee Spotlight



Kenoilani Koli'i is part of the new LEAP Unit in Kapolei

Having worked for the Department of Business & Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT) and the Attorney General's Office before joining DHS in 2005, Kenoilani Koli'i is used to change.

It is perhaps for that reason that she

has become such an asset to BESSD's new LEAP pilot program, which is changing the way that Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Financial Assistance applications are processed and handled.

As an Eligibility Worker (EW III) on the LEAP Intake Team, Kenoilani must balance her work assisting new clients with the stress of learning a new way of doing business. Throughout it all, though, Kenoilani has kept a smile on her face and a focus on putting her clients' needs first.

Supervisors and co-workers alike praise Kenoilani for helping to maintain staff morale and sanity during LEAP's pilot phase. She credits her regular 'boot camp' workouts and yoga sessions as essential to maintaining her positive attitude.

"It's easy to forget sometimes that we are public servants. We are on the frontline, and our first job is to help people," says Koli'i.

For those efforts, we thank all the hardworking Eligibility Workers throughout the Department.

So mahalo and a hui hou!

"[Linda] and her family touched the lives of so many children in the time of their greatest need.

The impact of her dedication to foster children will continue for years to come."

- Lisa Zablan, Licensing Worker / Matcher

DHS Says Aloha to Super Foster Parent Linda Dean

Linda Dean, a veritable institution in Hawai'i foster care, is retiring. Since first becoming licensed as a general resource home with the Department in 1992, Linda has fostered over 900 keiki, sometimes caring for as many five children at a time.

Linda is also a former Chair of the Hawai'i State Foster Parent Association (HSFPA), and is credited with greatly enhancing and modern-

izing the organization's resources. Linda's skill in working with difficult placements is legend, which led to her being tapped to participate in the Department's Train the Trainer classes and her selection as a PRIDE trainer.

Most remarkable, though, is Linda's heart for children. Her home came alive with special activities and decorations during every holiday or birthday, allowing each and every

child in her care to feel special.

Now, at 62, and having adopted three children from the Department, Linda has decided that the time has come to pursue other paths...and maybe even sleep in late from time to time.

We commend her outstanding service and commitment to Hawai'i's foster keiki, and we wish her nothing but the best in all future endeavors.

Employees Aid Colleagues by Donating Leave Time

Director McManaman thanks our DHS employees for helping colleagues who had exhausted their paid leave and other wage loss replacement benefits due to a major illness or other serious condition.

Recently 55 employees donated a total of 205 vacation leave days to colleagues during their time in need. Donors have the option of designating their vacation leave to help specific employees or to help

employees in general through the Department's Leave Share Bank.



ACROSS DHS Contributors wanted!



The *ACROSS DHS* Employee Newsletter was actually established back in 1987, the year that the Department was established.

It was intended to be a newsletter of, for, and about the Department of Human Services and the people that work so hard to empower those who are most vulnerable in our State.

Somewhere along the line - no one remembers exactly when - and amidst all the competing pressures and demands on staff, the Newsletter got lost in the shuffle and the hustle of

the daily grind that make this Department such a challenging and rewarding place to work.

So we are especially pleased to resurrect *ACROSS DHS* as a means to bring the DHS ohana closer together, to share our victories, and to document our struggles.

However, in order to truly make the Newsletter yours, we need YOUR help.

If you know of something wonderful going on the department, a colleague deserving of special recognition, a story that needs to be told, send us a line!

A full article is not necessary. A quick email, even as bullet points will do.

You can find us in the Director's Office at 586-4892 or by email at jperez@dhs.hawaii.gov

Mahalo for your kokua in this effort, and mahalo for all your efforts every day on behalf of DHS and the clients we serve!

ACROSS DHS:

From Island to Island

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