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ACROSS DHS

FROM ISLAND TO ISLAND

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

SUMMER 2011

A Note from the Director's Office

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

Our second edition is marked by the numerous contributions from the DHS staff. This is true not only with respect to the fact that most of the articles came from staff, but also because they documented the many ways in which the DHS 'ohana contributes to the greater community.

I join our Public Information Office in thanking everyone who sent in stories and articles. Indeed, you have truly helped to make this a newsletter of, by, and for the people of this Department - which is exactly as it should be. Please keep the contributions coming by sending

your articles to:
JPerez@DHS.Hawaii.gov

I would also like to thank everyone who contributed to the Foodbank and the Mother's Day Gift Bag drives, as well as the many other community projects and programs where you lend a helping hand.

With the end of the legislative session, we now move forward to implementing a number of important changes and initiatives. These include changes to our QUEST programs, expanded access to patient-centered healthcare homes, a review of our entire technology infrastructure, a business processing reengineering (BPR) of our SNAP programs, and the long-awaited hiring of critical DHS staff.



DHS Director Pat McManaman

We also look forward to needed facility improvements at our Ho'opono and Waiakamilo offices.

Through it all, our success depends on each one of you. Thank you for your commitment to DHS and the clients we serve.

DHS Employees Give Big for Foodbank Drive

Over a four week span this spring, DHS employees contributed 651 pounds of food and almost \$7500.00 to the Hawai'i Foodbank.

The Hawai'i Foodbank is a non-profit organization that collects,

warehouses, and distributes mass quantities of food to 250 member organizations throughout the state.



DHS employees' enthusiastic support of the Foodbank drive provides a shining example of the generosity of spirit that is pervasive throughout the Department.

Mahalo to all who supported this outstanding effort!

Ho'opono Partners with Lanakila Elementary



“To watch these readers spin their tales to the children with the use of different voices, facial expressions, and a caring spirit is truly a wonderful sight to behold.”

May marked the end of the second year for the Lanakila Elementary Braille Reading partnership. The program will begin again when school resumes this August.

Some facts about Ho'opono's partnership with Lanakila Elementary:

- Our readers volunteered from August 24, 2010 to May 17, 2011
- There were a total of sixteen volunteers who participated, four more than last year!
- The readers read to two Pre-K and four kindergarten classes.
- Each Tuesday, the volunteers read to over one hundred children.
- Our readers also participated in Lanakila's Read Across America Day, a national program to promote literacy

The program was welcomed back to read this past school year, and we have been asked to continue this partnership for the upcoming school year. This gives

Ho'opono students further motivation to develop their Braille Reading skills.

A major goal this year was to build upon the good relationships formed with students and school staff in the program's first year. Our community partnership with Lanakila Elementary was definitely strengthened.

The reading program also provides Ho'opono students, former students and friends in the blind community a wonderful volunteer opportunity and promotes a mindset of community involvement.

Some of the volunteers have become very polished storytellers. To watch these readers as they spin their tales to the children with the use of different voices, facial expressions, and a caring spirit is truly a wonderful sight to behold.

We even had one of our newer students teaching the children words and phrases in Spanish. Each of our readers brings something special

to their session, and they always find a way to make the gift of literacy a fun and meaningful experience.

It was also wonderful to see students accept our blind volunteers as people, not the "blind man" or the "blind lady." The volunteers became Uncle or Aunty to the students. I have observed this personally at markets or other stores in the neighborhood, where Lanakila students would call out, "Hi Uncle," or tell their mom that, "this is the Aunty who reads to our class."

We would like to especially thank contract Braille Instructors Sherry O'Connor and Sharon Ige for their tireless teaching of Braille to the Ho'opono volunteer readers and the encouragement to read.

- contributed by Alan Hatakenaka, VRSBD

Sacks of Sunshine for Foster Keiki



DHS Child Welfare Branch extends its heartfelt gratitude to the fantastic fourth graders of Punahou School's Buff and Blue Crew for their successful Sacks of Sunshine (SOS) service learning project. We are especially grateful to be the recipients of this wonderful project for a second year.

Through the SOS project, the students raised over \$900.00 through the sale of hand-made

bookmarks and other hand-crafts. The funds were used to purchase brand new gender-specific backpacks filled with books, toys, stuffed animals, clothing, snacks and personal hygiene products that were presented to CWS for the benefit of Hawai'i's foster keiki.

The Child Welfare Intake Unit distributed these 'sacks of sunshine' to eight active placement units and our Receiving Home

to raise the spirits of the children entering foster care.

We would like to also thank Punahou teacher Danette Kobayashi and Elementary Principal Michael Walker Jr. for their efforts to organize and support their students' service to the community.

- contributed by Johnny Papa, MSW, ACSW, Child Welfare Intake Unit Supervisor

Employee Team Spotlight - Nuuanu Unit (128)

The Nuuanu Unit is co-located in the Kuhio Park Terrace Resource Center, which sits right in the heart of the housing project to create a 'one-stop shop'. In our building, we have other agencies such as: Parents and Children Together (PACT), Kokua Kalihi Valley (KKV), a day care center and two DHS units. The collaboration has been extremely positive, allowing our clients to benefit from an array of services that are all closely located near their place of residence.

I would like to share an act of kindness on behalf of my unit staff. On March 29, AARP, Lanakila Pacific and the Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition, held a Kupuna Care Rally. Our

unit was asked to support this coalition by bringing a bag of brown rice to the Capitol Rotunda on the day of the event. In past years we have supported various events and agencies such as Food Bank, Red Cross, etc. However, this rally's special focus on assisting our kupuna really hit home for a lot of us.

A letter was circulated to inform the unit of the event, but even before we had a chance to discuss it, my staff had already accumulated 220 pounds of brown rice. Even our security guard pitched in to support the cause!

On the day of the event, two of our female Eligibility Workers (we have

no male employees in our office), delivered the bounty of rice to the Capitol. Being a part of such a special team has made my many years of service with the Department extremely rewarding, but watching the ladies lug those bags of rice really made me emotional. Even in these tough times of economic struggle, our unit staff found it in their hearts to dig deep in support of our kupuna, helping them to put food on their tables.

- contributed by Eloise P. Cordeiro, Unit Supervisor

Members of BESSDD Nuuanu Unit (128):

Joe-Ann Helekahi	Secretary
Ala Faaitu	Office Asst
Mabel Ueshiro	Office Asst
Michele Doane	EW-01
Teresita 'Tess' Jaquias	EW-04
Susan Shiroma	EW-03
Vicki Peahi	EW-02
Michele Ugale	EW-07
Lucianne Ledford	EW-06
Patricia 'Pat' Valentin	EW-08

The Miracle Worker from Ho'opono

Art imitated life this spring when acting Ho'opono Administrator Lea Grupen appeared on stage in the role of Kate Keller, the mother of Helen Keller, in The Actor's Group (TAG) production of *The Miracle Worker*.

The well-known play, made famous by the 1962 film adaptation starring Anne Bancroft and Patty Duke, ran from April 22 - May 15 at the TAG Theatre in Iwilei and kicked off

with a special fundraiser performance for the benefit of Ho'opono's many programs for blind clients.

Surrounded by a seasoned cast of veteran actors, Lea gave a spirited performance in a difficult and emotional role in her first theatrical appearance since the sixth grade.

Indeed, Lea became a significant draw for the production with former and current Ho'opono clients as well as friend and colleagues

often filling numerous seats in the audience during the show's three week run.

ACROSS DHS gives Lea a standing ovation for her efforts and a well-earned 'bravo' to the entire cast and crew!



Gift Bags Make Mother's Day Special

The Hawai'i Women's Legal Foundation and the Hawai'i Women Lawyers continued their support of foster keiki by once again donating gift bags for the children to give to their resource family and birth moms.

The beautifully decorated bags were filled with cosmetics prod-

ucts including fragrances, body washes, lotions, creams and nail polish - all of which helped brighten Mother's Day for the children and the moms.

The bags were assembled and delivered in late April in order to be distributed around the state in time for the important day.

The Social Service Division extends a heartfelt mahalo to both organizations as well as the many SSD staff who helped to support this annual tradition.



Governor Proclaims Father's Month in Hawai'i



Governor Neil Abercrombie and Lt. Governor Brian Schatz proclaimed June as Father's Month in Hawai'i on May 17, 2011.

The proclamation affirmed that:

- "Good fathering during infancy, childhood, and adolescence contributes to the development of emotional security and has substantial positive psychological and economic benefits for children, family and society; and
- "Fathers who are actively involved in their children's lives help contribute to their children's self-esteem, social skills, behavior and to avoid substance abuse; and
- "Children of all ages whose fathers are interested in their children's education are more likely to enjoy school, have genuine friendships, receive good grades, participate in extracurricular activities and achieve career goals."

Governor Abercrombie and Lt. Governor Schatz urged the people of the Aloha State to support the efforts made by the Hawai'i Coalition for Dads and the Hawai'i State Commission on Fatherhood in increasing awareness of the importance of fathers.

You can find out more about the Hawai'i State Commission on Fatherhood on the DHS website at: www.hawaii.gov/dhs/fatherhood

- contributed by Greg Farstrup, Chairman of the Hawai'i State Commission on Fatherhood

ACROSS DHS:

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Neil Abercrombie, Governor
Pat McManaman, Director
Pankaj Bhanot, Deputy Director

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