



# Ka Wai Ola

NEWS FOR THE LĀHUI

kawaiola.news

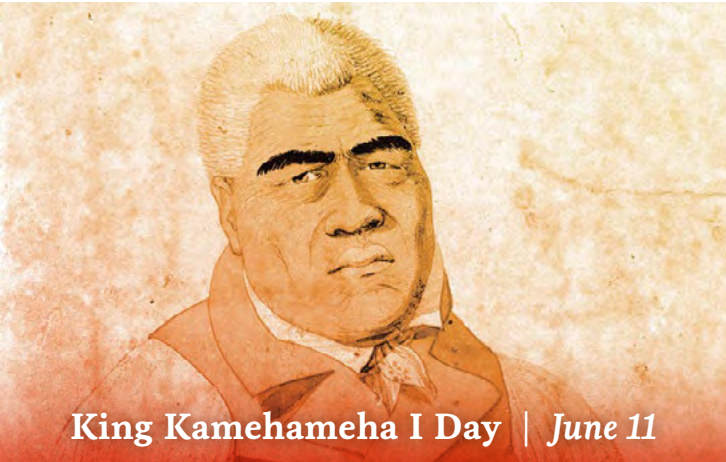
June (June) 2025 | Vol. 42, No. 06



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The "Rebuild Coalition" is a groundbreaking partnership helping wildfire survivors obtain the funding they need to rebuild their homes. (L-R) Matt Bachman of Habitat for Humanity Maui, Maria Linz of Hawai'i Community Lending, Rhonda Alexander-Monkres of Ho'ōla iā Mauiakama Disaster Long Term Recovery Group, Mikey Burke of Lahaina Community Land Trust, and Brandy Cajudoy of Cajudoy Construction at a property in Lahaina where construction on a new home will begin in October. - Photo: Marina Starleaf Riker





King Kamehameha I Day | June 11

This year’s theme is E Ho’omau - celebrating Mary Kawena Pukui, the renowned Hawaiian scholar, linguist, and historian whose work has helped preserve the Hawaiian language and culture for generations. sfca.hawaii.gov

2025 KING KAMEHAMEHA DAY CELEBRATIONS

WASHINGTON, D.C.

King Kamehameha Statue Lei Draping Ceremony

June 8, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.  
U.S. Capitol Building Visitor Center, Emancipation Hall

HAWAI’I ISLAND

Kailua-Kona

King Kamehameha Celebration

June 7, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
- 9:00 a.m. - Floral Parade  
- 11:30 a.m. - Ho’olaule’a at Hulihē’e Palace

Kohala

King Kamehameha Celebration

June 11, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
- 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. - Lei Draping Ceremony & Floral Parade  
- 11:00 a.m. - Ho’olaule’a at Kamehameha Park

O’AHU

Honolulu & Waikīkī

King Kamehameha I Tribute

June 11, 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.  
Kamehameha I statue, Ali’iōlani Hale

King Kamehameha Statue Lei Draping

June 13, 2:30 - 5:00 p.m.  
Ali’iōlani Hale

108th King Kamehameha Celebration

June 14, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
- 9:00 a.m. - Floral Parade, ‘Iolani Palace to Queen Kapi’olani Park  
- 11:00 a.m. - Ho’olaule’a at Queen Kapi’olani Park

KAUA’I

Lihū’e

King Kamehameha Celebration

June 14, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
- 9:00 a.m. - Floral Parade Starts at Vidihna Stadium, up Rice Street to the Historic County Building.  
- 10:00 a.m. Ho’olaulea at Historic County Building Lawn

MAUI

Kahului

Nā King Kamehameha Commemorative

June 21, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
- 9:00 a.m. - Ho’olaulea at Queen Ka’ahumanu Center  
- 9:45 a.m. - Pā’ū Parade along Ka’ahumanu Ave.

OHA Genealogy Workshop

June 3, 6:00 p.m. | Wailuku, Maui

A free workshop by genealogist Luci Meyer at OHA’s Maui Office (1887 Wili Pa Loop, Ste.1). Due to space limitation, rsvp is required. Please contact Maui Beneficiary Services Agent Roy Newman at royn@oha.org or 808-909-2506.

Consultation Session on Lowering Successor Blood Quantum

June 3, 6:30 p.m. | Waikīkī, O’ahu

A consultation session on Act 80 intended to lower the successor blood quantum during the 2025 Hawaiian Home Lands Sovereignty Conference. Testimony will be accepted. Ala Moana Hotel, Pakalana Room. For more info email: conference@hawaiianhomesteads.org or call 808-312-1001.

Royal Hawaiian Band Performances

June 6, 13, 20 & 27, Noon - 1:00 p.m.  
Honolulu, O’ahu

The Royal Hawaiian Band holds free concerts on the ‘Iolani Palace Grounds most Fridays. rhb-music.com

Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival at Windward Mall

June 7, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. | Kāne’ohe, O’ahu

Featuring Hawaiian steel guitar masters and NextGen steel guitarists. The festival will livestream on YouTube @HawaiianSteelGuitarShowcase. hawaiiansteelguitarfestival.com

Ka ‘Aha Hula i Waimea - The Gathering of Hula at Waimea

June 7 & 14, 11:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.  
Waimea, O’ahu

Cultural traditions of mele oli and mele hula from Ka Pā Hula O Kauanoe ‘O Wa’ahila & Hālau Kilipohe Na Lei Lehua. waimeavalley.net

Kama’āina Sunday

June 8, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Honolulu, O’ahu

Enjoy audio tours of ‘Iolani Palace, ‘ono food, lively entertainment, and shop local vendors. iolanipalace.org

Kōnane at Bishop Museum

June 11, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. | Kapālama, O’ahu

Learn the history, mo’olelo, strategies, and philosophical perspectives of kōnane, a Hawaiian game of strategy and enjoy a mini tournament. bishopmuseum.org

Kuleana Niihau Island News Special

June 13 & 16, 7:00 p.m. | KITV  
June 15, 6:30 p.m. & June 20, 5:30 p.m. | KIKU

For the first time in history, news cameras were granted exclusive access to Niihau. Virtually untouched by modern society, the island’s language and lifestyle have been preserved.

ALEMANAKA  
CALENDAR

Pu’uhonua Mākeke

June 14, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Waimānalo, O’ahu

A showcase of products, services, and businesses from Pu’uhonua across Hawai’i. 41-1300 Waikupanaha St., in the pavilion. FB/IG @puuhonua-makeke

Mele Conference and Hula Festival

June 16 – 18 | Waikīkī, O’ahu

Kāhuli Leo Le’a’s inaugural gathering dedicated to mele (Hawaiian song) and related cultural practices. Enjoy three full days of presentations. kahulileolea.org

OHA Genealogy Workshop

June 17, 6:00 p.m. | Kaunakakai, Moloka’i

A free workshop by genealogist Luci Meyer at OHA’s Moloka’i Office at Kūlana ‘Ōiwi. Due to space limitation, rsvp is required. Please contact Moloka’i Beneficiary Services Agent Malu Lani-Ka’akimaka at kasidyk@oha.org or 808-582-0516.

48th Annual Nā Hōkū Hanohano Awards

June 21, 3:00 - 10:00 p.m. | Honolulu, O’ahu, Live broadcast on Hawai’i News Now K5

Honoring the best in Hawai’i’s music, recognizing exceptional achievements across a variety of genres and categories. harahawaii.com

Summer Concert Series

June 28, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. | Waimea, O’ahu

Kala’e Parish & Kalenakū, Amy Hānaiali’i, Jerry Santos with Kamuela and Kanani Oliveira Hula Studio. waimeavalley.net

MĀLAMA ‘ĀINA EVENTS

Lā Mālama ma Pu’uokapolei

June 7, 8:30 - 10:00 a.m. | Pu’uokapolei, O’ahu

Wear clothes that can get dirty, bring water for hydration. Tools will be provided. www.uluae.org

Mālama Hāmākua Maui Kōkua Days

June 13 & 28, 9:00 - 11:30 a.m.  
Hāmākua, Maui

Plant, weed, mulch, and compost our native plants. Tools and lunch provided. Meet at the Hahana Rd. entrance of the Hāmākualoa Open Space Preserve. www.malamahamakuamaui.com

Mālama Hulē’ia Volunteer Day

June 21, 8:00 a.m. – Noon | Lihū’e, Kaua’i

Every 3rd Saturday is a community workday at Alakoko fishpond. Sign up to volunteer: peleke@malamahuleia.org. or malamahuleia.org

Waipā Community Workday

June 28, 9:00 a.m. – Noon | Waipā, Kaua’i

Every 4th Saturday check in at the old Waipā poi garage before 9:00 a.m. Bring closed-toe shoes, a water bottle, gloves, hat, rain gear, a towel, and a change of clothes. Lunch provided if you rsvp in advance. waipafoundation.org ■

# The Fight for What is Ours: OHA’s Pursuit of Justice

Aloha mai kākou,

The 2025 Hawaiʻi State Legislative Session concluded with unfinished business that should deeply concern every Native Hawaiian and every citizen who believes in the rule of law. Once again, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs’ (OHA) effort to compel the state to meet its legal and constitutional obligations under the Public Land Trust (PLT) has been denied, not by reason, but by political maneuvering that delays justice for Hawaiʻi’s first people.

At the heart of the issue lies the 1.8 million acres of Hawaiian Kingdom crown and government lands, “ceded” following the illegal overthrow of our constitutional monarchy and annexed by joint resolution – not treaty – by the United States in 1898, a process which legal scholars and Native Hawaiian advocates widely recognize as illegitimate. These lands were later designated as the Public Land Trust through the Admissions Act of 1959, with a mandate that 20% of the revenues be used for the betterment of Native Hawaiians.

That mandate was enshrined in the Hawaiʻi State Constitution and codified in HRS Chapter 10. Yet, for over four decades, OHA has been denied its full pro rata 20% share. Instead, the legislature has imposed an arbitrary cap of \$21.5 million annually, while the state collects hundreds of millions each year from leases, fees, and other uses of these lands. Public facilities such as airports, harbors, parks, schools, and hospitals sit on these lands, yet Native Hawaiians see only a fraction of the returns.

In 2016, OHA commissioned an independent audit of PLT revenues and found that nearly \$400 million in applicable revenues were being collected. Today, that figure is likely far higher, yet the cap remains unchanged. OHA has consistently advocated for transparency and accountability by calling for a full and accurate land inventory of PLT

lands, necessary to determine what is truly owed. Despite the passage of three legislative acts addressing the PLT since 1990, a complete inventory has not been completed.

Why? Because once the state knows what it owes, it can no longer avoid paying it. This session, OHA worked on amending SB 903, which sought a third-party audit and the extension of the PLT working group that includes representatives from OHA, the legislature and the executive branch, to determine a fair and lawful payment moving forward.

The bill made significant progress before being gutted in conference by a last-minute amendment that would have forced OHA to agree to negotiating a final settlement once an inventory was complete. OHA rejected this coercive maneuver, and the bill died.

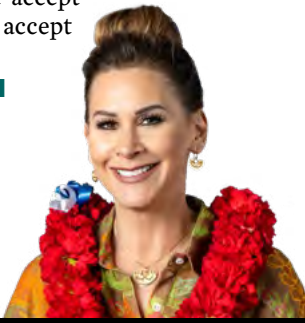
Let it be clear: OHA is not backing down. This is not just about money. This is about justice, reconciliation, and honoring the commitments made in Hawaiʻi’s own laws. Our lāhui deserves what is rightfully ours. We will not accept delay. We will not be pushed into a corner. We will not accept anything less than what is pono.


We are coming for what is owed. The fight continues. ■

Me ka ha’aha’a,

Stacy Kealohalani Ferreira

Ka Pouhana | Chief Executive Officer





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# The 2025 Legislative Session

## A Summary of Bills Impacting Native Hawaiians

By Michèle McCoy, J.D.  
OHA Public Policy Advocate

The 2025 Legislative Session opened with cautious optimism as Hawai'i entered the year with a projected budget surplus. The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), hoped the session would enable us to secure meaningful gains in areas critical to the lāhui, including funding for a long-awaited inventory and audit of the public land trust (PLT), comprised mostly of former crown and government lands of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

However, with the changing fiscal and political landscape, legislative appropriations fell short of expectations. OHA's budget bill (HB 410) passed but funding levels stayed flat, and OHA's PLT audit and inventory bill (HB 1358) died in the Senate.

OHA's bill to amend restrictions on residential development in Kaka'ako Makai (SB 534) and to remove landowners from the Island Burial Councils (SB 268) also died in committee, even though these bills did not require any funding to enact. Given that this is the first year of the biennium, bills that did not pass this session will be automatically reintroduced in 2026.

Of immediate concern coming out of this session are proposed changes to Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) chapter 6E, governing the treatment, handling, and disposition of 'iwi kūpuna threatened by construction activities. SB 15 could be read to exempt a broad range of privately held property from the historic review process the protects 'iwi.

Accordingly, OHA is calling on the governor to veto this bill. HB 830, which would mandate SHPD to contract out residential projects if the agency cannot complete review in 60 days, is also problematic. Ultimately, third-party review under a severely shortened timeline threatens the accuracy and integrity of the agency process aimed at identifying and protecting 'iwi before construction begins.

Considering long-standing problems with implementation of the statute, and recent backlash as reflected in the legislation introduced this session, OHA is convening a working group to consider whether OHA should assume some of SHPD's duties under HRS chapter 6E.

Rep. Daniel Holt and Sen. Jarett Keohokalole, chairs of the House and Senate Native Hawaiian Caucuses, introduced HR 186 and SR 130 at OHA's request. If you are interested in serving on the working group, please contact



Office of Hawaiian Affairs trustees, executive leaders and staff honor Queen Lili'uokalani prior to the opening of the 2025 Legislative Session on January 15. - Photo: Joshua Koh

# 2025



## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

OHA at BSWG@oha.org (up to five seats are reserved for community members per the resolutions).

### Bills Awaiting the Governor's Signature

The following bills that would positively affect governance over our 'āina and the social services that advance OHA priorities are currently awaiting the governor's signature:

**GM 770** formalized the appointment of Hannah Springer to the loa seat on the Commission for Water Resource Management. Approved by the Senate, Springer's appointment ensures that a qualified cultural practitioner will fill this critical seat on the body tasked with managing our most precious resource. Springer is a former OHA trustee, a plaintiff in the landmark case,

*Ka Pa'akai O Ka 'Aina v. Land Use Comm'n*, and a tireless advocate for 'āina and justice.

**HB 505** establishes the Red Hill Water Alliance Initiative (WAI) policy coordinator within the Department of Land and Natural Resources and creates a dedicated remediation special fund to institutionalize environmental oversight of the Red Hill crisis. The bill ensures interagency coordination, scientific monitoring, and transparency to protect O'ahu's primary aquifer.

**HB 703** extends the State Rent Supplement Program for kūpuna through 2028 – one of the most critical lifelines preserved this session. Many kūpuna on fixed incomes struggle with housing costs and this continuation of support helps mitigate the growing crisis of kūpuna houselessness and reinforces the dignity and independence of kūpuna across the islands.

**HB 1300** appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center for a study focusing on social determinants of health, environmental exposure, and resilience in Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino communities – including the health impacts of living near the Nānākuli landfill. The measure reflects an important step toward gathering the data necessary to address long-standing health inequities.

**SB 292** establishes safe harbor protections for survivors of sexual exploitation, ensuring they are not prosecuted for prostitution-related offenses when seeking help. This measure responds directly to the findings of OHA's 2022 report on Missing and Murdered Native Hawaiian Women and Girls and provides critical legal safeguards for Kānaka Maoli women and girls who disproportionately suffer from trafficking.

**SB 694** prohibits the incarceration of minors in adult prisons except under narrow circumstances. Native Hawaiian youth are overrepresented in the justice system, and exposure to adult correctional environments exacerbates trauma and diminishes rehabilitative potential. The bill supports age-appropriate best practices and reflects OHA's commitment to criminal justice reform grounded in the best interests of youth and community.

OHA will be hosting legislature empowerment across the pae 'āina in September and October to provide off session updates and prepare for the 2026 legislative session. Please check back oha.org/governance for more information. ■

# He Wa'a He Moku

## Preparing for a historic launch of 14 programs to uplift Mana i Maui Ola

By Elena Farden  
OHA Sr. Director of Strategy & Implementation

As summer approaches, OHA's Strategy & Implementation team stands at the edge of an ambitious new chapter – preparing to launch 14 programs and initiatives designed to move the lāhui forward across education, health, housing, and economic stability. Each of these initiatives reflects the continuous work of OHA – in years past and present – of planning, listening, and building with our communities, and together they aim to activate the long-term vision of Mana i Maui Ola.

Launching 14 programs is like launching 14 wa'a at once. This is no small feat. And these are not single outrigger wa'a – but double-hulled vessels designed for



long-distance voyaging for carrying community and impact.

Each program – whether focused on restorative justice, Native Hawaiian business resilience, affordable housing models, or reimagining education pathways – represents a distinct vessel, with its own crew, resources, needs, and expertise. And yet, they are all paddling toward a shared horizon: a thriving lāhui.

To power this journey, OHA has submitted a bold budget request for Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027, grounded in both our urgency in ushering progress for Mana i Maui Ola, as well as agency to effect OHA's charge under Chapter 10-6(1) and HRS Chapter 10-H.

Our request reflects the scope and scale

required to not only support program delivery, but also the training, community partnerships, and data infrastructure essential for long-term impact.

We make this request with eyes wide open to the broader context. Across the nation, we are witnessing federal funding freezes in critical areas that directly affect our people – Native Hawaiian education, housing, health, and workforce development. These shifts pose real threats to programs that our communities rely upon.

OHA is stepping forward not to replace these resources, but to ensure that in times of instability, we remain anchored in our own commitments to our people.

This is more than a launch. It is a test of how we align systems and spirit, and how we honor legacy while innovating boldly. Over the past year, our team has worked tirelessly to prepare each “wa'a,”

developing internal capacity, consulting with community, ensuring readiness in grants management, and engaging in early dialogue towards designing evaluation frameworks rooted in Indigenous values.

We are moving with intention – not just to fund projects, but to build movements.

There is an 'ōlelo no'ēau: “He wa'a he moku, he moku he wa'a; the canoe is an island, the island is a canoe.” As we embark on this voyage, we do so knowing we have finite resources, but collective intelligence as a team, as a lāhui.

We invite our lāhui to engage and dialogue with us on this launch. Together, we can transform this moment of potential instability into one of resurgence.

E holomua kākou me ka na'auao, me ka ikaika, a me ke aloha 'āina. Let us move forward with wisdom, strength, and love for our land and people. ■



### He 'ōpū ali'i

Our ali'i understood their kuleana to serve our lāhui. With benevolent hearts, they put their people first, shaping Hawai'i's future. Now, today's 'ōiwi leaders carry this responsibility, leading with the values exemplified by their royal ancestors.

On June 11, we honor Kamehameha Pai'ēa, our namesake and the visionary 'ōiwi leader whose strength and intelligence unified the Hawaiian Islands and left a lasting legacy.

*Hānai i ke keiki, ola ka lāhui*



Ke Kula 'o Kamehameha



# OHA Provides \$1.66M Grant for Emergency Financial Assistance

By Bill Brennan, OHA Communications Director

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) has awarded Hawaiian Community Assets (HCA), a HUD-certified housing counseling agency, \$1.66 million to administer the agency's ongoing emergency financial assistance program which provides critical resources to stabilize Native Hawaiian families facing financial hardship.

The OHA Community Grant will go to support the Kūkulu Kahua Emergency Financial Assistance Program.

"At the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, we understand that the wellbeing of our lāhui begins with the stability and dignity of each 'ohana," said OHA CEO Stacy Ferreira. "Through the Kūkulu Kahua emergency Financial Assistance Program, OHA is committed to provide not only urgent financial relief but also pathways to long-term stability and healing. This investment reflects our deep kuleana to uplift our people in times of hardship and to stand as a trusted source of support."

The Kūkulu Kahua program will

deliver culturally rooted financial assistance to OHA beneficiaries to help them with a wide range of emergency situations, including rent and utility payments, and funeral expenses and other pressing needs that may threaten a household's stability.

The program pairs one-time financial assistance to eligible OHA beneficiaries paired with access to HCA's free financial counseling and wraparound support services.

"This grant from OHA will strengthen our ability to respond to the urgent needs of our communities with care, dignity and cultural integrity," said Chelsie Evans Enos, executive director of Hawaiian Community Assets. "Kūkulu Kahua is more than emergency assistance, it's a foundation for long-term stability and generational resilience."

The Kūkulu Kahua Emergency Financial Assistance Program launched on May 15. The partnership reflects a shared commitment by both organizations to uplift Native Hawaiian 'ohana during times of crisis and build toward long-term financial stability. ■

For more information, visit:

[hawaiiancommunity.net/kukulukahua](http://hawaiiancommunity.net/kukulukahua)



*Kūkulu Kahua*  
Emergency Financial Assistance Program

Kūkulu Kahua offers one-time support for emergency needs paired with access to financial counseling and wraparound services designed to empower families on their journey toward economic resilience.

One-time emergency financial assistance can be used for:

- rent •
- utilities •
- funeral expenses •
- car/home repair •

For more information and to apply, go to:

[hawaiiancommunity.net/kukulukahua](http://hawaiiancommunity.net/kukulukahua)



# EPA Awards OHA \$2M Grant for Urban Property Revitalization Assessment

By Bill Brennan, OHA Communications Director

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) has received a \$2 million Brownfields Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to assess contaminated local lands as a precursor to potential cleanup and revitalization. This grant puts the EPA's commitment to protect human health and the environment into action while ensuring the agency remains a good steward of tax dollars and advances policies to energize the economy.

"By tackling polluted and abandoned properties, the Brownfields Grants being awarded nationwide restore local pride, improve neighborhood health, and ignite economic vitality," said EPA Pacific Southwest Regional Administrator Josh F.W. Cook. "This program transforms liabilities into cherished community assets."

"OHA is honored to be awarded FY25 Brownfields grant funds from the EPA in support of required environmental assessments for future developments at Kaka'ako Makai, the site of a former municipal landfill, and at our Iwilei properties," said OHA CEO Stacy Ferreira. "This critical investment strengthens OHA's ability to steward these culturally and strategically significant lands with transparency, environmental responsibility, and community trust."

"These assessments will help us identify and address any environmental conditions early in the planning process, ensuring that future uses of the parcels are safe, informed, and aligned with both public health and Native Hawaiian values," said OHA Board of Trustees Chairperson Kaiali'i Kahele. "We mahalo the EPA...for recognizing the importance of Native Hawaiian land stewardship in urban Honolulu."

Federal grant recipients must satisfy legal and ad-

ministrative requirements to receive funds from EPA. The Brownfields Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup Grants being announced include \$121.8 million for 148 selectees for Assessment Grants; \$88.6 million for 51 selectees for Cleanup Grants; and \$15 million for 15 selectees for Revolving Loan Fund Grants.

In addition, Brownfields Supplemental Revolving Loan Fund Grants include \$42 million for 34 high-performing recipients to help communities continue their work to carry out cleanup and redevelopment projects on contaminated brownfield properties. Supplemental funding for Revolving Loan Fund Grants is available to recipients that have depleted their funds and have viable cleanup projects ready for work. ■

"Brownfields" are former industrial or commercial sites where future use is affected by real or perceived environmental contamination.

# "Pop-Up" Satellite Offices for OHA Beneficiaries on Hawai'i Island

By Bill Brennan, OHA Communications Director

Last month, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) began its new Traveling Beneficiary Services initiative on Hawai'i Island, when OHA Beneficiary Services staff set-up "pop-up" satellite offices at the Nā'ālehu Community Center on May 9 and another at the West Hawai'i Civic Center on May 16.

A satellite office in Waimea will begin offering services on June 6.

"We are committed to showing up for our beneficiaries in their communities with purpose and aloha," said OHA Board Chair and Hawai'i Island Trustee Kaiali'i Kahele.

"This is about removing barriers, providing assistance and resources, and ensuring that the

Office of Hawaiian Affairs remains responsive and accessible to those we serve."

The new initiative is designed to meet Native Hawaiian beneficiaries where they live, work and raise their families. Instead of requiring beneficiaries to travel long distances to access support, OHA will bring its services directly to communities across Hawai'i Island with high concentrations of Native Hawaiians.

The satellite offices will be open once a month in each location (see schedule in sidebar) to provide direct in-person support to beneficiaries from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

"We are reimagining how OHA services our people," said OHA CEO Stacy Ferreira. "By bringing our services into the heart of our communities, we're strengthening our relationships, increasing impact, and truly honoring the needs and voices of our beneficiaries." ■

## OHA Traveling Office Locations and 2025 Schedule

All satellite offices will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (closed from 1:00 -1:45 p.m. for lunch)

### Waimea

Parker Ranch Center  
67-1185 Hawai'i Belt Road

Open the first Friday of each month:

June 6, Thursday July 3 (since Friday is a holiday), August 1, September 5, October 3, November 7, December 5

### Nā'ālehu

Nā'ālehu Community Center  
95-5635 Hawai'i Belt Road

Open the second Friday of each month:

June 13, July 11, August 8, September 12, October 10, November 14, December 12

### Kailua-Kona

West Hawai'i Civic Center, Building B  
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Highway

Open the third Friday of each month:

June 20, July 18, August 15, September 19, October 17, November 21, December 19

For more information call 808-594-1835 or go to [oha.org](https://oha.org)

# New OHA BSA for Moloka'i and Lāna'i

By Puanani Fernandez-Akamine

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) is pleased to welcome Kasidy "Malu" Lani-Ka'akimaka as its new Moloka'i and Lāna'i beneficiary services assistant. Her kuleana with OHA is to provide direct, in-person support and kōkua to Moloka'i beneficiaries, including with the Hawaiian Registry Program, and to serve as a liaison and support to Lāna'i beneficiaries.

Malu joined OHA this past March. Prior to that, she has worked primarily in the medical field, serving as a kūpuna care community health outreach worker for Nā Pu'uwai (part of the Native Hawaiian health care system on Moloka'i), as a clinical managerial assistant at Moloka'i General Hospital, and as a home care service provider with Care Resource Hawai'i.



Kasidy "Malu" Lani-Ka'akimaka is OHA's new Beneficiary Services Agent for Moloka'i and Lāna'i. - Courtesy Photo

When she isn't working, Malu's greatest joy is spending time with her 'ohana. She believes in being fully present with her 'ohana and appreciating the simple, meaningful moments they share together to create memories.

Born and raised on Moloka'i, Malu is a proud graduate of Moloka'i High School and earned a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certification through Maui Community College.

"Moloka'i is not just where I'm from, it's who I am," Malu said. "My community, my culture, and my values are deeply rooted in this island."

Growing up on Moloka'i, Malu knows how important it is to kōkua. "I've seen firsthand the

importance of taking care of one-another. With limited resources and unique challenges, the strength of our island lies in our ability to support each other."

Through her years working in healthcare, Malu has been able to serve her community in meaningful ways. She hopes that her work at OHA will provide growth opportunities that will allow her to contribute to the wellbeing of our lāhui in more ways.

"I'm excited and honored to begin this next chapter, and I'm ready to serve our people with aloha, intention, and a deep commitment to uplifting our communities." ■



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# Recent Repatriation Efforts in Europe and the U.S. East Coast

By Kamakana Ferreira, OHA Compliance Archaeologist

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) recently completed a repatriation mission to Europe and the U.S. East Coast in collaboration with Hui Iwi Kuamo'o (HIK) – a Native Hawaiian organization (NHO) that provides care and protection for iwi kūpuna, moepū (funerary objects), and mea kapu (sacred objects) through repatriation.

Travel took place between April 22 and May 3, with the first leg of the trip including stops in Berlin, Germany, and Belfast, Northern Ireland. The second leg of the trip included stops in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Washington, D.C.

An 'awa ceremony was held on O'ahu the night before the trip to prepare the travelers, including some coming in from neighbor islands, for the work ahead.

In Berlin, consultation negotiations took place with the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation (abbreviated as the "SPK") on April 24 for the return of two important ki'i (carved images). The foundation is a federal government body that oversees 27 museums and cultural organizations in and around Berlin.

Previously, and in collaboration with HIK, OHA repatriated a total of 32 iwi kūpuna and seven moepū from the SPK in 2022 and 2023. These iwi kūpuna and moepū have since been reburied. The two ki'i in question are to be returned under a shared stewardship agreement, wherein OHA and SPK would share custody.

Shared stewardship is a progressive way for museums to work together with Indigenous communities on the appropriate care of cultural objects without having to fully relinquish their interest in the object(s). The proposed agreement has garnered support from the U.S. Department of Interior and the German Consul General in San Francisco (whose jurisdiction covers Hawai'i).

The consultation negotiation was positive, with tentative agreement on the stewardship terms. OHA will continue to work with SPK until the agreement is executed and the ki'i are returned home.

In Belfast, a repatriation ceremony took place to return three iwi kūpuna from the Northern Ireland National Museums (NMNI), Ulster Museum, on April 28. The event was attended and supported by James Applegate, the U.S. Consul General in Belfast.

OHA had originally submitted a repatriation claim in October 2021 for five iwi kūpuna and five mea kapu after being notified of possible holdings at NMNI by Hawai'i County Council Member Holeka Goro Inaba.

Unfortunately, three of the iwi kūpuna could not be located by Ulster Museum staff at the time; thus, OHA and HIK were not able to retrieve them when they first visited Belfast in May 2022.

The three missing iwi kūpuna were eventually located by Ulster staff in November 2024, and arrangements were subsequently made for their return. The NMNI Board of Trustees swiftly approved the return in January 2025 to enable the repatriation event in April. The iwi

kūpuna were reburied upon their return to Hawai'i.

Continuing on to the U.S. East Coast, the OHA and HIK team first stopped in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on April 30 for the retrieval of the akua hulu manu (feathered god image) of Chief Kekuaokalani from Harvard's Peabody Museum.

A repatriation claim submitted by a lineal descendant (also a member of HIK) for the akua hulu manu was approved under the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) earlier this year. HIK graciously invited Hawaiian cultural practitioners, Hawaiian students attending Harvard University, OHA staff and OHA Board Chair Kaiali'i Kahele to attend an 'aha 'awa ceremony to celebrate the return of the akua hulu manu. However, due to a scheduling conflict, Kaua'i Island Trustee Dan Ahuna represented the OHA Board in Kahele's place.

Immediately following the events in Cambridge, the team departed for Washington, D.C., to retrieve the 'ahu 'ula of Chief Kekuaokalani from the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Museum Support Center in Suitland, Maryland, on May 1.

This 'ahu 'ula was worn by Chief Kekuaokalani at the infamous Battle of Kuamo'o in 1819, where he was killed by the forces of Liholiho. While not an OHA claim, OHA supported HIK and the Smithsonian in their efforts to return the 'ahu 'ula to Hawai'i.

Sen. Brian Schatz recently applauded the effort and featured the ceremonial return on the U.S. Committee on Indian Affairs website. An 'aha 'awa ceremony was held at the Smithsonian to celebrate the return of the 'ahu 'ula.

The 'ahu 'ula was transported to the Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park on May 3 "on loan" until the formal repatriation process under the National Museum of the American Indian Act is completed. Final disposition for



This 'ahu'ula, recently repatriated from the Smithsonian Museum, was worn by Chief Kekuaokalani at the infamous Battle of Kuamo'o in 1819 where he was killed by the forces of Liholiho (Kamehameha II). - Photo: Smithsonian Museum

both mea kapu have yet to be decided by claimants.

OHA normally conducts several repatriation missions per year and plans them in a way to consolidate travel for multiple claims whenever possible. Work is often done in collaboration with descendants or other NHOs like HIK.

In mid-June, OHA will participate in repatriations with the American Museum of Natural History in New York and the Chicago Field Museum in partnership with Nā Hoa Aloha o Ka Pu'uhonua o Hōnaunau for the return of a mahiole (feathered helmet) and burial kapa that are believed to be from Kona, Hawai'i Island. Both of these cultural objects are being repatriated pursuant to NAGPRA. ■



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# BLNR Rejects the Army's FEIS for Pōhakuloa



(L-R): Haumāna from Hālau Kū Māna created signs urging BLNR to reject the Army's FEIS. OHA Compliance Archaeologist Kamakana Ferreira and OHA Chief Advocate Leinā'ala Ley testify. Kia'i protest the ongoing use of Pōhakuloa for military training. Hundreds of people showed up to the BLNR meeting on May 9 in an outstanding demonstration of Native Hawaiian civic engagement. - Photos: Jason Lees

By Puanani Fernandez-Akamine

On May 9, the Department of Land and Natural Resources' (DLNR) Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) rejected the U.S. Army's Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for 23,000 acres of state land within the 133,000-acre Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA) on Hawai'i Island after an emotional day-long meeting.

The Army's proposed retention of the land it leases from the state at Pōhakuloa has generated widespread opposition. Hundreds of community members, cultural practitioners, and environmental advocates from across the pae 'āina gathered ahead of the 9:00 a.m. meeting to demand that the BLNR reject the FEIS.

The land within the PTA is one of four parcels of public "ceded" lands currently leased to the Army by DLNR that are set to expire in 2029. The other three are on O'ahu.

Community advocates contend that the FEIS is inadequate and fails to address decades of documented environmental destruction, cultural desecration, and serious health risks associated with military use. For decades, the Army's use of Pōhakuloa has been opposed by the community – including formal opposition by conservation groups, cultural practitioners and Native Hawaiian organizations presenting both expert legal and scientific critiques.

Specific concerns include the confirmed presence of depleted uranium in the soil of the impact zone, failure to remove unexploded ordnance and other toxic munitions from the impact zone and surrounding areas, as well as the 892 wildfires that military activities at PTA have caused between 1975-2024. Notably, the August 2022 "Leilani Fire" that started at Pōhakuloa burned about 17,700 acres – 12,400 acres of which were outside of the boundaries of PTA and were habitats for endangered species.

A Statement of Solidarity signed by more than 200 Native Hawaiian organizations, environmental groups, and individuals, was submitted to the BLNR calling on the board to uphold its responsibility to protect trust lands,

cultural resources, and public health.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) also called on BLNR to reject the Army's FEIS, noting in its testimony that Pōhakuloa comprises part of the ceded lands base stating, "as a trustee of the ceded lands base, and of the Native Hawaiian people's unrelinquished claims to self-governance, OHA is concerned with the failure of the FEIS to clearly set out the Army's compliance with clean up measures included in the current lease and required to safeguard the land's long-term use and accessibility for civilians."

OHA also supported calls from the State Historic Preservation Division for an archaeological inventory survey (AIS) that covers the entirety of state-owned lands at Pōhakuloa.

In 2014, Maxine Kahaulelio and Clarence "Ku" Kauakahi Ching filed a lawsuit (*Ching v. Case*) against DLNR for its failure to monitor the Pōhakuloa lands the state leased to the U.S. Army back in 1964. In April 2018, First Circuit Court Judge Gary Chang ruled in favor of the lawsuit noting the state's failure to "mālama 'āina." The Hawai'i State Supreme Court later affirmed Chang's ruling.

The Army's FEIS omitted key environmental and cultural information including surveys for endangered species and Native Hawaiian burials and archaeological sites in large portions of the proposed lease area. It also failed to provide an enforceable wildfire mitigation plan or evaluate contamination risks to ground water. Pōhakuloa sits less than 2,000 feet above a massive aquifer.

"We need the Board of Land and Natural Resources to decide whether to stand with the people of Hawai'i or enable further military desecration of our 'āina," Kahaulelio said.

BLNR's decision to reject the Army's FEIS was rendered in the early evening following the meeting.

"This decision reflects a thorough review of the document's legal, environmental, and cultural deficiencies, many of which OHA and others identified in public testimony," said OHA Board of Trustees Chair and Hawai'i Island Trustee Kaiali'i Kahele.

A joint statement issued by the Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation (NHLC), the Center for Biological Diversi-

ty (CBD), and the Sierra Club of Hawai'i noted that the board's rejection effectively halts the Army's attempt to secure a new lease for the time being. However, the fight is not over. Under Hawai'i law, the Army may resubmit a revised FEIS that addresses BLNR's concerns.

"This decision is a win for truth, for science and for the people of Hawai'i," said CBD Hawai'i and Pacific Islands Director Maxx Phillips. "The board recognized that you can't make informed decisions about protecting endangered species, sacred sites or clean water when you refuse to even do baseline surveys."

"Pōhakuloa has been bombed, burned and polluted for over six decades. [The] rejection of the FEIS gives us a fighting chance to restore and protect this sacred place," added Sierra Club of Hawai'i Director Wayne Chung Tanaka. "The board's decision upholds its constitutional and fiduciary obligations to Native Hawaiians and the general public, including both present and future generations."

"The state has a legal duty to honor the public trust and the rights of Kānaka Maoli," noted NHLC senior staff attorney Ashley Obrey. "The decision reflects well-established Hawai'i law that prioritizes the health of Hawai'i lands and Native Hawaiian cultural practices over military convenience."

For more than 75 years the military has used the 133,000-acre PTA for military exercises despite Pōhakuloa's designation as a conservation district, its "ceded" lands status, and its cultural significance to Native Hawaiians.

Should the State of Hawai'i ultimately reject the Army's request to extend its lease once it expires in 2029, Pōhakuloa will not be shut down – but there will be less land available to the military, and more lands returned to Hawai'i's public land trust inventory.

"OHA is committed to ensuring that any future course of action honors the unique legal status of these lands and the trust obligations they carry," Kahele added. "These lands are not ordinary – they are part of an unrelinquished legacy. OHA will continue to prioritize protecting the rights and interests of the Native Hawaiian people and preserving the integrity of the public land trust." ■



*“Hula is the language of the heart...  
therefore the heartbeat of the Hawaiian people.”  
– King David Kalākaua*

Aloha nui to all the kumu hula, dancers and musicians who shared their talents at this year’s Merrie Monarch Festival!

Special congratulations to the new Miss Aloha Hula Jaedyn Janae Puahaulani Pavao who also won the ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i Award presented each year by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). Pavao is a haumana of Hālau Ka Lei Mokihana o Leinā‘ala under Kumu Hula Leinā‘ala Pavao Jardin.

Congratulations also go out to Kāne Overall Winner Hālau Nā Kamalei o Likolehua under the direction of Kumu Hula Robert Cazimero and Wāhine Overall Winner Hālau ‘o Kamuela under the direction of Nā Kumu Hula Kunewa Mook and Kau‘ionālani Kamana‘o.

In addition to the brilliant hula performances, the week-long celebration included mākeke with the finest Hawaiian and locally made products, the annual Merrie Monarch Festival Royal Parade in downtown Hilo, and more.

OHA trustees, leaders and Hilo-based staff and their ‘ohana enjoyed marching in the parade and hosting an open house and blessing at OHA’s new Hilo Office in the Puainako Town Center that week, celebrating with hula, music and mea‘ai. - Photos: Jason Lees

# The 2025 Merrie Monarch Festival



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Academy of Hawaiian Arts



Hālau Ka Liko Pua O Kalaniākea





# Ongoing Healthcare Challenges on Moloka'i

By Donalyn Dela Cruz

Even after the Hawai'i legislative session ended on May 2, 2025, Sen. Lynn DeCoite refused to give up on one of Moloka'i's most pressing needs: access to healthcare transportation.

"There's an aging population, there's needs, and even though doctors are trying to fill the gap, people are still retiring, and doctors who don't live there cannot even get there on time," said DeCoite.

For residents seeking specialized treatment, they travel by plane and when that is not available, by boat.

First elected to the House of Representatives in 2015, DeCoite has steadily introduced bills that would provide funding for reliable healthcare transportation for Moloka'i. Over the past decade, DeCoite has introduced multiple bills to subsidize healthcare flights and costs for visiting physicians. This past session was no exception.

"My colleagues graciously supported it, but we couldn't get the House to do it," she said.

Undeterred, she has begun engaging with partners and organizations to bring much-needed investment to her home island. Specifically, she wants to create opportunities where traveling doctors can have reliable transportation and a place to stay for a few days to provide care.

"It's working to fill the void of, you know, what we're lacking. Whether it be just practitioners, it's to try and put out more funding to help with costs," said DeCoite.

Moloka'i faces significant healthcare challenges due to its remote location and limited medical infrastructure. For residents, understanding the scope of available healthcare services and the limitations is crucial for plan-



Moloka'i General Hospital offers 24/7 emergency services, acute care, imaging and outpatient treatment. It was recently recognized as a Top 20 Critical Access Hospital for quality care. - Courtesy Photos

primary care for the island, despite the continuation of traveling doctors.

After conducting many interviews, Moloka'i General Hospital (MGH) president Janice Kalanihulia recently secured two doctors for MGH: an internal medicine provider and a pediatrician. One will begin in July and the second will start in November.

"We kissed a lot of frogs before we found the right ones," said Kalanihulia. "We're open to people coming here and moving; we watch to see how they integrate themselves into the community and how genuine they are, and their desire to be here."

Kalanihulia says she is constantly tracking potential medical professionals as part of a recruitment effort.

MGH is the island's only hospital, offering 24/7 emergency services, acute care, imaging, and outpatient treatments. It is fully operational and was recently recognized as one of the top 20 Critical Access Hospitals in the U.S. for quality care.

The island also has Nā Pu'uwai, which provides culturally grounded health services, chronic disease management, and wellness programs, and the Moloka'i Community Health Center which offers primary care, dental, behavioral health, and mobile clinic services.

Kalanihulia noted that most residents seek primary care. "I think the kinds of services that we offer are fairly all-encompassing for rural [communities], because you have to remember, we don't have any surgical capability. There are no on-island specialists, no anesthesiologists, so the kind of care we can provide is pretty narrow, but for a small community hospital, we are really well outfitted."

MGH now has a wound care specialist at its facility once-a-week. "Previously you would have to get on a plane and go to O'ahu for that kind of care – and a lot of



Moloka'i General Hospital (MGH) President Janice Kalanihulia notes that while they currently have no on-island specialists, MGH is well outfitted for a small community hospital.

people just did not do that. They opted to stay home until we sent them out and they ended up with amputations. So I think this service has really saved people's limbs," Kalanihulia said.

Medical needs that are complex and severe are what DeCoite is most concerned about. At times she has received calls from residents who need air transport, but no flights were available.

"When they're stuck at the hospital and they cannot get on the airplane, I have to call the National Guard," DeCoite said, adding that she has also reached out to those who own private helicopters for help. "That's where we're at."

When DeCoite's bill for subsidies had its first hearing this last legislative session, the Department of Transportation and the Chamber of Commerce offered favorable testimony.

"You know, nobody from Moloka'i would testify, which was upsetting," she said. DeCoite believes the lack of public testimony reflects the tension to preserve Moloka'i's identity without forgoing essential services or funding.

DeCoite wants to raise awareness of the challenges she faces in getting funds when there is a lack of community voices who favor business opportunities that would result in more transportation and lodging options on Moloka'i.

In the meantime, the healthcare organizations on Moloka'i continue to serve who and when they can.

"It's a really serious business, and it's a huge responsibility," said Kalanihulia. "You know, I sit here with Emmett's picture right over my shoulder, and I just think, you know, how would he want to see this unfold? What would he want to see happen? And then I try to do that."



MGH President Janice Kalanihulia

Moloka'i Sen. Lynn DeCoite

ning and accessing necessary medical care.

The island's population is about 7,400 residents. According to the 2021 Island Community Report by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, approximately 65% of Moloka'i's residents are Native Hawaiian.

Two years ago, Moloka'i lost two beloved physicians within months of one another – Dr. William Thomas, who passed away on Sept. 4, 2022, at the age of 63, and Dr. Emmett Aluli, the iconic leader of the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana, who passed away on Nov. 30, 2022, at age 78. Their deaths left an enormous gap in reliable



# Kalaupapa: Who Holds the Kuleana to Decide?

By Adam Keawe Manalo-Camp

At the base of the towering sea cliffs on Moloka'i's north shore, Kalaupapa sits quietly. For more than a century, this place carried the weight of exile. Over 8,000 people diagnosed with Hansen's disease (leprosy) were sent here between 1866 and 1969, removed from their homes, families, and communities.

Today, only four former patients remain. All are in their nineties. As this living chapter of Kalaupapa's story nears its close, a question looms: what should come next, and who holds the kuleana to decide?

For Miki'ala Pescaia, that kuleana is personal. She is a descendant of Kalaupapa patients, a cultural practitioner, homesteader, historian, and former Kalaupapa National Park ranger. She now serves as the lay leader of Siloama Church, the oldest Protestant church in Kalaupapa. Her relationship to place is not professional, it's generational.

"As someone with generational presence and pilina to the island, it's always been our hope and understanding that the island is one," she says. "The request from King Kamehameha V to create these imaginary boundaries, to carve up Kalawao from the rest of the island, that's a legacy of Hansen's disease. And that isolation is something we still experience as a community today."

Although the quarantine law was lifted in 1969, the separation is still felt. Pescaia says the trauma of exile doesn't disappear just because the law changed. "Even though everyone got back their liberty to leave Kalaupapa, the trauma of that legacy still impacts us today," she explained. "But also, the descendants of patients themselves are looking for reconnection."

Reckoning with Kalaupapa's past means understanding it was not a single experience.

"Some patients were deeply attached to their kulā- iwi and did not want to be at Kalaupapa," Pescaia says. "They didn't want to be remembered for the disease. 'I'm more than that.' 'I am one Kanaka.' 'I am one fisherman.' They wanted to be remembered for being the husband,

the wife, the mother they were. But on the other hand, for some patients, they came here as children. Kalaupapa was home. So, we need to think as a society: how do we honor and respect the spectrum of their experience?"

Much of Kalaupapa is currently managed by the National Park Service. Many of the staff are Native Hawaiian and from Moloka'i, which Pescaia sees as a strength. Still, she warns that critical infrastructure is fragile, and federal support is never guaranteed.

"We only have so much water. We only have so much landfill. We only got one septic tank that gets cleaned once a year," she says. "We need to think about those things and remember that the Hawaiian homestead lands there could be leased one day."

Pescaia believes Kalaupapa's future requires a shift away from conventional federal management. She proposes a model rooted in cultural practice and local leadership, like the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission.

"Kalaupapa needs a similar model," she says. "Kalaupapa is a wao akua, a realm of the gods, and should be treated as such. When we go to Kalaupapa, we need to have the right mindset."

That mindset also means recognizing the depth of Kalaupapa's reach. "We all have family that was sent to Kalaupapa," Pescaia says. "We all have aunts and uncles who were sent to Kalaupapa. In that sense, Kalaupapa is not isolated but is part of the mo'okū'auhau of the lāhui. We really should have memorials on all the islands so that we remember the patients who sacrificed themselves to keep the rest of us safe."

The work of stewardship, she says, is not just about preservation. It is about care. "In a Western democracy, there are always people who are in and out," she says.

"But the Hawaiian model, the one Kalaupapa's residents lived, was different. It wasn't about exclusion or partisanship. It was about collective pono, making sure everyone from the kauhale to the 'ili to the ahupua'a all knew their place."

Pescaia supports partnerships with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement but cautions that any future leadership must center cultural integrity over political efficiency. "We need leadership that doesn't just preserve the place, but its sense of community that Kalaupapa built while also being innovative."

Environmental stewardship is part of that kuleana. The waters surrounding Kalaupapa face mounting pressures from overfishing. "Kapu isn't about



Kalaupapa is located on Moloka'i's remote Kalawao Peninsula located on the island's north shore at the base of towering cliffs - considered to be the tallest sea cliffs in the world at more than 3,000 feet above sea level. - Photo: Sanba38, Wikipedia, 2006

restriction. It's about discipline," Pescaia explained. "The area around Kalaupapa is the Kapi'olani Hospital of fishes. If you keep catching the fish around the peninsula, that's it - no more bēbē, no more fish."

What comes after for Kalaupapa is not just about land management or historical preservation. It is about how a people respond to silence, to loss, and to opportunity. It is about whether we inherit only the grief - or also the strength.

Kalaupapa's future, Pescaia believes, depends on whether Hawai'i is willing to learn from its example - not just as a historical tragedy, but as a model of resilience.

"Despite the deep trauma, Kalaupapa represents a community that constantly found ways to survive," Pescaia says.

"They represent the best of us. We need to revere those kaiaulu practices and that pilina with Akua the patients had and bring that into all our communities." ■



Miki'ala Pescaia is a descendant of Kalaupapa patients, a cultural practitioner, a historian, a lay leader of Kalaupapa's Siloama Church, and a former Kalaupapa National Park ranger. - Courtesy Photo

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# Moloka'i's Journey Towards Energy Sovereignty

By Marina Starleaf Riker

For Moloka'i, the answer to who should chart the island's energy future was simple. "Who knows best? It's the people who live there," declared Tehani Kaalekahi, the executive director of Sust'ainable Molokai, a nonprofit dedicated to empowering residents to shape collective decisions about the future of the island.

Like many communities across the pae 'āina, Moloka'i struggled for decades with energy challenges, paying some of the priciest electricity costs in Hawai'i — which already has the highest electric bills of any U.S. state.

And although the Hawaiian Electric Company (HECO) forecasted years ago that Moloka'i could reach 100% renewable energy by 2020, the island didn't have a clear path forward to create any utility-scale renewable energy projects. Many that were proposed by off-island firms, meanwhile, were met with resistance when they failed to involve the community or understand their needs.

Which is why the people of Moloka'i are working to change that — and upend the status quo of top-down developer decisions to, instead, embrace place-based wisdom and collaborative community planning to create a future of energy independence and justice.

"Why would someone from the continent come in and say, 'this is going to work for you.' How would they know? They don't live here," Kaalekahi said in an interview. "Who better to make those decisions than the people who live and work here?"

In 2021, the Molokai Clean Energy Hui — a group of community members organized by Sust'ainable Molokai that include representatives from key partners like Ho'āhu Energy Cooperative — decided that instead of waiting for state regulators and developers to pick projects for Moloka'i, Moloka'i would decide its own energy future.

The hui took an unprecedented step to convince the Hawai'i Public Utilities Commission, which regulates energy across the islands, to temporarily pause planning for all utility-scale energy development on the island, giving time for residents to chart their own path to a 100% renewable future.

What came out of that was a community-led planning process, the first of its kind in Hawai'i. It spanned two years and empowered voices across the entire island, involving almost 50 events and focus groups, 700 surveys and 2,800 conversations with residents (about 7,400 people live on island).

Known officially as Molokai's Community Energy Resilience Action Plan (CERAP), the groundbreaking initiative carefully listened and collected community mana'o to identify 10 priority renewable energy projects that could deliver 90% of Moloka'i's electricity needs.

While the hui ensured that all voices — from keiki to kūpuna to Hawaiian homesteaders to 'ohana living off grid — had a say in shaping the 53-page plan, they also forged partnerships with energy experts and govern-



Besides energy planning, Sust'ainable Molokai has helped community members to exchange old appliances with new, energy efficient ones. - Photo: Sust'ainable Molokai



Moloka'i's community-led energy planning process means that residents are able to bring place-based knowledge and an intimate understanding of microclimates when siting renewable energy projects. - Photo: Marina Starleaf Riker

ment regulators on county, state and federal levels.

"It's like one of those things where it'll take everybody," Kaalekahi said. There's no way one entity can do it all."

Since Molokai's energy roadmap was published in the summer of 2023, the hui and other stakeholders are now shifting gears to map out project specifics, including the costs, tradeoffs and possible designs that fit best within Moloka'i's diverse communities and ecosystems.

Centering place-based knowledge in the energy planning process means that so much more is considered before a project is ever brought forward in any official manner — like factoring in the frequency of sunshine, wind or rain in a particular microclimate, which may have been missed by offshore energy developers. As Kaalekahi notes, there is no "one size fits all," even though that might have been acceptable in years past.

Moloka'i's journey toward energy sovereignty has po-

sitioned the community as a model for other rural communities across Hawai'i and thousands of miles beyond its shores, documented in national headlines for championing a new way to create reliable, affordable and secure renewable power.

Although the process itself — navigating state and federal energy regulators, understanding the specifics of Moloka'i's energy demands and current grid — has been complicated, one thing is clear: Moloka'i's energy future is intimately tied to its own self-determination.

Without a secure source of power on island, Moloka'i will continue to be vulnerable to supply chain disruptions, price hikes and climate disasters that threaten the barges that deliver its current power source.

And that's a reality that all communities across the pae 'āina face.

The County of Maui's Climate Action and Resiliency Plan, for example, charts a path toward achieving zero emissions and a carbon-neutral economy by 2045; the State of Hawai'i, meanwhile, is mandated by state law to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.

But while governments have tried to shift the most isolated archipelago in the world away from relying on imported fossil fuels for power, an increasing number of communities are following Moloka'i's lead and taking matters into their own hands.

In the aftermath of the 2023 wildfires, for example, Lahaina Strong, Hā Sustainability and Shake Energy Collaborative came together to document the community's energy priorities and vision for the future; Maui's Upcountry community is also currently undergoing a process to bring residents together to better understand challenges to resilience and energy security.

"This is an awesome opportunity for community to do what community does," Kaalekahi said. ■



# The Battle for Maui: Part 1

By Kirby M. Wright

*"The Battle for Maui" is a two-part work of "creative nonfiction" by Kirby M. Wright, an award-winning 'Ōiwi poet, novelist and playwright.*

We launch from Kohala before dawn, paddling for deep water. I wear a gourd helmet, a coconut fiber battle cape, and boar tusk wrist guard. Thirty miles of channel to cross. The sun breaks over the water. 'Oama (young goat-fish) skitter the surface.

We are nine hundred wa'a peleleu and kakaka canoes carrying an army 30 lau (12,000) strong. My men do not fear death. The great ones are those who charge into battle without fear. They live for war. We are an island united. Ali'i Kauanoano has the Pi'ipi'i, elite warriors from Hilo and Hāmākua. Kekūhaupi'o commands the 'Ālapa, those North Kona warriors who are experts with spear and sling.

The 'Okaka, an army from South Kona, is led by the great Ke'eaumoku, father of my queen. I bring the hoahānau, my personal army of koa warriors. I will hold the hoahānau back until the tipping point in battle, that time when the charge of my fierce young warriors will overwhelm the enemy's willpower.

John Young and Isaac Davis, my cannon haoles, are here. Ka'iana and Kekūhaupi'o are here too. Kekūhaupi'o, my bodyguard, would sacrifice his life to defend me in battle.

And Ka'iana, it was you who left the safety of Kaua'i to join me. Your blood is sacred and your mana strong. Your body is stout like mine but more graceful. You made the heads of my ali'i wahine turn in court, their eyes filling with admiration for a new ali'i with a body to rival mine. You are young enough to be my son, had I married early. My queen admires and respects you.

Our paddles carve through 'Alenuihāhā Channel. A school of dolphin surfaces. My twin lauhala sails billow in the wind. I believe these are stronger than Cook's linen sails on the Resolution. My canoe has two 80-foot long koa hulls and a swivel cannon mounted to its bow. We carve through the blue swells between islands.

Maui, a green gem on the horizon. How friendly those slopes appear and how calm the coast appears. Maui was once ruled by Kahekili, my father. The new king of Maui,



Portrait of Kamehameha I by artist Brook Kapukuniahia Parker, 2013.

- Image Courtesy of Brook Parker ([hawaiianatart.org](http://hawaiianatart.org))

Kalanikūpule, knows we are crossing. His army gathers in Kahului. He is my half-brother and inherited the island from Kahekili.

An ali'i may give his son an island. But he cannot give him the mana to defend it. When I take this island, I will tell the maka'āinana they are free from the rule of Kahekili's cruel son.

We make the southeastern shore yet are a great distance from Kahului. Hāna smoke curls skyward. Dogs bark onshore. The green backside of Hāna beckons. I stand and raise my ihe and say, "E aho ho'i ka make ana i ke kauā, he nui nā moepū," (It is better to die in battle, many will be the companions in death).

Ka'iana raises his musket. Warriors bang paddles against the sides of their canoes. If I die in battle on Maui, I will have many good friends in death. Hāna is māka'u

loa. I sense danger in Hāna's long curve and shores hidden behind lava pinnacles.

We reach the entrance to the bay. Lava rock walls enclose it. The shoreline is a forest of 'ulu, hala, and coconut palms. Fog creeps down from the mountain. I must find 'Olopū, the sacred adze stolen from Hilo.

'Olopū is ko'i na'i aupuni, a battle-adze once belonging to the great Hawai'ikuauli. This ali'i ancestor never lost when carrying 'Olopū into battle. The thief is a low chief living near Hāna. I see fisher folk onshore as we glide in. Kekūhaupi'o leaps out, grabs our bow, and guides us in.

We beach and lift our canoe over the rocks and rest its hull on sand. Davis and Young remain offshore. My haoles refuse to land Lōpaka until scouts report a safe shore. Lōpaka is not our only cannon. I have three small ones stowed on other canoes, along with muskets, gunpowder, and fuses.

I march the shoals with my warriors. Ka'iana speaks to the maka'āinana. A fisherman claims 'Olopū is in the hands of a Kokomo chief. He knows of the ax because the chief threatened to butcher him with it for failing to bring promised hogs.

We follow the river up through a koa forest. Most of my men wear battle capes and gourd helmets. Wāhine bathing in a pool go silent when we pass.

\*\*\*\*\*

We reach the hala groves of Kokomo. Ka'iana hands me a gourd of water. I drink deeply. He is the man I want to take my place should I fall on Maui.

Ke'eaumoku sends scouts into the hala. The day is hot and quiet. No sign of man, animal, or bird. The scouts do not return.

Warriors drift through the grove like ghosts, pouring between the hala trunks before forming a crescent. These Kokomo men are both young and old. Most wield spears.

"Kahalui," I call. My men fan out, forming a rival crescent. Both sides shout challenges. A big man leaves their crescent with arms raised. He is Kapakahi the Giant, a warrior who fought alongside Kahekili. He wears a red malo and a necklace of 'ilio teeth. He once broke the backs of our bravest men and hurled their bodies off the 'Āo cliffs.

Kapakahi beckons me forward. "'A'ole, Kamehameha," Kekūhaupi'o says, "I will fight the giant."

I know my kumu believes if I'm killed my men will

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THE BATTLE FOR MAUI

Continued from page 15

flee. Yet, if I refuse the challenge my men will see me as a coward. “Bring my ihe,” I tell Kekūhaupi’o. He hands it to me. I grip the handle of my short spear and approach the giant. He is tall but gray. My arms and legs are more muscled.

“Eh, Kapakahi,” I call. “Where is my brother?”

“Waiting in Kahului,” the giant answers. “Ten mano (four thousand) strong. Blood from your island will again fill our rivers and streams.”

“Give me the ax, Kapakahi,” I tell him.

Kapakahi claps. A warrior brings him ‘Olopū. He raises the sacred ax – its blade catches the sun and glows the green of the sea. “Ae, Kamehameha,” he says, “you will never reach ‘Īao. Today, you die in Kokomo.”

He whirls ‘Olopū. I keep my spear chest level. Kapakahi stinks of ‘ilio (dog). Kahuna believe dog spirits haunt those eating their flesh. Kapakahi swings. I block his blow with my ihe. My spear keeps him from getting close enough to kill. He swings again. I crouch – the blade flies over my head.

His third blow catches my shoulder and opens me up. Blood splatters down my chest. I drop my spear. Kekūhaupi’o brings me the a’u ko pāhoa, a swordfish dagger. I duck another blow, swing my dagger and slash open Kapakahi’s thigh. I strike again, the jagged teeth of the swordfish bill ripping open his ‘ōpū (belly). The giant falls to his knees. The Kokomo crescent breaks, its warriors vanishing in the hala. I pry ‘Olopū out of Kapakahi’s hand.

My kumu presses kapa cloth to my wound. Dearest Kekūhaupi’o, master of the art of war, I am a warrior because of you. We trained in Waimea where you taught me hand-to-hand combat and how to use weapons. Now the giant lies at my feet and Kokomo villagers are free.

Oh Ka’iana, dear friend and great warrior, I entrust you with the muskets. You are my Queen’s favorite on court because of your mana. You will lead our musket men in Kahului.

Ke’eaumoku impales the giant’s head on the tip of his spear and leads us back. I see respect in my men’s eyes. I hold up the sacred ax when we reach our beached canoes. The men chant. I hide fear for what awaits us. Ahead is a wide valley swarming with hardened warriors who have never tasted defeat. My half-brother commands them.

Davis and Young wrap river stones in kapa (barkcloth). We will use them as cannon fodder in Kahului. My strongest paddlers will steer the canoes with the cannons and muskets.

At first light we launch. We struggle against a strong current offshore and a rugged coastline of ‘a’ā (lava rock). I order our canoes to retreat to the deep blue-black water past the reef, where the current is weak and the water calm.

To be continued in July... ■

Born and raised in Honolulu, Wright is a Punahou graduate with a master’s of fine arts degree in creative writing. His novels include “Punahou Blues;” “Moloka’i Nui a Hina;” “The End, My Friend;” and “The Queen of Moloka’i” – also a work of creative nonfiction based on the life of his grandmother.



JOIN US ON  
MAUI AND MOLOKA’I  
FOR OUR UPCOMING  
COMMUNITY  
MEETINGS

Maui



CARMEN “HULU” LINDSEY  
Trustee for Maui

COMMUNITY MEETING

Wednesday, June 4, 2025  
at 6:00 p.m.

OHA BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MEETING

Thursday, June 5, 2025  
at 9:00 a.m.

Meetings will be held at  
**UH Maui College**  
310 W. Ka’ahumanu Ave.  
Kahului, HI 96732

Moloka’i



LUANA ALAPA  
Trustee for Moloka’i and Lāna’i

COMMUNITY MEETING

Wednesday, June 18, 2025  
at 6:30 p.m.

OHA BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MEETING

Thursday, June 19, 2025  
at 9:30 a.m.

Meetings will be held at  
**Lanikeha Community Center**  
2200 Farrington Ave.  
Ho’olehua, HI 96729



TUNE IN LIVE!

All meetings will be available via livestream.  
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meetings please visit [www.oha.org/BOT](http://www.oha.org/BOT)



## Faces of the Diaspora

# A Story About Displacement and 'Ohana Land on Maui

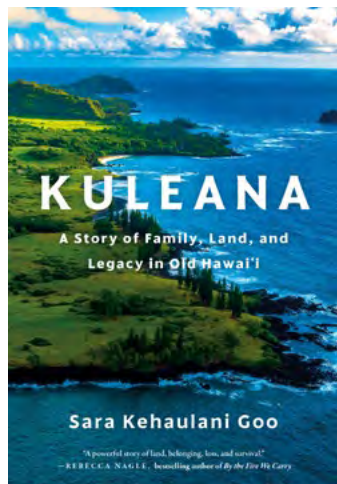
By Megan Ulu-Lani Boyanton

For much of her life, Sara Kehaulani Goo felt pulled between her journalism career and her Kanaka 'Ōiwi identity.

That conflict about her legacy came to a head in 2019 when she received an email from her father about their 'ohana's land on Maui. Its property taxes had jumped by 500%, and Goo's family members were faced with a choice: Pay or sell.

"We just wanted to figure out: How do we hold onto it? How do we keep it?" Goo, 48, said.

From her home in Washington, D.C., she had tough conversations with relatives across generations and time zones. All the while, Goo balanced the crisis with her marriage, her children, her career and the global pandemic.



That era of her life culminated into her new book, *Kuleana – A story of family, land and legacy in Old Hawai'i*, which Flatiron Books will publish on June 10. Cities along her summer book tour include Washington, D.C.; San Francisco, California; Los Angeles, California; Hāna, Maui; Honolulu, O'ahu; and Seattle, Washington.

Goo has long felt called to write about her 'ohana's land and

further the public discourse around Hawaiian issues like economic displacement.

"What I really wanted to do with this book is to tell a real, honest story about the experience of not just my family, but what is a common experience for many Native Hawaiian families," Goo said. "It's a story that needs to be told."

Goo's 'ohana has roots on the islands of Maui, O'ahu and Hawai'i, but she was born in California. Her parents met at the University of California, Irvine, and raised their four children in Orange County.

Goo, the firstborn, enjoyed her seaside upbringing, though she couldn't stifle her curiosity about the rest of the world – including Hawai'i. "I hungered to understand more," Goo said.

Her grandparents helped her connect with her 'Ōiwi culture. As the eldest grandchild, Goo treasured the time she shared with her tūtū wahine, Mileka. She recalls



Sara Kehaulani Goo. - Photo: Marvin Joseph

trips to Maui to visit her kūpuna and the heiau on her family land in Hāna.

Mileka was born there, while Goo's grandfather, Richard, hailed from Pearl City, O'ahu. The couple had eight children, including Goo's father. Her paternal side is Kānaka Maoli, Chinese and Okinawan.

"They really raised us with that cultural sense about being Native Hawaiian," Goo said. "That kuleana for our land was also a really important thing."

Despite living on the continent, Goo still experienced Hawaiian traditions. Every holiday felt like a lū'au. The celebrations would last days, with family members feasting on kālúa turkey and teriyaki spareribs. Weddings meant Goo's aunts danced hula.

But her burgeoning passion for journalism began to overshadow her culture. Goo worked as the co-editor of her high school yearbook, then she embedded with the *Orange County Register*.

She was instantly drawn to the newsroom's energy.

However, "it meant putting aside other nagging questions about Hawai'i that I had for myself," Goo said.

She majored in journalism at the University of Min-

nesota. The decision to move to chilly Minneapolis was purposeful: Goo wanted to expose herself to unfamiliarity and learn to embrace it. She worked at *Minnesota Public Radio*, the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* and a law magazine. Goo also interned in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, for a summer.

"I just kind of wanted to do it all," Goo said.

After graduating in 1998, she drove her Toyota coupe to Boston, Massachusetts, for a job at *The Wall Street Journal*. For two years, she covered New England's tourism industry for a weekly section on the regional economy.

Following a layoff, Goo was hired at *The Washington Post* as a business reporter in 2001. She was excited to build her new life in Washington, D.C. Then, the 9/11 attacks happened.

Goo remembers a city on edge. She was assigned to cover airlines, then homeland security and the government's anti-terror effort. "It honestly felt like a duty," she said.

In 2003, she met her future husband, Michael, at a salsa dancing class. Michael, who is of German ancestry, impressed Goo with his curiosity and appreciation of other cultures. Early on in their relationship, the couple traveled to Hawai'i and Michael met Goo's grandparents – a fortuitous sign in her eyes.

Sadly, Mileka passed away before Goo and Michael wed on Maui in 2005. Goo's grandmother never saw her dream of a house on the family land come true.

Goo began to reckon with her 'Ōiwi identity when her first son was born in 2007. She had to decide whether to give him an inoa Hawai'i – and how to nurse his understanding of their Indigenous heritage.

"If I'm going to give my son the family name – Kahanu, in this case – I needed to really live up to that as a mother and for myself," Goo said.

Silas Kahanu was born, and Michael's daughter, Isabella, became his stepsister. In 2011, Chloe Mileka followed as the family's youngest.

At *The Post*, Goo was promoted to senior news director. After 11 years, she left to spearhead a data journalism project at Pew Research Center from 2012 through 2015. Then, in 2016, she returned to the news industry as the managing editor of NPR's digital news operation.

And two years after that, she finally found a cultural outlet on the East Coast dancing hula at Hālau Nohona Hawai'i under Kumu Hula Kaimana Chee.

In 2019, Goo joined *Axios Media* as its executive editor and later took on the role of editor-in-chief. She left the media company this year. Goo is currently focusing on her book, though she plans to continue working in the journalism industry.

One day, she hopes to return to Hawai'i.

"I felt that I was given breadcrumbs," she said. "I knew that, someday, I would come back." ■



# E Ho'i ka Nani i Moku'ula

By Jordan Kalawai'a Nunies

The question of how to rebuild Lahaina stronger and better has been an important part of the conversation since the August 2023 wildfires.

One goal that has emerged in the aftermath of the fires, is to restore the abundance that once characterized Lahaina. Known traditionally as Ka Malu 'Ulu o Lele (the shaded breadfruit grove of Lele), the lands of Lahaina were a study in agroforestry – resplendent with breadfruit, banana, coconut, and kalo.

Because of this abundance, for generations Lahaina was the preferred seat of power for Maui's ruling chiefs. When foreigners saw Lahaina, they were amazed at the ingenuity of its agricultural systems. Lahaina earned the nickname "Venice of the Pacific" no doubt because of its wetlands and waterways.

Eventually, this verdant land of abundance was a victim of sugarcane plantations – its forests denuded to make way for acres of sugarcane, and its waters diverted to water this thirstiest of crops so as to feed the sugar habits of the west.

The healing of culturally relevant spaces is part of the long-term plan for Lahaina's recovery. Two of these spaces are Loko o Mokuhinia and Moku'ula.

"The opportunity to restore culturally relevant spaces [in Lahaina] and heal these lands in an appropriate culturally mindful way is our biggest focus," said Kaponoi Molitau, director of Maui County's Department of 'Ōiwi Resources.

The Department of 'Ōiwi Resources has been tasked as the project lead for the creation of a "cultural corridor" that includes restoration of Loko o Mokuhinia, Moku'ula, and Malu 'Ulu o Lele.

"We have an opportunity to now focus our intentions on 'āina, wai, and kai and letting our lands heal, our waters replenish, and restoring these lands properly," Molitau said.

Loko o Mokuhinia was a 17-acre fishpond renowned in Maui Komo-hana as the home of Kihawahine, an akua mo'o ali'i wahine, who is said to have dwelled beneath the waters of the pond in a cave called Ka Lua o Kiha.

Moku'ula was a 1-acre island within the fishpond of Mokuhinia. It was the site of King Pi'ilani's residence during the 16th century, and when the capital of the Kingdom of Hawai'i moved from Kailua-Kona to Lahaina in 1820, it was on Moku'ula that King Kamehameha III (Kauikeaouli) built a royal compound where he lived from 1837 to 1845 until the capital was moved to



"Moku'ula - King's View" by artist Janet Spreiter depicts Kauikeaouli's view from his residence on Moku'ula Island looking ma uka across Mokuhinia pond. - Image courtesy of @JanetSpreiter



Photo of Moku'ula circa 1900. In 1914, Mokuhinia Fishpond and Moku'ula Island were filled in to make way for a ballpark. - Photo: Hawai'i State Archives

Honolulu.

"Lahaina's rich ali'i culture is filled with amazing historical accounts, mele, oli, and mo'okū'auhau that are part of the very fabric that binds our Kānaka 'Ōiwi to these ancestral lands," said Molitau.

"E ho'i ka nani i Moku'ula" (let beauty return to Moku'ula) is a line from He Inoa no Manoanoa, an oli that details the mo'okū'auhau of Kānaka to these wahi kapu (sacred spaces).

This phrase has been adopted by the community as a rallying cry to raise awareness about efforts to restore Mokuhinia and Moku'ula. This prophetic kāhea for beauty to return to Moku'ula was written by P.H. Kekuaiwa and published in Ka Nupepa Kuokoa on June 14, 1862.

Today, Mokuhinia and Moku'ula are not visible. In 1914, the fishpond and island were filled in

with about 3 feet of coral and soil to make way for Malu Ulu o Lele Park.

'Āina restoration efforts for Mokuhinia and Moku'ula will begin with the development of a long-term royal complex masterplan for Lahaina.

"The Lahaina Royal Complex or 'Cultural Corridor,' will [extend from the] Hauola Stone to Moku'ula-Mokuhinia. This includes lands that were part of Kamehameha III Kauikeaouli's royal compound, Pākālā, Kamehameha Iki, Moku'ula, and Mokuhinia. We also

see the natural elements [of the land] coming back – the water springs of Nalehu next to Kamehameha Iki. These were, and are, all part of the Royal Complex area that should be part of this discussion."

In addition to restoring, honoring and protecting these culturally significant sites, their restoration will create a vibrant cultural space that not only preserves Hawaiian history and supports community healing, but helps to restore Lahaina's natural wetland coastal ecosystem.

More broadly, plans to plant 'ulu trees throughout Lahaina will help to reduce heat and provide a sustainable food source for future generations. Wetland and habitat restoration, in an era of climate change and rising temperatures, will support both fire and flood mitigation, increase groundwater recharge and create a buffer between the ocean and the town to mitigate the hazards of sea level rise.

Ultimately, restoration of Mokuhinia and Moku'ula will require collaboration and communication between the community and government agencies across county, state and federal levels, years of hard work, and strong, ongoing funding support.

With restoration still in the early planning phase, the use of 'ike kūpuna found in the oli, mele and mo'olelo of Lahaina will be tapped as roadmaps to guide the planning process. Molitau notes that the priority is to align with what the kupa 'āina (natives) of Lahaina believe is right for the 'āina.

"We have one shot at doing this correctly," said Molitau. "And we know that many of the voices of wisdom will come from the kupa 'āina o Lahaina." ■

For more information, visit: [mauirecovers.org/recover/creation-of-a-cultural-corridor-and-the-restoration-of-malu-ulu-o-lele-mokuula-and-the-loko-o-mokuhinia](https://mauirecovers.org/recover/creation-of-a-cultural-corridor-and-the-restoration-of-malu-ulu-o-lele-mokuula-and-the-loko-o-mokuhinia)



## REBUILDING MAUI

BY PUANANI FERNANDEZ-AKAMINE

It has been nearly two years since the August 8 wildfires swept across the island of Maui.

In a span of less than 24 hours, the fires took 102 human lives, destroyed thousands of homes and businesses, and charred more than 3,200 acres of land. The historic town of Lahaina was reduced to ashes and its community left traumatized in the wake of unimaginable loss.

The response to the tragedy was swift. Within hours after the fires began, county, state, and federal emergency declarations were signed authorizing the use of available disaster resources, and shelters opened for evacuees even as firefighters struggled to contain the fire.

Funds were quickly created to support wildfire survivors and millions of dollars poured in from thousands of organizations and individuals from throughout the pae 'āina and around the world. Donations of food, clothing, bedding and other necessities were so plentiful that they were rerouted to a warehouse on O'ahu to be sorted and stored.

Over the past 21 months, thousands of workers and volunteers representing government organizations, community nonprofits, churches and more have labored to help the community recover. In February, debris removal from the wildfires was completed and some people have begun to rebuild – but recovery is a long, complicated, expensive, and emotional process.

As support from short-term disaster recovery organizations like FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and the Red Cross wind down, most wildfire survivors remain adrift, still living in temporary homes and still healing from their physical, emotional and spiritual trauma.

In this void, a grassroots organization has formed to provide ongoing support to survivors as Maui's wildfire disaster recovery effort transitions from "short-term" to "long-term."

## MAUI'S LONG-TERM RECOVERY GROUP

Rhonda Alexander-Monkres is the executive director of Ho'ōla iā Mauiakama Disaster Long-Term Recovery Group (Ho'ōla). Initially formed as a volunteer organization, Ho'ōla has evolved into a nonprofit and this past January, Alexander-Monkres, who served as the group's board vice chair, was hired as its full-time executive director.



With the last of the wildfire debris cleared last February, some Lahaina residents have begun to rebuild their homes. However, 66% of the people who lost their homes in Lahaina do not have the cash to rebuild. To meet that need, a homegrown "rebuild coalition" has been formed to help fill residents' funding gaps. - Photos: Marina Starleaf Riker



Brandy and Eric Cajudoy talk with Auntie Val Ho'opai (right) on her now vacant property in Lahaina. She is one of the first five homeowners whose homes will be rebuilt with support from the "rebuild coalition." Construction on Ho'opai's home will begin in October.

"LTRGs are typically formed by community members following disasters," she explained. "Eventually FEMA goes, Red Cross goes. So we're in the long-term recovery phase, and our goal and mission is to help individuals with their recovery plans – and that happens through bringing together community people and community organizations to assist."

Ho'ōla offers survivors individual case management, trauma-informed spiritual and emotional wellness resources, and general contracting – and has formed

partnerships with some 30 local and national disaster organizations, functioning somewhat like a clearinghouse to help survivors access the resources they need – whatever those might be.

Kaipo Kekona, a kupa of Lahaina, is Ho'ōla's chair and board executive committee member. He emphasized that Ho'ōla is rooted in the values of kuleana and laulima and is "bringing the community together to support recovery in a way that honors our traditions and collective spirit.

"As we move forward, it's crucial to focus on sustained support for families and individuals as they continue to navigate the challenges of loss and rebuilding," Kekona said. "This journey is far from over, and our commitment to the community remains strong to ensure that the healing process continues for as long as it takes."

To this end, Ho'ōla has intentionally partnered with three other organizations – Hawai'i Community Lending, Lahaina Community Land Trust, and Habitat for Humanity – to form what they call a "rebuild coalition" specifically focused on helping wildfire survivors rebuild their homes. Working together, these organizations are providing survivors with wrap-around services using a single intake process.

"When I look back at the disaster – and this is often the case – people enter the recovery space with huge hearts and the best intentions," Alexander-Monkres said. "They identify community needs and set up programs to address them.

"But too often, efforts happen in silos, with groups focused on their own recovery agendas – which can be good. The problem is survivors are left navigating dozens of applications and repeatedly verifying the same information. Our coalition found power in coming together."

## LEVERAGING STRENGTHS

With their respective roles clearly identified, the coalition uses a kind of funnel process to move 'ohana through the rebuilding journey from start to finish.

First up is Hawai'i Community Lending which handles application intake for 'ohana needing kōkua to rebuild. They collect all the necessary financial data and provide a financial assessment.

The application then goes to the Lahaina Community Land Trust (Land Trust). Their team reviews the financial assessment to identify the various funding options

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## REBUILDING MAUI

Continued from page 19

available to that 'ohana. The goal is to make sure that when they are pau, the family's mortgage will not exceed 30% of their monthly income.

Next is the rebuild analysis, which is Ho'ōla's kuleana. Their team reaches out to the family to schedule a site visit to their property. There, they look at lot condition, placement, easements, and so forth, determine whether the family has a contractor or house plans, and use that information to put together a budget for the rebuild.

From there, the estimated budget is sent back to the Land Trust which checks the home's pre-fire value and performs a "rebuild calculator analysis" to determine where the funding gaps are and what opportunities exist to fill those gaps.

At that point, the coalition meets. "We figure out how we can repackage their rebuild costs by finding gap programs, donations, or reductions in rebuild materials – all to get them into a completed home," said Alexander-Monkres.

Habitat's contribution to the coalition is primarily financial. They offer construction grants of up to \$200,000 that are forgivable over time.

### LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY

"People would tell us things like, 'I'm trying to apply for a building permit, and now I have to pay \$3,000 for a site survey. Then I have to pay my architect \$6,000. After that, they said I need a structural engineer – that's another \$6,000. Now I have to upgrade my septic system. And then they found iwi on my lot, and suddenly I'm facing a \$50,000 bill,'" Alexander-Monkres recalled.

The frustration and confusion around navigating the rebuild process inspired Brandy Cajudoy, Ho'ōla board member and chair of its construction committee, to create the "A-Z Rebuild Checklist" which is posted on Ho'ōla's website.

"Listening to the community, hearing their struggles, and trying to be part of the solution is how the checklist evolved," said Alexander-Monkres. "All that 'ike was in Brandy's brain. And every time she heard of a new grant or resource or change in any of the steps, she would update the website. It's like a one-stop-shop. Everything you need is right there."

Cajudoy, a former kumu at Kamehameha Schools Maui is a general contractor and her rebuild checklist is an innovation in disaster recovery that has garnered the attention of the National VOAD (voluntary organizations active in disaster).

"One of the things I'm most proud of with the rebuild coalition is how far we've come with our services and providing this opportunity to anyone who lost a single-family home and needs help rebuilding," said Alexander-Monkres.

### THE RESOURCES ROUNDTABLE

"To fill the gap needed to rebuild a house, our coalition might piece together a package that includes 8-10 different

combinations of grants, loans, and in-kind donations," she noted. "Putting that all together takes quite a bit of analysis, brainpower and effort."

Because funding gaps can range from \$100,000 to \$500,000, Alexander-Monkres said that the coalition tries to solve for the big numbers. But when they fall short, that is where resource roundtables can help.

"LTRGs are expected to set up an unmet needs roundtable. We call ours a resources roundtable," she said. "It's a gathering of people and organizations – anyone who is able to donate money, manpower, or muscle to help with someone's recovery."

Funders at the rebuild coalition's roundtable have included Hawai'i Community Foundation, Maui United Way, the Salvation Army, and various churches. At the roundtable, disaster case managers – without disclosing names – present a summary of need for clients who have exhausted all other funding resources. "The unmet needs roundtable is the final stop for connecting survivors with resources that haven't been met elsewhere," Alexander-Monkres said.

When funders at the roundtable agree to allocate funds for specific clients, payments are made directly to the vendors involved in the rebuild instead of to the family.

### A COMMUNITY-CENTERED STRATEGY

Once a package is put together for the 'ohana, a contract detailing the gap funding is put together for them to review.

If they decide that they want to accept the financial solution package, a key requirement is that they agree to place their property into the Lahaina Community Land Trust – essentially a deed restriction that prevents future resale of the finished home to a non-resident.

Although this is a new concept to most people, land trusts have been around since 1969. It's an old idea gaining new traction as communities struggle with affordability and gentrification. It is a community-centered strategy designed to ensure a supply of affordable housing and prevent displacement of residents. It does not affect ownership or inheritance.

"I'm a believer in the movement," said Alexander-Monkres. "This is the first time I've found something that is helping people to afford where they live, to have balance in their lives, and to gain family strength – and that helps our community overall."

"That is what makes our work unique," Kekona added. "It's not just about rebuilding structures – it's about restoring lives, nurturing connections, and fostering long-term resilience."

### A BRAVE NEW WORLD

Three months after the wildfires, Alexander-Monkres accepted a position with the Red Cross as their deputy director for Maui's long-term recovery and in December she flew to the continent to meet with the LTRG in Paradise, California – site of the 2018 wildfire considered the deadliest and most destructive in California history.



Ho'ōla staff with members of the Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) at Sacred Hearts School in Lahaina where two classrooms will be converted into volunteer housing for the Mennonite team. In the background is Maria Lanakila Church, which miraculously survived the fires. (L-R) are Stephen Van Bueren of Ho'ōla, Don Rheinheimer and Michelle White Eagle of MDS, Rhonda Alexander-Monkres of Ho'ōla, Brian Showalter of MDS, and Brandy Cajudoy of Cajudoy Construction. - Photo: Marina Starleaf Riker

The visit filled Alexander-Monkres with hope. "I could see a path forward for us to be able to get beyond the devastation and loss."

She was introduced to VOAD – the voluntary organizations active in disasters – a national network that includes hundreds of organizations and thousands of individuals represented in 56 VOAD "territories" – including a Hawai'i VOAD chapter headed by Matt Gleit.

One of Alexander-Monkres' most impactful connections during this time was with Carlene Anders, executive director of the national nonprofit Disaster Leadership Team (DLT), whose mostly volunteer staff travel across America – wherever disasters occur – to help survivors with their recovery process.

In fact, Anders was instrumental in helping Maui organizers establish their community-led LTRG for wildfire survivors. She worked with Keoni Kuoha then with Hawai'i Community Foundation, and Nick Winfrey then with Maui United Way, to compile a diverse list of people on Maui who were good community connectors – and then put out a kāhea for volunteers.

Alexander-Monkres submitted her name and ended up as vice chair of the board of the newly formed Ho'ōla iā Mauiakama Disaster Long-Term Recovery Group. "I worried about the time commitment while also working full-time at the Red Cross, but it ended up being what I love."

Through this work, Alexander-Monkres was introduced to an entire network of disaster recovery experts, volunteers and resources that she had no idea existed. "It's unbelievable. Most of them are faith-based organizations, but so many have the skills, talent, knowledge and funding to show up and help."

### HELP FROM UNEXPECTED PLACES

"We never go into a community unless we're invited," said Anders, who lives in Eastern Washington. "That is VOAD protocol. But as soon as the [Maui] disaster happened, we received quite a few calls."





Ho'ola iā Mauiakama Disaster Long Term Recovery Group's board at a strategic planning meeting. - Courtesy Photo

Anders explained that VOAD comes alongside the local folks working on the ground after a disaster and helps them see what can be done, how things can work, and then helps them through that process.

"Our LTRG in Eastern Washington has done three major disaster recoveries, and so we have been living it. We understand the trauma that happens there," said Anders, who is herself a wildfire survivor.

In 2014, her community was ravaged by the largest fire in Washington State history. Some 256,000 acres burned, including part of the city of Pateros. Anders was with the volunteer fire department at the time, and her family home was among the more than 350 homes destroyed by the fire.

Drawing from those experiences, Anders has provided guidance to Ho'ola since its inception. Today, she is an advisor for the group.

"The hours that this team has put in is incredible," she said. "Getting your 501(c)(3), getting your staff, really springboards the recovery abilities for this type and size of disaster. They are going to be in it for the long haul and they had to establish for that.

"When these things happen, people rise to the surface in an amazing way. They tap into so many skills they've spent their whole life developing – and that helps the whole community to recover."

## THE MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE

When she attended the 2024 VOAD conference, Alexander-Monkres was introduced to members of the faith-based Mennonite Disaster Service. In the subsequent months, the group stayed in touch with her, continually offering their assistance. She checked them out online and

became increasingly familiar with their work.

"Carlene explained that this is what happens in disasters. We needed to embrace bringing in outsiders, we needed to embrace the help," Alexander-Monkres said.

The rebuild coalition went through the data and eventually concluded that they could not rely exclusively on local contractors to help survivors rebuild. "That was eye opening," reflected Alexander-Monkres. "Local contractors have capacity to build about 100 houses per year. So, if 1,400 homes were destroyed, it would take 14 years to rebuild. That's what sold us on accepting outside help."

Once they decided to accept help from the Mennonites, their next challenge was finding a place to house the crew. "We were desperate because if we couldn't find housing, they couldn't come," Alexander-Monkres said. "That's why we're starting so late on the rebuilds – we couldn't find a place for them to stay."

As if by divine intervention, Alexander-Monkres received a surprise call from the Maui Catholic Diocese. "They heard we were looking for housing and said they could help."

On the campus of Sacred Heart School in Lahaina, two classrooms were still standing after the wildfires – although the rest of the campus had burned down. The Diocese offered the classrooms to house the Mennonites.

Three days later the Mennonite team flew in, visited the site, and started putting together plans to convert the classrooms into bunk rooms and build an outdoor kitchen and shower facility for their crew of 40 people.

At least initially, the rebuild coalition will work exclusively with the Mennonites. "There's no one else like them," Alexander-Monkres explained. "They come in as a self-contained construction and project management unit that builds all their own houses from start to finish and donate all their labor. They have dozens of free house plans on their website – we chose five – and a crew of retirees in Kansas who build kitchen cabinets that are also available for free."

In addition to donating their labor, the Mennonites are shipping in kitchen cabinets and roofing materials for the rebuild coalition's first five homes – set to begin construction in October.

"With the Mennonites, we remove labor costs for everything but electrical and plumbing. They walk by faith, they're incredibly kind, and they're deeply committed to the mission of helping people recover," Alexander-Monkres said.

## LOOKING AHEAD

In Lahaina, 1,355 single-family homes were destroyed by the fires, 813 of which were owner-occupied. Of these, about 537 homeowners (66%) do not have the cash to rebuild. The rebuild coalition exists to support these families.

So far, about 320 households have submitted applications to the rebuild coalition, and just under 100 have submitted all their documentation. With the first five homes to begin construction in October, the coalition is currently in the process of selecting the next 10.

"It takes anywhere from 4-6 months to build a house, so the rebuild coalition's first five will be the test – and then we'll get a rhythm and grow to hopefully 15-20 Mennonite-built houses per year," Alexander-Monkres said.

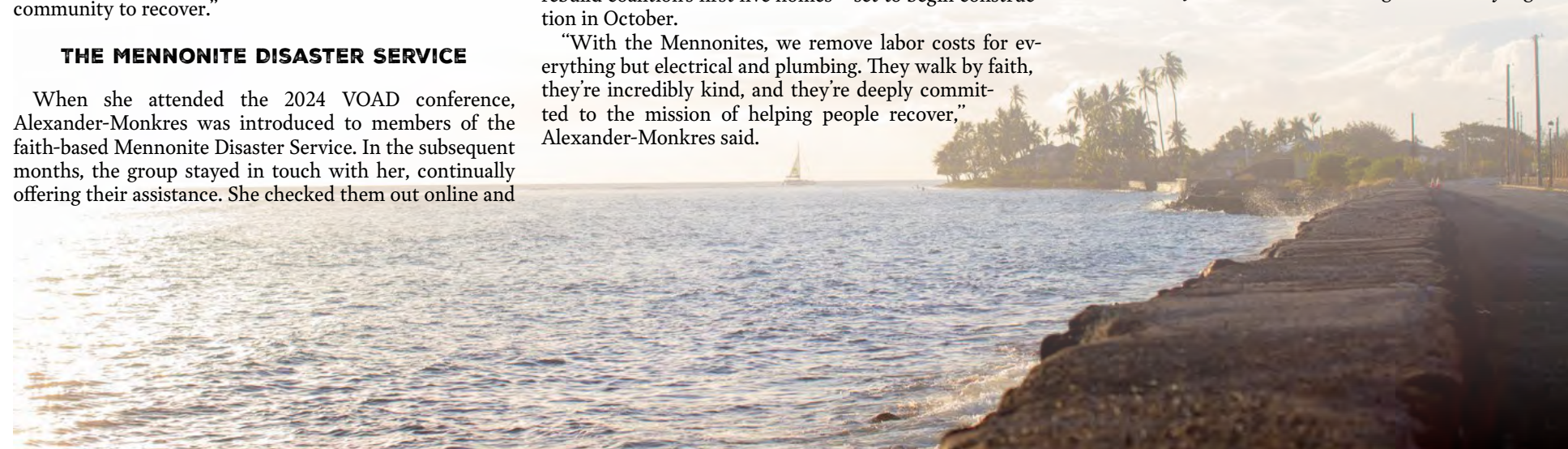
She hopes to keep Ho'ola active for at least five years – more if necessary – but as with everything in this world, funding is key. Staff salaries are funded through the end of the year, as are their operating expenses, and she just hired a grant writer. For now, Ho'ola and the rebuild coalition are committed to walking this long-term recovery journey with the island's wildfire survivors by faith.

"Disaster recovery is chaotic. It's the most intensive thing I have ever done – and one of the most rewarding things," Anders reflected. "When the system works it's amazing. People get homes. They start to recover. They feel like they can truly survive. Even though its two years in, there is still more hurt to come and you've got to have people there to help with that – to lift people up and to be available."

"As we approach the anniversary of the wildfire it's important to remember that recovery is not just a phase – it's an ongoing commitment to our community and our future," Kekona said.

"While the early days brought overwhelming support and media attention, now is the time to keep that spirit alive. The work continues and we need our community to stay engaged, stay resilient and continue to support one another whether through volunteering, donating or simply being present for those still healing – every effort counts. Together, we honor those we've lost by building a stronger, more unified Maui for generations to come." ■

For more information visit [mauilongtermrecovery.org](http://mauilongtermrecovery.org)





# More 'Ōiwi Representation in Reimagined *Lilo & Stitch* Movie

By Hannah Ka'ulani Coburn

The reimagined Disney story, *Lilo & Stitch*, released in theatres on May 22, is a retelling of the original animated film from a modern lens with an enhanced focus on cultural authenticity.

*Lilo & Stitch* made its debut in 2002, introducing the world to a lonely, orphaned 6-year-old Hawaiian girl, Lilo Pelekai, living with her 18-year-old sister and guardian, Nani. After Lilo wishes on a shooting star and asks for a friend, she encounters a strange blue creature called Stitch which she adopts, thinking it is a dog.

Stitch turns out to be a fugitive from an alien planet – the product of a genetic experiment (known by his creators as Experiment 626).

The original film included some elements of Native Hawaiian culture (such as the importance of 'ohana) that had never previously been represented in an animated film. However, Native Hawaiian involvement in the making of the original film was minimal.

As Disney executives moved forward with plans to revive *Lilo & Stitch*, this time as a live-action movie, they



Chris Kekaniokalani Bright is the screenwriter of the live-action *Lilo & Stitch*. - Photo: HIFF

were committed to greater Native Hawaiian representation in the production and tapped Chris Kekaniokalani Bright to write the screenplay.

Bright, a photographer and filmmaker from O'ahu, comes from a musical family.

His grandfather was Ron Bright – the renowned musical theatre director – and his father, Clark Bright, is the bandmaster for the Royal Hawaiian Band. And the young screenwriter already had a special relationship to the film – his mother, Lynell Bright,

is the director of the Kamehameha Schools Children's Choir which was featured on the soundtrack for the original film.

Bright said that it was important, in the making of the movie, to do things right and be authentic to our culture, noting that everyone involved in the project, from producers to the director, was committed to including people from Hawai'i in the production – not only as part of the cast and crew – but as cultural consultants.

"Being able to represent contemporary Hawai'i on the big screen, I don't think it's ever been done," Bright said. "We've seen [Hawai'i] from outsider perspectives. So even though there's aliens, a crazy third act, and space-ships – at its core, this is still a Hawai'i movie and you feel it."

The opportunity to show a glimpse of his "backyard" to the world excited Bright who hopes the characters in the movie will feel familiar to local audiences. "I hope people from Hawai'i will feel like 'that's my tūtū, that's



"Stitch" with Maia Kealoha as Lilo in Disney's new live-action version of *Lilo & Stitch*. - Photo: Courtesy of Disney. © 2025 Disney Enterprises Inc. All Rights Reserved.



Kaipo Dudoit as David in Disney's live-action *Lilo & Stitch*. - Photo by Zach Dougan. © 2025 Disney Enterprises Inc. All Rights Reserved

my little cousin,' because I did while I was on the set and writing it."

The new *Lilo & Stitch* dives deeper into Nani's backstory than the original, showing how taxing it would be for an 18-year-old to take care of a 6-year-old in Hawai'i without any help.

"I wanted to do right by that and really honor the original. So, you start by figuring out what is truly the heart of the story – and of course it's about 'ohana – but it's also about being broken, but still being good," Bright said.

"There's that central relationship between Lilo and Stitch, but also between Lilo and Nani. And you just have to figure out, okay how do we preserve that and then how do we also deepen it in ways that you just can't do in animation?"

The movie stars Maia Kealoha, Sydney Agudong, and Kaipo Dudoit – all of whom were born and raised in Hawai'i.

Kealoha, who plays Lilo, is an 8-year-old Native Hawaiian from Hawai'i Island who the cast and crew members say embodies every part of Lilo. Kealoha said that she had an amazing time filming the movie and has always been a fan.

"It was amazing working with Sydney and my director Dean was creative – he made the movie a great Hawaiian roller coaster ride," Kealoha laughed. "And yes, I love it! Just because it came out before I was born, I had like 5,000 plushies of Stitch!"

Dudoit, a Kanaka 'Ōiwi model, actor, and mea hula born and raised in Hono'uli'uli, O'ahu, plays David Kawena – the boyfriend of Lilo's older sister, Nani. He said he felt blessed and honored to be part of the project.

"It has been an absolute gift," Dudoit said. "As a little Hawaiian boy, I didn't really see [people like] myself on the big screen very much, especially when I was growing up. Thankfully, times have changed. It's been an absolute honor to be given this opportunity to showcase not only my home, but my family as well."

Dudoit credits Bright for incorporating a Hawaiian cultural identity into the movie's characters through his screenwriting.

"I think our film really brought out both [Hawai'i's] beauty and differences. Hawai'i people are used to understanding that we like to celebrate our own differences as people and in our own cultures and in our own families, so I think that was a beautiful thing we were able to share among each other," Dudoit said.

"I hope everyone enjoys *Lilo & Stitch*. And I hope people that are from Hawai'i – or are no longer in Hawai'i but live somewhere else – are able to see their home again and remember that 'ohana will always carry us through tough times." ■



# An Unwavering Guardian of Hawai‘i’s Royal Heritage

## Prince David Klaren La‘amea Kaumuali‘i Kawānanakoa

March 7, 1952 – May 1, 2025

By Ian Keali‘i Custino

**E** kapu ē! E kapu! E lohe a e ‘ike! With great humility and aloha, we announce the passing of Prince David Klaren La‘amea Kaumuali‘i Kawānanakoa, a high-born descendant of Hawai‘i’s sacred ali‘i lineage. Prince David passed peacefully on the afternoon of May 1, 2025 at his home in Mānoa, O‘ahu, surrounded by his ‘ohana.

Prince David Klaren La‘amea Kaumuali‘i Kawānanakoa was born on March 7, 1952 in Carmel, California. He spent his early years between Hawai‘i and Carmel developing a deep love and appreciation for both his Hawaiian heritage and the vast open road of the California coast. He was an adventurous spirit who loved motorcycles and was always generous with his time – particularly in his kuleana for Hawai‘i and its people.

Prince David was the son of the late Prince Edward Abnel Keli‘iahonui Kawānanakoa, Sr., and the late Lila de Clark Whitaker Kawānanakoa. He was the nephew of the late Princess Abigail Kinoiki Kawānanakoa who passed in December 2022.

Prince David was named for his great-grandfather, HRH Prince David La‘amea Kahalepouli Kinoiki Kawānanakoa, elder brother of Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana‘ole Pī‘ikoi, who were both designated crown princes and heirs to the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1883 by his Majesty King David La‘amea Kalākaua. He was also named for his fourth great-grandfather, King Kaumuali‘i, the last sovereign ruler of the islands of Kaua‘i and Ni‘ihau before the unification of the Hawaiian Islands by King Kamehameha I in 1810.

Prince David was a humble and unwavering guardian



Prince David Kawānanakoa pictured here in the throne room of ‘Iolani Palace on June 11, 2024, at the signing of the historic Tuuruma Ariki Declaration with other Pacific Island Leaders during the 13th Festival of Pacific Culture and Arts. - Photo: Joshua Koh

of Hawai‘i’s royal heritage, upholding the traditions, dignity, and memory of our beloved ali‘i. He carried his kuleana with strength, humility, and grace. He honored his legacy through his steadfast commitment to his family, faith, and tradition.

Prince David served as ikū hō‘ano (vice-regent) for Hale O Nā Ali‘i O Hawai‘i, a sacred order devoted to the preservation and advancement of Native Hawaiian knowledge and values. First established as Hale Nauā

by King David Kalākaua, it was reestablished in 1918 by Prince David’s great-grandmother, Princess Abigail Wahiika‘ahu‘ula, consort to HRH Prince David Kawānanakoa.

His brother, Prince Quentin Kawānanakoa serves as ikū lani hō‘ano (regent) and recounts, “my brother David held a deep aloha for our heritage and remained a steadfast guardian of our family’s legacy. His presence in our lives was quiet but powerful – a reminder of where we come from and the kuleana we carry forward.”

Prince David was an active member of the Prince Kūhiō Hawaiian Civic Club. He took particular interest in building and decorating the civic club’s floats for the annual Kūhiō Parade. “He was very kind, always very giving, and just pleasant to be around,” recalled renowned vocalist Marlene Sai, a past pelekikena (president) and lifetime member of Prince Kūhiō Hawaiian Civic Club.

The Kawānanakoa family held private memorial services for Prince David on the evening of May 16. A public service was held at St. Augustine by-the-sea Church in Waikīkī on May 17.

Hale O Nā Ali‘i O Hawai‘i extends its deep respect, profound sadness, and heartfelt aloha to the Royal House of Kawānanakoa and the loved ones of our beloved Prince David Klaren La‘amea Kaumuali‘i Kawānanakoa. ■

*Donations in memory of Prince David may be made to support Queen’s Head & Neck Institute at the Queen’s Medical Center c/o Queen’s Philanthropy, P.O. Box 3445, Honolulu, HI 96801 or by calling (808) 691-4688. Checks can be made payable to “Queen’s Medical Center.”*

*Ian Keali‘i Custino is the ikū kū‘auhau (historian) for Hālau Wahiika‘ahu‘ula, Hale O Nā Ali‘i O Hawai‘i.*

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OHA is working with American Savings Bank (ASB), the lender that will administer the mortgage process for this program.



# A Legendary Hawaiian Waterman

## Clyde Aikau

Oct. 24, 1949 – May 3, 2025

By Jodi Young

**L**egendary Hawaiian waterman Clyde Aikau, the younger brother of world-renowned waterman Eddie Aikau, passed away peacefully at his Waimānalo home on May 3 at the age of 75. Clyde is survived by his wife, Eleni Aikau, son Ha'a Aikau, sister Myra Aikau, and many nieces and nephews.

Clyde was the youngest of six children born to Solomon 'Pops' and Henrietta Aikau in Kahului, Maui, on Oct. 24, 1949. His siblings, from oldest to youngest were Fred, Myra, Eddie, Gerald and Solomon III. The family moved from Maui to O'ahu in 1959.

Clyde and Eddie were the closest of brothers, sharing a passion and commitment to family, Hawaiian culture, and the ocean. They both served as North Shore lifeguards; voyaged on *Hōkūle'a* (separate voyages); rode giant winter waves at Waimea Bay; and were famous for their impromptu slack key guitar sessions that they shared with family and friends around the islands and the world.

After the loss of his brother Eddie in 1978, Clyde fol-



Clyde Aikau, younger brother of Eddie Aikau, was a celebrated waterman in his own right. He was a North Shore lifeguard, *Hōkūle'a* crew member, and a champion big wave surfer. - Photo: Brian Biemann

lowed through with his lifetime commitment to perpetuate Eddie's legacy and contributions to big wave riding and Hawaiian culture.

In 1986, Clyde won the inaugural Eddie Aikau Big Wave Invitational at Waimea Bay, in tribute to his brother. He continued to surf in the event every year that it was held up until the age of 66 (in 2016), forging an unri-

valed big wave legacy all his own.

During his storied life, Clyde ran a Waikīkī Beachboy service for many years. He also served as a liaison between the Department of Education and houseless families and children in Hawai'i to ensure they had access to school supplies, transportation and, ultimately, education. Clyde was a lifelong education advocate, having attended the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa where he pursued a degree in sociology.

In recent years, Clyde rallied with his family's support through a series of heart issues and ultimately, pancreatic cancer. While that road was a difficult one, he never allowed it to get in the way of his eternal optimism and zest for life.

He continued with his family duties, supported his wife's dog boarding and training business, and ensured the success of his brother's event.

The Aikau family wishes to express its deepest gratitude to the community of Hawai'i, and their extended friends and family abroad, for the heartfelt wishes they have received.

Details regarding upcoming services for Clyde will be announced when confirmed. ■



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## Ka'ao no nā Manu

By Lisa Kapono Mason



High in the rain-soaked canopy of Keauhou, where 'ōhi'a blossoms dance in the lapa winds, and the hā'ao rains never sleep, a protector of the forest once soared; a sleek, black form with knowing eyes, gnarled toes, and voice older than stone. He was Laha, born into the feathers of the 'alalā. Laha, and his wide-winged stature, was known for his kāhea that could stop 'io mid-flight. - Photo: Ann Tanimoto Johnson

**K**a'ao is a traditional form of Kanaka storytelling rooted in imagination, myth, and individual truth. Unlike historical narrative (mo'olelo), ka'ao allows space for the fantastical; a ka'ao can embody extraordinary elements, yet be deeply connected to real places and people, and carry profound insights for both the author and audience.

Saving manu 'ōiwi (our endemic forest birds) from extinction requires more than science; it demands authentic connection to the source. Within ka'ao, Hawai'i's manu are some of the main characters, exemplifying lessons that celebrate 'ike kūpuna, honor cultural memory, and integrate ecological truth into a shared vision for action.

Writing ka'ao is a fun, reflective, and inspiring practice, with evolving thoughts and rules on what counts. In today's digital world, perhaps ka'ao are already living in our social media posts, YouTube channels, and A.I. movies; tools that are building connections for this generation and together weaving tales of hope for Hawai'i's birds. ■

*Lisa Kapono Mason was raised in Hilo and happily resides in Kea'au on the island of Hawai'i. She is a community educator, conservation researcher, and native bird enthusiast with a passion to help strengthen relationships between our manu and lāhui.*

## Lalo: He Mokupuni i Holu Aku a Holu Mai

By Kainalu Steward



**K**o Hawai'i Pae 'Āina began as a burst of hot magma rising from the depths of Kanaloa, forming massive, revered mountains such as Maunakea. Over time, these mountains slowly subside

as the papakū (seafloor) cools, while fringing ko'a (coral) grow upward towards the sun, forming a lei-shaped reef that encircles each island's perimeter.

These reefs nourish coastlines for generations and eventually give rise to low-lying reef islands – until they return to Pō (ancestral realm; deep darkness) as mauna kai (seamounts), having lived for millions of years.

This mo'okū'auhau (genealogy) of island evolution reminds us why this sea of low-lying coral atolls, sandy shoals, jagged basalt islands, and underwater seamounts scattered across Papahānaumokuākea are respected and honored as 'āina kupuna (ancestral islands).

As one journeys into Papahānaumokuākea, Lalo (French Frigate Shoals) is the first coral atoll greeted after passing the sheer cliffs of Nihoa and Mokumanamana. It also serves as an indicator of how islands beyond Lalo transition to mostly low, broad reef islands with shallow lagoons.

Lalo produces one of the most diverse and complex reef communities, forming a crest that shelters multiple sandy islands. The formation of these islands is highly dependent on adjacent reefs that have eroded over the past few thousand years as sea levels shifted and waves shaped their shores – processes that both nourish and diminish sand.

Despite these sandy islands' limited area and low elevation, Lalo serves as a central nesting site for more than 90% of our honu (Hawaiian green sea turtle) population and is a favored habitat for foraging 'iliihōloikauaua (monk seals) and thousands of seabirds.

In October 2018, Walaka, one of the largest hurricanes developed in the Central Pacific, tore through Lalo as a Category 3 storm, bringing powerful winds and damaging swells.

This event brought headline attention from around the world to Lalo, as islands nearly vanished overnight, testing its resilience. However, the dynamic nature and reshaping patterns of Lalo are reflected within its various inoa 'āina (place names), including Lalo-iho (lower Lalo), Lalo-a'e (upper Lalo), Lalo-hele (continuous Lalo), Lalo-kona (leeward or southern Lalo), and

Lalo-ho'āniani (reflective Lalo).

Initially documented in 1835 by Kaiāikawaha, a Lahainaluna scholar, and later resurfaced through the extensive research of Dr. Kekuewa Kikiloi, these inoa 'āina acknowledge Lalo's natural cycles of disappearing into Pō and re-emerging into Ao (light) as intrinsic to its identity as an 'āina kūpuna.

In 2021, I had the privilege to visit Lalo for the first time. This journey was especially meaningful, as it was shared with an 'ohana of fellow Kānaka 'Ōiwi ocean scientists, resource managers, and community members.

The voyage was led by Dr. Haunani Kāne to reconnect with and learn from Lalo. It also marked a pivotal moment, as this was the first research cruise led entirely by a Kānaka 'Ōiwi crew. It was a life-changing experience that planted seeds of inspiration and lessons that fuel me today. To learn more about our huaka'i, visit [arcg.is/DoCiu](http://arcg.is/DoCiu).

He pūko'a kani 'āina...a mau loa aku! ■

*Kainalu Steward is originally from Lahaina, Maui. He is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Earth Sciences at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, studying reef island resilience at Lalo. His research aims to map seasonal shoreline dynamics and oceanic conditions that influence island change, to support stewardship at Lalo. Kainalu attributes his 'ohana, community, mentors, and 'āina for inspiring and shaping this collective work.*



*Kānaka 'Ōiwi crew on the 2021 research cruise to Papahānaumokuākea. (L-R): Kainalu Steward, Hanalei Wann-Keli'i-ho'omalū, Brad Wong, Lauren Kapono, Dr. Haunani Kane, Aloha Kapono, Kainoa Lum, and Kammie Tavares. - Photo: Jason Patterson, 'Ōiwi TV*



# Growing the Native Hawaiian Physician Network

Submitted by JABSOM Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence and 'Ahahui o nā Kauka

The health of our lāhui has long been a critical concern. From the impacts of smallpox and Hansen's disease (leprosy) in the 1800s to today's high rates of diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and mental health challenges, Native Hawaiians continue to bear a heavy burden.

Our kūpuna knew that health is central to our people's strength and survival. From ali'i who established hospitals to kahuna who practiced lā'au lapa'au, we inherit a powerful legacy of healing and service.

Yet Native Hawaiians still face the highest rates of chronic illness in the state. At the same time, Hawai'i is facing a severe physician shortage – currently lacking 757 doctors statewide, especially in primary care.

Fewer than 6% of Hawai'i's practicing physicians are of Native Hawaiian descent. Addressing this crisis begins with us – by training and supporting more Native Hawaiian physicians who are rooted in culture and committed to our communities.

At the Department of Native Hawaiian Health at the University of Hawai'i's John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), the Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence (NHCOE) is dedicated to cultivating the next generation of Native Hawaiian physicians. NHCOE supports students throughout the medical pathway – from high schoolers exploring health careers, to post-baccalaureate students applying to medical school, to medical students growing in their clinical practice. We also support physicians and trainees on their journey as Kānaka Maoli healers.

Our mentorship model follows the kaikaina-kaikua'ana (older-younger sibling) tradition,



The 2024 John A. Burns School of Medicine Kihei Ceremony sponsored by the Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence and 'Ahahui o nā Kauka. - Photo: Kara Wong-Ramsey

connecting those further along in their path with those just beginning. This approach strengthens cultural identity, academic achievement, and a sense of pilina – relationship and responsibility.

Together with 'Ahahui o nā Kauka, the Association of Native Hawaiian Physicians, we are building a Native Hawaiian Physician Network – a living system of support linking students, physician trainees, and physicians. According to recent data, over 400 Native Hawaiian physicians are in practice or retired. We aim to connect with and expand this community.

We invite the following to join us:

- High school, college, and post-bac students exploring medicine
- Medical students and residents seeking mentorship
- Practicing and retired physicians willing to guide the next generation

This network is about more than career support. It is grounded in aloha, kuleana, and a shared commitment to improving the health of our lāhui. ■

Contributors to this month's column include Director of the Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence Kanoho Hosoda, Ph.D. (Waimānalo); 'Ahahui o nā Kauka Co-Treasurer Kara Wong-Ramsey, MD (Mānoa); 'Ahahui o nā Kauka President Marcus Iwane, MD (Waimalu); 'Ahahui o nā Kauka board member Associate Professor, Department of Native Hawaiian Health & Office of Medical Education Dee-Ann Carpenter, MD (Moanalua); 'Ahahui o nā Kauka member and Assistant Professor, Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence Kelli-Ann Voloch, MD (Kāne'ohe).

**Join the Native Hawaiian Physician Network – a growing community of students, residents, and physicians working together to heal and uplift our people.**

Complete the NHCOE Interest Form:  
[tinyurl.com/yckfd28m](https://tinyurl.com/yckfd28m)

Learn more:  
[nhcoe.jabsom.hawaii.edu](https://nhcoe.jabsom.hawaii.edu)

Contact us:  
[nhcoe@hawaii.edu](mailto:nhcoe@hawaii.edu)

Physicians and students can also join 'Ahahui o nā Kauka, at:  
[kauka.org](https://kauka.org)

# A Hawaiian Prayer For Healing

By Kalei Nu'uhiwa, Ph.D.



Aloha kākou  
e nā hoa  
makamaka.

What up gang?

Thought I would  
talk about a healing

chant that Samuel M. Kamakau shared in *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, on Feb. 2, 1867, for two reasons. The first reason is to learn a pule ho'ōla (healing prayer) together and the second reason is to direct you towards the original article where Kamakau published it.

True to the Hawaiian style of teaching, the article comes with a whole bunch of stories that are featured to help the reader formulate a pilina or relationship to the pule ho'ōla.

When it was published, Kamakau made sure to say that it was a healing chant used during difficult days and not a pule 'anā'anā or the workings of the devil. In fact, Kamakau talks about an event where this pule ho'ōla was used when a ship was sinking. Everyone who chanted survived and those who did not perished.

Kamakau also explains that part of the lines of the pule ho'ōla are older, used during a time when men went to the hale mua or the heiau to pray for the good health of their main chief, leaders, and community once in the morning and once in the evening. At that time this practice was called papaiaawa, or a place of worship or for family prayers.

Kamakau goes on to say that the ancient prayer mentions the famous sands of La'amaikahiki, from Ko'olaupoko, O'ahu. Kamakau states (and I paraphrase here): "When you travel from Ko'olaupoko to Waiāhole, you will pass Hakuikukui. Turn towards 'Auli'ili'i Point on the edge of the road and when your foot steps into the sand, that is the sand of Mahina. Shuffle a bit and that's Onehuna and Onehali of Kai-

puiolea. Then, look for the wind, it is there that you will see the stones shaped like canoes called "Nawa'ali'ili'iakiiolea. Those are the markings of the canoes that arrived from the sands of Tahiti, mentioned in the chant."

I'm not sure if these natural features still exist today out in Ka'alaea, O'ahu, but I do know that we tend to point towards those areas as the famous lands connected to La'amaikahiki and his canoe travels.

Kamakau's article reminds me again how important it is to document the stories and natural features we see around us today. Who knew that 158 years later we would be talking about this chant?

1. E Kāne, e Keleakui.  
*Listen Kāne, the moving Kiu winds.*
2. E Kāne, e Kelekeleakui.  
*Listen Kāne, the swift Kiu winds.*
3. Onehuna, i Onehali.  
*Orange hued twilight, signs of particle filled winds,*
4. A Keleakui, Kelekeleakui,  
*Aloft Kiu winds, the Swift Kiu winds,*
5. Ke one i Māhinahina,  
*Particles aloft in the white moonlight,*
6. Ka ipu i 'o'ole'a — a.  
*The unyielding wind gourd.*
7. E ola.  
*Heal! ■*

Scan QR code below if you would like to learn the pule ho'ōla, E Kāne, E Keleakui:





# Q1 2025 NHCC Member Insights



By Andrew Rosen

As 2025 began, a new federal administration brought a wave of executive orders, policy reversals, and evolving trade policies. Uncertainty surrounding tariffs and regulatory changes contributed to a cautious outlook among business owners across the nation and Hawai'i was no exception. The first quarter was marked by hesitation as businesses recalibrated amidst this changing political and economic landscape.

However, in recent weeks, signs of stability have emerged. Key trade negotiations are showing progress, energy prices have significantly declined, and the nation just recorded its lowest monthly inflation rate in four years. These developments suggest that the outlook for the remainder of 2025 may improve.

## Business Sentiment: Clouded by Uncertainty

When asked about the 12-month economic outlook, only 23.1% of respondents expected improvement, while a combined 61.6% expected conditions to worsen or stay the same.

No respondent selected "Much Better" as their outlook.

This marked a drop in optimism compared to Q4 2024, when 38.5% reported the economy was the same as 2023 but better than 2019.

## Sales Revenue: Modest Gains

Compared to the same quarter last year, 53.8% reported improved sales revenue while 38.5% stayed the same. Only 7.7% saw a decline.

Pre-pandemic, in Q1 2019, the numbers were similar, with 53.8% reporting better sales and 30.8% saying it was worse.

This suggests that while uncertainty clouds future expectations, many businesses have found a post-pandemic rhythm with improving revenues compared to 2019.

## AI Adoption Rising

More than half of respondents (53.8%) reported using AI in their businesses, a substantial increase from the 30.8% adoption rate reported at the end of 2024. Applications ranged from marketing and research to document preparation and workflow automation.

## Workforce & Capital Remain Ongoing Challenges

Hiring continues to be a top issue, with 33.3% struggling to find skilled workers and others citing high training costs, poor retention, or low pay competitiveness.

Regarding access to capital access, one-third of businesses report challenges securing loans, grants, or investment. Barriers include documentation requirements, creditworthiness, and financial literacy gaps.

When asked what the Native Hawaiian Chamber of Commerce (NHCC) could do to help, many respondents requested more targeted networking (not just social events), expanded reach beyond Honolulu, and advocacy for local business-friendly policies.

As we compare Q1 2025 to the end of 2024, sentiment has cooled, but business performance shows signs of resilience. While concerns persist over government regulation, hiring, and financing, our members remain resourceful and adaptive.

With AI becoming a regular part of business operations and federal economic indicators turning positive, NHCC will continue to advocate for and invest in programs that improve access to capital, workforce training, and community-centered economic development.

Mahalo to our members for your candid feedback and for helping us tell your story. And mahalo to Rebecca Soon and her team at Ward Research for their work in refining our member survey. Their insights have helped us improve data clarity and relevance since our inaugural effort in 2024. Here's to a strong 2025! ■

For more information or questions contact [andrew@nativehawaiianchamberofcommerce.org](mailto:andrew@nativehawaiianchamberofcommerce.org).

# E NHLC...

## How does putting land in a trust protect it for future generations?



By Devon Haia, Esq.  
Equal Justice Works Disaster  
Resilience Fellow and Staff  
Attorney

Whether property was recently purchased, or passed down through generations, 'ohana can use a family land trust as a legal shield to protect and preserve their land for future generations.

A trust is a legal tool used to hold title to assets. Every trust has a creator, at least one trustee, and at least one beneficiary. When an asset, such as land, is placed in a trust, title to the land splits: the trustees hold legal title and the beneficiaries hold equitable title. Legal title means the trustees can make ownership decisions for the property, such as signing a lease agreement. Equitable title means a beneficiary has the right to benefit from the property, such as splitting profit from rental proceeds.

The terms of a trust, laid out in the trust document, can dictate how the trustees must manage the land. The creators of the trust can establish clear guidelines and restrictions on how the land is to be used, which can help prevent misuse, overdevelopment, or loss. Trustees are obligated to act in the best interest of the trust and the beneficiaries. State law is the default where a trust instrument is silent.

In traditional land ownership, any person with an undivided interest in the property can sell their interest to an outside party. For example, if a property is equally owned by five siblings, one

of the siblings can sell their 20% share to anyone they want. However, if the land is placed in a trust by the siblings, the trust instrument can dictate how and to whom any beneficial interest may be sold or passed. Further, if one family member with an ownership interest is irresponsible with financial management, a land trust, depending on the circumstances, may keep creditors at bay.

A trust agreement can also dictate a clear path to resolving any internal family disputes over management of the land – preventing any concern about conflict resolution.

Lastly, putting land into a family land trust prevents 'ohana from having to go through the courts to ensure title is passed to the next generation. Probate can be an expensive and lengthy process. Terms of the trust can dictate how the trustee and beneficiary interests pass from one generation to the next without having to go through probate.

This legal tool provides a way to manage family assets collectively and ensure their preservation and use for future generations. ■

*E Nīnau iā NHLC provides general information about the law. E Nīnau iā NHLC is not legal advice. You can contact NHLC about your legal needs by calling NHLC's offices at 808-521-2302. You can also learn more about NHLC at [nativehawaiianlegalcorp.org](http://nativehawaiianlegalcorp.org).*

*The Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation (NHLC) is a nonprofit law firm dedicated to the advancement and protection of Native Hawaiian identity and culture. Each month, NHLC attorneys will answer questions about legal issues relating to Native Hawaiian rights and protections, including issues regarding housing, land, water, and traditional and cultural practice. You can submit questions at [NinauNHLC@nhlchi.org](mailto:NinauNHLC@nhlchi.org).*



# Shaping Tomorrow's Leaders



By Casen Cluney

*NaHHA would like to share an article from one of our LAMAKŪ HO'OKIPA, our Beacons of Hospitality, who are making a positive impact through the value of mālama and as a contributing member of the Native Hawaiian community.*

tributing member of the Native Hawaiian community.

In 1981, Captain Henry Kaalekahi, Jr., founded the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD) Explorers program with a vision to educate, train, and inspire the next generation of firefighters. Today, the program stands as a dynamic training ground for 'ōpio ages 14-21, offering a comprehensive, hands-on learning experience in firefighting, emergency response, and life-safety skills.

Grounded in a STEAM-based curriculum, this program not only develops technical expertise and professionalism, it also instills foundational values of aloha 'āina and aloha Kānaka, fostering a new generation of leaders rooted in service, culture, and community.

The program provides young people – known as “explorers” – the chance to connect with their communities and develop skills that prepare them for future careers in public service.



Fire Fighter Casen Cluney got his start in the HFD Explorers Program. - Photo: Honolulu Fire Department

As a former explorer, I spent three transformative years in the program and understand the profound impact this program has had on me. It was one of the most defining moments of my life. From tying knots and rappelling off towers, to working in the lo'i, the lessons I learned extended far beyond firefighting.

The program helped shape my values. I gained discipline, a deeper understanding of kuleana, a lasting respect for people and place, and was inspired to become a servant leader grounded in aloha and dedicated to protecting our communities.

Some of the most impactful experiences was supporting restoration and preservation efforts on Kaho'olawe with the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana and working alongside Kāko'o 'Ōiwi in the cultural, agricultural and ecological revitalization of over 400 acres of wetlands in Ahupua'a He'eia.

These opportunities deepened my cultural awareness, strengthened my leadership and teamwork skills, and cultivated a lifelong respect for cultural integrity and stewardship.

Today, the HFD Explorers program continues to serve as a cornerstone of youth development, preparing young people not only to fight fires, but to lead with integrity, compassion, and a strong sense of community wellbeing.

The lessons I learned – discipline, kuleana, and pride in my Native Hawaiian heritage – continue to guide me in my career as a firefighter. This program didn't just prepare me for a profession; it helped define the person I strive to be every day. ■

Currently stationed at the Waipahu Fire Station, Fire Fighter I Casen Cluney, has four years of dedicated service in the Honolulu Fire Department. He is the youngest of five children of Will and Allyson Cluney of Kailua and proudly serves alongside his brother in the HFD, continuing a strong family legacy rooted in service and aloha 'āina. His commitment to protecting the community and honoring his Hawaiian heritage exemplifies the spirit of HFD. If you're inspired to gain invaluable knowledge, build character, and serve your community, learn more about the HFD Explorers Program at [hfdexplorers.org](http://hfdexplorers.org)

# Mai Po'ina 'Ole – We Will Not Forget

By Carole Lanialoha Lee  
with Ryan Schuessler

These words, first spoken by Lili'uokalani, have taken on a special meaning in Chicago. Here, in the heart of the Midwest, the Hawaiian civic spirit burns strong.

Founded in 2005 by Joelladean Hinano Keliikoa-Lee, Princess Victoria Ka'iulani Hawaiian Civic Club of Chicago proudly carried Prince Kūhiō's legacy in the Midwest until 2015.

In 2020, our city's kānaka gathered at the foot of the William McKinley statue in Chicago, defending our beloved Princess Ka'iulani during a time of turmoil. We realized the need to reinstate the legacy of our club's founder. On Oct. 19, 2023, Ke Ali'i Victoria Ka'iulani Hawaiian Civic Club-Chicago received its charter.

Keliikoa-Lee, our club's founder – and my mother – chose “mai po'ina 'ole” as our club's motto. She believed that we have the kuleana to identify and honor the burial sites of our kūpuna who moe me ka maluhia lanī in the Midwest.

My mother loved history and genealogy, so “mai po'ina 'ole” made sense for her. It makes sense for Chicago too – a large city nestled in the Midwest – a region often viewed as “flyover country.” A place that gets forgotten.

Mai po'ina 'ole.

During lockdown, our civic club began digging into our community's history. Some of our members partnered with the Field Museum to create an exhibition, and those co-curators chose to tell the story of how hula was preserved, protected, and perpetuated in Chicago.

Research for the exhibit revealed some untold stories; Hawaiians have been a part of Chicago's cultural landscape for more than 130 years.

Among the first to visit were ali'i. Kalākaua visited Chicago in 1875 and praised the city's resilience following the



Great Chicago Fire, just four years prior. No doubt he saw a city recovering from devastation in a country nearly destroyed by civil war a decade earlier.

Ali'i didn't just pass through Chicago. In the early 1900s, Lucy Iwalani McWayne – a member of the Ka'ahumanu Society and a descendant of Kamakana, granddaughter of Kahekili II – established a residence here where her daughter, Kulamanu Nash, was raising her family.

Chicago was a magnet for Hawaiians of all backgrounds – every island is represented in the city's history. Many who journeyed here came to work as entertainers, as dancers or musicians.

“Mai po'ina 'ole” is not just our club's motto – it's also the name of our initiative to identify the Hawaiian performers who lived in Chicago and locate those whose 'iwi rest

here.

One such kupuna, Zachary Pali Jr., the eldest child of Pali Pahupu and Rose Kamohakau of Moloka'i, traveled to Chicago in 1916 with a handful of musicians recruited for a new show. They played in more than 130 cities. Musicians like Zachary shaped American music as we know it, introducing the Hawaiian steel guitar to blues, jazz, and country western music.

Zachary died in Chicago in 1919 at just 22. His story was forgotten for more than 100 years. When our club learned that he was buried in an unmarked grave, we joined together with the Pali family to honor their kupuna by purchasing a headstone.

Because in Chicago, mai po'ina 'ole. ■

Carole Lanialoha Lee is pelekikena (president) of Ke Ali'i Victoria Ka'iulani Hawaiian Civic Club-Chicago. She is a musician, kumu hula, scholar, and lifelong Chicagoan. Ryan Schuessler is a senior exhibition developer at the Field Museum in Chicago. He is co-chair of the Mai Po'ina 'Ole Initiative and a proud supporter of Ke Ali'i Victoria Ka'iulani Hawaiian Civic Club-Chicago.



# Healing our Kāne



By Jodi Leslie Matsuo,  
DrPH RDN

**N**ative Hawaiian men continue to face some of the highest rates of chronic illness and pre-

mature death in Hawai'i. Conditions like heart disease, diabetes, liver disease, and cancer are not only more common, but they're often diagnosed late, when treatment options are limited.

But why is that? And how can we create pathways for our kāne to engage in healing before crisis strikes?

Stories from within our primary care clinic, supported by research, shed light on why many kāne underutilize healthcare.

From a young age, many are taught that masculinity means being strong, silent, and self-reliant. Asking for help or showing pain can feel like a failure of their kuleana as providers and protectors. Yet this stoic ideal often comes at a high cost: symptoms are ignored, emotional distress is hidden, and care is delayed until the situation becomes serious.

Historical trauma continues to shape how Native Hawaiians engage, or disengage, with medical care. Western healthcare systems are often viewed not just as unfamiliar, but as extensions of institutions that have excluded, mistreated, or ignored us.

These spaces can feel disconnected from the cultural values and ancestral healing practices that once sustained our people. As a result, many kāne approach these settings with mistrust or a sense of not belonging.

That feeling deepens when kāne walk into a clinic and see no one who looks like them, speaks their language, or understands their worldview. The unspoken message? This isn't for you.

Mental health is often the invisible thread running through physical illness – yet it is rarely named. De-

pression and anxiety are common among kāne but often show up as back pain, fatigue, irritability, or substance use. Because our people are resilient, suffering is frequently masked by strength. Yet in clinical settings, these emotional struggles are often missed, especially when providers lack cultural awareness.

Even for those ready to seek care, logistical barriers persist, such as limited insurance, transportation, inflexible work schedules, and lack of nearby services, especially on the neighbor islands.

We need more Native Hawaiian health practitioners, expanded language access, and clinical spaces rooted in cultural safety; places that don't just serve us, but truly welcome who we are. But healing needs to extend beyond the clinic to enact the cultural shift in the current kāne mindset regarding health.

Peer mentorship programs, talk-story circles modeled after the traditional Hale Mua (where young men learned the roles and responsibilities of manhood) and ho'oponopono offer ways for men to process emotions, release burdens, and restore balance, especially when words are hard to find.

These gatherings can help normalize conversations about health by reframing care-seeking as an act of strength, not weakness, and honoring it as an expression of one's kuleana to 'ohana and future generations.

Restoring wellness also means reconnecting to 'āina. Working the lo'i, gathering limu, or casting net for nourishment, cultural grounding, and personal purpose.

Kāne are more likely to thrive when care is not something done to them, but something built with them – guided by culture, community, and respect. ■

*Born and raised in Kona, Hawai'i, Dr. Jodi Leslie Matsuo is a Native Hawaiian registered dietitian and certified diabetes educator, with training in integrative and functional nutrition. Follow her on:*

*Facebook @DrJodiLeslieMatsuo  
Instagram @drlesliematsuo  
X @DrLeslieMatsuo.*

# Honoring Legacy, Embracing the Future



Na ke Kime Ho'oka'a 'Ike

**K**ualapu'u School is a vibrant hub of Hawaiian culture and educational innovation on the island of Moloka'i. Over 90% of its student population are Native Hawaiian and nearly 80% of its faculty are from Moloka'i.

Deeply reflecting its community roots, Kualapu'u offers dual-track Kaiapuni (Hawaiian language immersion) and English programs, thus ensuring that haumāna (students) and staff engage in cultural practices and learning grounded in Hawaiian values.

Under the leadership of retiring Po'o Kumu (Principal) Lydia Trinidad, Kualapu'u has flourished as a community-centered institution. Her transformative legacy includes founding a general education preschool ahead of state offerings, and expanding daily instruction in 'ike Hawai'i, art, and physical education. Lydia skillfully leveraged charter school flexibility to prioritize both academic rigor and cultural identity.

We extend a heartfelt mahalo to Lydia for her decades of leadership. Her vision, grounded in aloha and excellence, has laid a strong foundation for the school's future.

Looking ahead, Ka'ala Faye Camara, will be continuing Lydia's good work as Kualapu'u's incoming po'o kumu. Ka'ala, a committed educator and leader, and a kupa 'āina o Moloka'i, brings deep local knowledge and passion that will continue to elevate Kualapu'u's impact as a Hawaiian-focused charter school.

Although stepping down as principal, Lydia will continue serving the community through the Ho'okāko'o Corporation, mentoring new administrators and growing educational leadership capacity on the island. She also looks forward to traveling and volunteering.

Kualapu'u's enduring legacy of cultural pride, educational excellence and resilience will continue to guide its path for generations.

And there is more good news to share from Moloka'i! The Moloka'i High School's Robotics Team recently showcased their considerable talent on the world stage at the VEX Robotics World Championship in Dallas, Texas. Competing against top global teams, these students demonstrated engineering skill, teamwork, and unwavering island pride.

Their success reflects the growing strength of STEM education on Moloka'i and the remarkable potential found in our close-knit, rural communities. We celebrate their achievement and congratulate the team for carrying the spirit of Moloka'i to the world! ■

*Kualapu'u Conversion Charter School on Moloka'i serves haumāna from preschool to grade six and offers both Hawaiian immersion and an English language strand. For more information go to: [kualapuucharterschool.org](http://kualapuucharterschool.org).*



Lei making workshop for Kualapu'u staff, parents, and students with Leimana Ritte-Camara. - Photos: Courtesy of Lydia Trinidad



Kualapu'u haumāna attended the Ku'i ka Lono Conference in Hilo this past March.



# No Hawaiian Homeland Award for My Father



By Kipu Kai Kualii

A beautiful, pure Hawaiian man was saved from leprosy in Kalaupapa as a baby and went on to live a long, full, purposeful life on Kaua'i. However, he was unable to receive a Hawaiian Homestead award; unable to realize the legacy intended for him by Prince Kūhiō.

That man was my dad, Wilfred Kualii, III.

On March 12, at the age of 91, dad left us to join mom in Heaven. He was born on Oct. 1, 1933, in a tiny hospital in Kalawao, Moloka'i, on the Kalaupapa Peninsula.

At just 3-days-old, he was taken from his parents, Wilfred Kualii, Jr., and Louisa Kalaeloa, to ensure his survival. The only child of their young marriage, it must have taken everything to let him go like they did.

Dad had a tough childhood, only getting to the third grade and having to work in the taro patches and salt pans of Hanapēpē from a young age. Though he didn't have the schooling most kids received, he did learn the importance and value of hard work, as well as the



Kipu Kai Kualii's father, Wilfred Kualii, III.  
- Courtesy Photo

different ways to be a proficient provider by living off the land – growing, fishing and hunting.

As a young adult, he left home for the life of a paniolo on Kipu Kai Ranch. When my mom, Patricia Ann Carvalho, started working as housekeeper for the ranch owner, Mr. Waterhouse, the cowboy and the maid met and fell in love. Soon after, they were married and started a family.

Mr. Waterhouse, their boss (and matchmaker), was always extremely kind to them and to the three children born in their first four years of marriage.

Dad signed up for Hawaiian Homes in the 60s. When he purchased a new, fee-simple, plantation workforce home in the 70s, he decided to let Hawaiian Homes know.

The woman in the office told him to sign a form removing himself from the waitlist since he already had a home. She also told him he could put a son, 18 or older, in his place on the waitlist.

I'm his eldest son and I was only 16 at the time. My two older sisters were 18 and 19. She never told him he could remain on the list or put either of my sisters on the list in his place. He did what she told him to, and just like that he lost his opportunity to receive a legacy land award – because of one office person.

Years later, he lost out again when he missed signing on as a plaintiff for the Kalima Case.

How many Hawaiians like my dad are out there? How many have experienced loss because they listened to folks in authority who told them they deserved less? How many don't even know what their rights are as Native Hawaiian Beneficiaries? ■

*Founded in 1987, the Sovereign Council of Hawaiian Homestead Associations (SCHHA) is the oldest and largest governing homestead association registered with the Department of Interior, exercising sovereignty on the trust lands established under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920. For information contact [policy@hawaiianhomesteads.org](mailto:policy@hawaiianhomesteads.org).*

# Kolo ka 'Ie'ie i ke Kumu



Na Kalani Akana, Ph.D.

'A'ole a kana mai ka no'eau o ka po'e kahiko ma ka hana 'ana i nā mea waiwai Hawai'i like 'ole.

E pili ana i ka hana hīna'i a me nā mea like 'ole i hana 'ia me ka 'ie'ie, ua helu 'ekahi nā Hawai'i kahiko. Wahi a Te Rangi Hiroa, ke po'o kuhikuhi o ka Hale Hō'ike'ike 'o Pihopa, ua 'oi ke lakela ka hana a ka Hawai'i ma ka Pākīpi-ka ma ke hō'oai 'ana i ka hīna'i a i nā 'ie like 'ole. Ua hana 'ia ka 'ie me ka 'ie'ie, kekahi mea kanu o ka waokele nona nā 'a'a lō'ihī a kūpono no ka hō'oai 'ana.

I ka manawa a Te Rangi Hiroa i ho'opuka ai i ka puke 'o *Arts and Crafts of Hawai'i* ma ka makahiki 1911, 'a'ohe Kānaka 'Ōiwi e ho'ohana ana i nā 'ie me ka 'ie'ie. Ma ka wā o ka Ho'āla Hou nō na'e o nā mea Hawai'i ma nā 1970, ua huli kekahi mau kānaka i loko o ka puke e 'imi i 'ike no ka ho'āla 'ana i nā kino like 'ole o ka 'ie 'ie – ka hīna'i hinala 'oe, ka hīna'i 'o'opu 'oe, ka hīna'i 'ōpae 'oe, ka 'ie poepoe me ke po'i, a me ka 'ie poepoe po'i 'ole. Ua hō'oai nā Hawai'i i ka 'ie'ie a pili i ka ipu. Kupanaha ia mau 'ie ke 'ike aku.

'O kekahi kino kupanaha ho'i, 'o ia ke kino o ke akua hulu. Ua ho'i mai nei kekahi ki'i akua me ka 'ahu 'ula a Kekua-okalani, ke keikikāne a ke kaikaina o Kamehameha, 'o ia 'o Keli'imaika'i. 'O Keli'imaika'i ho'i, ke kupuna o Pauahi. 'O kēia pilina ke kumu o ka ili 'ana o nā 'āina a pau o Kekuaokalani, e like me Punalu'u, O'ahu, iā Ke'elikōlani a laila iā Pauahi.

'O Kumulā'au Sing me kāna wahine aloha, 'o Haunani, kekahi mau alaka'i 'Ōiwi e a'o ana i ka hana 'ana i nā 'ie, nā hīna'i, me nā ki'i nui kōhu kūpuna, 'aumākua, akua e like me Kū a me Lono – aia i ka mea hana ke koho. Aia a pau ka papa ho'okahi makahiki, hiki i nā haumāna ke hele a a'o ma malo o nā kumu hana hulu e ike me Rick San Nicholas e kāpili a ho'ā'ahu i ke ki'i me ka hana hulu.

Ho'ohana nā haumāna a lāua ala i ka pāma hihi, he "'ie'ie ku'i," a he pani haka-haka maika'i ma hope hana 'ino 'ia ka waokele i ke ki'i kē 'ana. Ua a'o 'ia ho'i nā haumāna i ka 'ohi 'ana i ka 'ie'ie me



Haunani me Kumulā'au Sing me nā ki'i 'ie'ie ku'i. -  
Photos: Courtesy of K. Sing



Ki'i o Kū na Raymond Nakama, Lono na Haunani Sing, Kū na Kumu Sing.

ka ha'aliu 'ana i nā a'a 'ie'ie. Ma ka Meli Manaka aku nei, aia kekahi kanaka hana no'eau, 'o Wes Sen kona inoa, e kālepa ana i 'ie'ie malo'o no Pīkī mai. Maika'i kēlā hana o hō'ilikole ka wao o Hawai'i. Inā hoihoi 'oe i kēia hana no'eau po'okela e nāna iā: [kekumuhawaii.com](http://kekumuhawaii.com). ■

*Kalani Akana, Ph.D., is a kumu of hula, oli and 'ōlelo Hawai'i. He has authored numerous articles on Indigenous ways of knowing and doing.*

*To read the English translation go to [kawaiola.news](http://kawaiola.news)*



## 'O Wai Kou Inoa? Who Are You?

By Bobby Camara



The hand next to what we'll call limu hā'ea, puffy and cloud-like. *Stereocaulon vulcani* is grey and across the top of the image. - Photo: Sarah Paroski

Our names are sources of pride and, of course, our societal identifiers. In the world of nā mea ola (biology) there are some species with many cousins, up on the kuahiwi (mountains) or in wet forests, sometimes isolated by deep valleys or steep ridges or kīpuka (clearings) or what-lā, small communities survive.

Unfortunately, specific inoa (names) for each unique species have been lost. Or sometimes the names are confused, or written with typographical errors, or things are called different names in differ-

ent regions, or appear on lists with no connecting reference or image. Such a messy challenge to untangle!

Here we have a lichen, a plant comprised of a limu and a fungus, intertwined, growing together symbiotically. They help each other, with limu making food through photosynthesis, while fungus provides the hale (home).

Its name is not known with certainty, but we research, striving to understand. *Cladonia skottsbergii* is its Latin binomial, but an inoa Hawai'i eludes us. The best we can do is look things up, googling, and asking friends and other researchers for kōkua. One source shares "limu haea, a lichen (*Stereocaulon* sp.) with erect, branching stalks."

But then, Pukui and Elbert gives us "hā'ea Rare var. kaha'ea, clouds." I'm a fan of "Rare var.(iants), words that've fallen out of favor or are infrequently used. And too, I'm a fan of noho i waho, a maliu; being outside and paying attention.

Clouds. But on the ground? Why not? We suggest that this lichen is indeed limu hā'ea. It grows in loose billows on the ground, often on cinder substrate. Clouds.

*Stereocaulon vulcani* is a grey lichen often found on windward young 'a'ā, and is, in fact, erect with branching stalks. It's very different in habit and in color, and is definitely not cloud-like. So we continue to muse, mull, and wonder...limu hā'ea? ■



*Cladonia skottsbergii*. - Photo: scaloha

## Navahine Case Lawyers Honored



Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Chief Advocate Leinā'ala Ley was honored in April with a Distinguished Service Award at the Hawai'i Women Lawyers 2025 Annual Awards along with former Earthjustice attorneys Issac Moriwake, Kylie Wager Cruz and Joanna Zeigler for their work on the landmark youth-led *Navahine v. Hawai'i Department of Transportation* case, a climate lawsuit that resulted in a historic settlement agreement to reduce transportation emissions in line with Hawai'i's public trust doctrine and the youth's constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment. Prior to joining OHA, Ley was an attorney with Earthjustice, America's premiere nonprofit public interest environmental law organization. Ley has dedicated her legal career to advocating for Hawai'i's people and for the protection of our natural and cultural resources. Pictured at the award event in April are some of Earthjustice's Navahine legal team including (l-r) Moriwake; Community Engagement Specialist Marti Townsend; Wager Cruz; Ley; and Litigation Assistant Julie Parks. - Courtesy Photo

## Lawsuit Challenges Commercial Fishing in PIHMNM

Last month, Kāpa'a, the Conservation Council for Hawai'i (CCH), and the Center for Biological Diversity, represented by Earthjustice, filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration challenging the April 17 executive order that would allow U.S.- flagged vessels to fish commercially in the Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument (PIHMNM). They are also challenging the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) attempt to implement the proclamation.

The executive order would strip vital protections around Jarvis Island, Wake Island, and Johnston Atoll that bans commercial fishing in those waters.

On April 25, the NMFS sent a letter to fishing permit holders giving them a green light to fish commercially within PIHMNM's boundaries even though the longstanding fishing ban remains on the books.

"This threatens to destroy one of the world's last healthy, wild ocean ecosystems. Commercial fishing removes large numbers

of fish, sharks, turtles, and other marine life as both intended catch and unintended by-catch, completely disrupting the underwater ecosystem and wreaking havoc on the food chain," said CCH Executive Director Jonee Leinā'ala Kaina Peters.

Earthjustice asserts that both Trump's initial proclamation and subsequent actions by the NMFS violate the law, citing the Antiquities Act of 1906 which allows presidents to designate and protect public lands as national monuments, but does not grant them the authority to strip vital protections from established monuments, and that this action exceeds the president's constitutional authority and infringes upon powers reserved to Congress.

The NMFS's attempt to green light commercial fishing violates several key American environmental laws, including the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.

Even short-term commercial fishing can inflict long-term, irreparable harm on pris-



## NEWS BRIEFS

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tine marine environments. The monument designations, and associated ban on taking marine resources, provide needed protection to scientific and historical treasures in one of the most unique ocean ecosystems on earth.

“The practice of commercial fishing is an affront to Native Hawaiian practices and beliefs. This proclamation threatens the ability of future generations to survive and thrive,” said Kāpa’a founding member Solomon Kaho’ohalahala.

### Yim Wins School Leadership Award

Babā Yim, po’o kumu (principal) of Ke Kula Kaiapuni ‘o Ānuenu in Pālolo Valley, was named the winner of the 2025 Masayuki Tokioka Excellence in School Leadership Award at the Public Schools of Hawai’i Foundation annual dinner on April 17.

Yim impressed the judges with his innovative leadership and ability to navigate challenges around operating a standalone Hawaiian immersion school serving students in grades K-12 from across O’ahu.

“Principal Yim leads with heart and purpose. His ability to unite people around a shared vision for Hawaiian education makes him an exceptional school leader,” Superintendent Keith Hayashi said.

Yim received a \$10,000 per-

sonal cash award and \$15,000 toward a school project of his choice.

Yim will use the school award to maintain the lo’i that run along the neighboring stream, expand the school’s performing arts program, and work with a local artist to beautify the cam-

pus by having students, their ‘ohana and the community help paint murals inspired by the students.

“Instilling the importance of language and culture [at Ānuenu] is about giving students a sense of stewardship so that we’re making better choices about how we take care of this place,” Yim said.

The annual Tokioka Excellence in School Leadership Award honors the late Masayuki Tokioka, founder of Island Insurance Company, Ltd., and a Hawai’i public school graduate.

### Hawaiian Football Festival in June

The Hawaiian Football Federation is sponsoring the King’s Hawaiian Football Festival 25 at UH Hilo, June 5-8. This celebra-

tion of culture, sport and identity will unite top Native Hawaiian football (soccer) players from across Hawai’i and the diaspora for a week of connection and competition.

A highlight of the festival will be a match between Nā Wāhine 17s of Nā ‘Ālapa Hawai’i and the Sāmoa U-17 Women’s National Team on June 5, and then again on June 8. The event will also include a workshop on Awakening Identity Through Sport on June 6. On June 7, college and professional scouts will attend a team training event, offering players valuable exposure and providing the public with an opportunity to witness rising ‘Ōiwi athletic talent in action.

Established on the island of Maui in 1975, the Hawaiian Football Federation is a grassroots nonprofit organization dedicat-

ed to representing the Hawaiian Kingdom on the global football stage.

It has formed national teams both to showcase some of the brightest Native Hawaiian talent, as well as to educate players, families, and supporters on the national history and culture of the Hawaiian nation-state and to rebuild Hawaiian national character and identity by representing 21st-century symbols of Hawaiian national pride.

All events and matches are free to the public. For more information go to [hawaiianfootball.com/](http://hawaiianfootball.com/).

### McKeague is New G70 President

Kawika McKeague is the new president of G70, a multi-discipline design firm specializing in architecture, civil engineering, interior design, planning and environmental design. McKeague brings nearly 25 years of experience in facilitating local and national planning efforts, most of which support Native

Hawaiian community-based initiatives.

McKeague joined the company in 2001 as an entry-level planner. For nearly a decade he promoted the integration

of a Native Hawaiian perspective into environmental planning and architectural design. He briefly left G70 to serve for a year at Kamehameha Schools as a senior cultural resource manager, then returned to G70 in 2012 as a senior planner and cultural specialist.

In 2019 he was named planning principal. Now as president, he will lead the firm’s cultural and community engagement initiatives while overseeing the principal team and company departments, guiding company operations and implementing its strategic vision.

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## Raising Awareness of MMIWGM in Hilo



He Ho’omaka Hou Ana ‘O Puna and Going Home Hawai’i hosted a gathering on May 5 in Hilo to honor the lives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Girls and Māhū (MMIWGM) and raise awareness about the urgent need for systemic change. The event brought together community members, advocates and families directly impacted by the crisis. According to the 2022 Missing and Murdered Native Hawaiian Women and Girls Task Force Report published by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs in collaboration with the Hawai’i State Commission on the Status of Women MMNHWG Task Force, Hawai’i ranks eighth highest in America for missing persons per capita and that the majority (43%) of sex trafficking cases involve Native Hawaiian girls in Waikiki. “One of the biggest misconceptions is that this does not happen in the islands. However, [our location] places us at a higher risk because of the glamour of tourism in paradise,” said Dr. Dayna Schultz, an event organizer. “Raising awareness is vital to the existence of our lāhui.” The gathering is part of a growing global movement that originated in Indigenous communities in Canada. “When Kānaka ‘Ōiwi women, girls and māhū go missing in silence, their names also die in silence. We call on government, law enforcement, and media outlets to stand with us in changing that — to give these lives the visibility and urgency they deserve, just as they would for any other community,” said Schultz. - Courtesy Photo



Po’o Kumu Babā Yim is pictured with senior Hawai’i Department of Education leaders after being presented with the Excellence in School Leadership Award. - Courtesy Photo



**NEWS BRIEFS**

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McKeague has a bachelor's degree in political science and government and a master's degree in urban and regional planning, both from UH Mānoa. He is also a haumana of Kumu Hula Victoria Holt-Takamine, who trained him both in hula and community advocacy. He is also the board president of the PAI Foundation and in 2020 was named to *Hawai'i Business Magazine's* "20 for the next 20" – an annual celebration of emerging leaders into the next two decades.

**Puana to be Performed in Aotearoa**

UH Mānoa's Hana Keaka (Hawaiian Theatre Program), founded by Dr. Tammy Haili'opua Baker, will be taking its most recent production, *Puana*, to an international audience. Baker and the cast of *Puana* have been invited to perform at the Kia Mau Festival's He Ngaru Nui program at Te Whaea Theatre in Wellington, Aotearoa, June 11-14.

Written and directed by Baker, and performed in 'ōlelo Hawai'i, *Puana* premiered last September and stars Theo Baker, Ikaika Mendez, and Joshua "Baba" Tavares. It explores the deep connections between Kānaka Maoli and their kūpuna through song.

*Puana* celebrates our musical heritage and legacy, a reminder that poetic compositions from the past serve as a foundation and guideposts for our contemporary artistic journeys.

This original production is a collaboration between Hana Keaka and Ka Waihona a ke Aloha, a project of UH's Kawaihuelani Center for Hawaiian Language. Along with Baker, it brings together other renowned artists including Kumu Hula Keawe Lopes, Kumu Hula Tracie Lopes, composer Zachary Lum, playwright Kaipulaumakaniolo no Baker, and award-winning Māori composer and recording artist Tawaroa Kawana.

**The Making of the Hae Hawai'i Quilt on Permanent Display at OHA**

Patricia Lei Anderson Murray is a dancer, an opera singer, an author, a former Miss Hawai'i (1962), and a quiltmaker. She is pictured here with the Hae Hawai'i quilt she made years ago that now graces Lili'uokalani Hall at the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) headquarters at Nā Lama Kukui in Iwilei. She recently shared her story about the making of the quilt with OHA staff. Murray said that when the quilt was almost done, she had trouble deciding what finishing touches should complete it. In need of inspiration, she went to 'Iolani Place and spent time in Queen Lili'uokalani's bed chamber where she was imprisoned after the overthrow. While there, Murray said she kept hearing the mele *Ku'u Pua i Paoakalani*, composed by the Queen during her eight-month imprisonment in the palace, and began humming it to herself. She returned home to finish her quilt, picked up her needle and began singing the mele as she sewed the final touches. She said she completed her final stitch just as she finished singing the last note of the song. - Photo: Lance Rae

He Ngaru Nui is a performing arts feature of Kia Mau – a biennial, contemporary Māori Indigenous arts festival – and a statement about the value and significance of Indigenous narratives. This programming strand honors and amplifies the storytelling traditions of Māori, Pasifika and global Indigenous cultures, taking Indigenous stories and sharing them with the world in a way that is both respectful and revolutionary.

**Rogers Receives STACY Award**

Mālia 'Alohilani Kuala Rogers, a Hawaiian immersion and resource teacher at Kawaikini Public Charter School on Kaua'i, was recently honored with the 2025 Hawai'i State Teachers Association's STACY Award for



Mālia 'Alohilani Kuala Rogers  
- Courtesy Photo

Teaching Excellence.

The annual award recognizes a teacher who has demonstrated leadership, dedication, and passion in five categories: scholarship, teaching, advocacy, community, and youth. Rogers has dedicated 30 years to advancing Hawaiian language education. She has been teaching at Kawaikini in Puhi, Kaua'i, since the school opened in 2008. She currently serves as the school's cultural specialist and is currently teaching a course in kapa-making, sharing this traditional art form with a new generation of learners.

Prior to joining the staff at

Kawaikini, Rogers taught in the Department of Education's Hawaiian Immersion Program for 16 years at Kapa'a Elementary and Kapa'a Middle Schools.

Originally from O'ahu, her 'ohana moved when she was young and Rogers was raised on Kaua'i.

In addition to her work in the classroom, Rogers has served as the secretary on the Board of Directors of 'Aha Pūnana Leo since 2002, is a board member for Namahana Public Charter School – set to open on Kaua'i in August – and recently became a board member of Mālama Māhā'ulepū in February 2020.

Rogers has a BA in Hawaiian Language and an elementary education teaching credential from UH Mānoa.

**HILT Honors Herb Lee**

Hawai'i Land Trust (HILT), a local nonprofit that protects, stewards, and connects people to the land, will honor Herb Lee, Jr. as its 2025 Kahu o ka 'Āina (guardian of the land).

Lee, the former president and chief executive officer of the nonprofit Pacific American Foundation, led innovative education projects benefitting 150 schools, training over 7,000 teachers and forming over 200 partnerships during his 25-year career.



Herb Lee - Courtesy Photo

"HILT honors Herb's tireless dedication to 'āina-based education," said Hilt President and CEO 'Olu Campbell. "Curriculum he developed decades ago is still guiding educators today. Herb has shaped the kia'i 'āina of today and tomorrow."

A community advocate and cultural practitioner, Lee founded the Waikalua Fishpond Preservation Society in 1995. A member of Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment Hawai'i, he helped develop Nā Hopena A'o (HĀ), adopted by the Hawai'i Board of Education in 2015.

His numerous awards include the Historic Hawai'i Foundation's Preservation Honor Award; Ka Mana o ke Kana-ka, the Spirit of the Hawaiian Award; and the 'Ō'ō Award. In 2014, he was recognized as a Cesar Chavez Champion of Change by President Obama. In 2022, he earned the Distinguished Kama'āina and the Lighting Our Way awards, and in 2024, he received a Luce Fellowship from the First Nations Development Institute.

Lee will be celebrated at HILT's annual Mālama 'Āina Kākou event on October 4. To learn more or purchase tickets go to: [hilt.org/events/malama-aina-kakou](https://hilt.org/events/malama-aina-kakou). ■





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## Keawanui, Moloka'i: Reviving the Wisdom of the Fishpond

Nestled along the south shore of Moloka'i in the 'āina section of Ka'amola lies a place of deep cultural, ecological, and historical significance: Keawanui Fishpond.

This 55-acre loko kua-pā (closed wall fishpond) serves as the land base for 'Āina Momona, a Native Hawaiian organization dedicated to environmental restoration, cultural education, and food sovereignty. While once part of a vibrant network of dozens of thriving loko i'a across Moloka'i, Keawanui today stands as one of the few remaining fishponds in Hawai'i that remain operable: a living classroom, a source of sustenance, and a symbol of resistance.

Keawanui is not simply a place – it is a legacy. Hawaiian fishponds represent some of the most sophisticated Indigenous aquaculture systems in the world.

These ancient engineering marvels are uniquely designed to raise fish sustainably, relying on tidal flows and carefully placed sluice gates that allowed juvenile fish to enter and mature before harvesting. These systems reflected a deep understanding of the natural world and an ethic of reciprocity between people and place.

But the story of Keawanui is also a reflection of the broader struggle that faces Hawai'i today. The impacts of colonization, overdevelopment, and climate change have left most loko i'a in disrepair or destroyed. Coastal degradation, invasive species, and sea level rise now threaten not just our fishponds, but our food systems, our culture, and our ability to thrive as Kānaka 'Ōiwi in our homeland.

'Āina Momona's work at Keawanui is an answer to that challenge. Under the leadership of Executive Director Walter Ritte – who has spent over 25 years restoring fishponds across the pae 'āina – the site has become a beacon of



**Kaiali'i Kahele**

CHAIR  
Trustee,  
Hawai'i Island

resilience and renewal. Walter's decades-long dedication to Keawanui has transformed it into a place of learning and reconnection.

Generations of youth, community members, and visitors have walked its walls, listened to its stories, and labored in its waters. What they gain is more than knowledge – they gain identity, purpose, and belonging.

The restoration of Keawanui is not merely about reviving an ancient food production method. It is about reclaiming a worldview.

It is about restoring the symbiotic relationship between people and 'āina. At a time when Hawai'i imports over 85% of its food, investing in traditional systems like loko i'a is not just wise – it is urgent. These systems are inherently sustainable, climate-resilient, and culturally grounded. They represent the type of regenerative economy and land stewardship that our islands desperately need.

As we look to the future, Keawanui offers a blueprint. It teaches us that our survival as Hawaiians – and as an island community – will depend on how well we honor and apply the knowledge of our ancestors. It reminds us that food security is inseparable from cultural security. And it compels us to act boldly to restore what has been nearly lost.

To build a just, equitable, and pono Hawai'i, we must reinvigorate our ancestral practices. We must support grassroots organizations like 'Āina Momona who are doing the work, day in and day out, to breathe life back into places like Keawanui.

Because in that fishpond – in the stones of its walls, the rhythm of its tides, and the hands of those who care for it – we see not only what was, but what can be. Keawanui is more than a fishpond. It is a vision for the future. ■



## A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats

Across Hawai'i, local families are struggling to make ends meet – even when working two full-time jobs. The cost of living has become a major barrier, making it harder for our people to stay in Hawai'i Nei. At the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), we see this challenge clearly – not just in the communities we serve, but within our own organization.

We, as the Board of Trustees, recently voted to support two important action items that support our commitment to our OHA 'ohana or our staff, our most valuable asset: salary increases and teleworking policies.

I was honored to chair an Ad Hoc Committee tasked with examining existing staff salaries at OHA and making salary recommendations that better reflect the real cost of living in Hawai'i.

The recommendation to increase OHA staff salaries wasn't made lightly. It was driven by our shared commitment to supporting our employees, many of whom are Native Hawaiian and deeply connected to the mission of OHA and the lāhui.

According to the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) Living Wage Calculator, a single adult in Honolulu needs to earn a (gross) salary of \$62,451/year just to afford basic necessities – far above the state's current minimum wage of \$14/hour. For families with keiki, the minimum living wage required exceeds \$100,000/year.

The Board of Trustees also voted to adopt a telework policy to assist with commute time, the high cost of gasoline, parking issues at the main office, and better work-life balance for staff. The telework policy is a hybrid work-from-home for eligible employees. This will save OHA more than \$96,000 annually.

Our staff work every day to uplift our people, but like many in Hawai'i, they've faced increasing financial pressures. Housing costs, groceries, childcare, and



**Keoni Souza**

VICE CHAIR  
Trustee,  
At-Large

transportation expenses continue to rise, while wages across the state haven't kept pace.

These challenges hit Native Hawaiians especially hard. Native Hawaiians continue to experience high rates of housing insecurity, outmigration, and wage disparities. If we want to reverse those trends, we need to start by ensuring our own people can live and thrive in Hawai'i.

OHA's decision to raise staff salaries and implement a telework policy are significant attempts to address these socioeconomic impacts on our staff. By investing in the financial wellbeing of our employees, we're helping them stay rooted here, be able to afford housing, and continue contributing their talents to our communities. This is about more than just pay – it's about honoring their service, recognizing the value they bring, and building a Hawai'i where working for and with our people is a viable path forward.

While these are just two pieces of a much larger puzzle, it reflects a core belief: that the people who serve the lāhui deserve to be able to live in the same communities they uplift. Affordable housing remains one of the greatest challenges in our state, with median home prices near \$1 million and rental costs continuing to rise. If we want our local families – especially Native Hawaiians – to remain here for generations, we must take meaningful steps to close the gap between wages and reality.

The trustees' action reflects that responsibility. If we want to keep our people home, we must create systems that support them. The future of our work is rooted in the people we support and empower.

Our lāhui deserves to thrive, not just survive. And that begins with decisions like these, where values meet action. We mahalo our staff for their dedication, we appreciate you. ■

## He Inoa no Kamehameha

Travelers from Hawai'i to Washington, D.C., often make a beeline to the King Kamehameha I Statue in the Emancipation Hall of the U.S. Capitol. I've done so myself – alongside fellow Office of Hawaiian Affairs trustees, alumni from my alma mater Kamehameha Schools, and my keiki.

Standing before the likeness of our great mō'i in the heart of the nation's capital is an unforgettable and deeply moving experience. It is, in many ways, a reminder that we, the lāhui, are never far from home – even when oceans separate us from our 'āina.

There are four government-commissioned statues of King Kamehameha I. Two are located on Hawai'i Island: one in Kohala and the other in Hilo. The most well-known is in Honolulu at Ali'iōlani Hale, seat of the Hawaiian Kingdom's judiciary, and the fourth is located in Washington, D.C. Identical in form, these statues represent the enduring legacy of Hawai'i's unifier both in the homeland and across the ocean. Yet, each statue speaks with its own mana.

The Honolulu statue was erected in February 1883. Standing over 18 feet tall, Kamehameha I grips a spear – showcasing his military prowess – while his open hand echoes the spirit of aloha, suggesting both strength and welcome. During each Kamehameha Day on June 11, the people of Hawai'i drape the statue in long lei, reinforcing its role as a living cultural symbol and focal point for community celebration.

In Washington, D.C., the statue affirms that Hawai'i's history is not lost in statehood but endures alongside the nation's broader narrative.

Chosen in 1969 to represent the islands in the National Statuary Hall Collection, King Kamehameha I stands as a symbol that our people, our language, and our traditions are woven into the story of America. It challenges visitors to recognize Native Hawaiian leadership within the pantheon of American history, asserting that Hawai'i's journey – from monarchy to statehood – adds a vital chapter to the national story.

For many Kānaka living far from Ha-



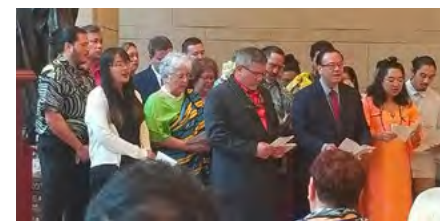
**Keli'i Akina, Ph.D.**

Trustee,  
At-Large

wai'i, the statue in D.C. is more than political symbolism. It is a spiritual and emotional anchor – an image of home, of heritage, of ancestral mana. It provides a connection to our roots, offering both inspiration and comfort for our lāhui on the continent. In the presence of the statue, many feel seen, remembered, and grounded in their identity, even while separated from the land that raised them.

Taken together, these statues of King Kamehameha I embody a dual narrative: one of self-determination and remembrance in the islands themselves, and one of resolve. These monuments are not just figures of bronze, but pillars of our living identity.

Our ali'i left us a legacy of leadership grounded in the wellbeing of our people. They call us to honor our past while forging a future where the voices of our lāhui – both at home and abroad – are heard, valued, and empowered. ■



Trustee Akina joins Kamehameha Schools alumni in the D.C. area in singing "Aloha Pauahi" and "Imua Kamehameha" in June 2019. "I was honored to represent OHA at our nation's capital for the lei draping of the Kamehameha statue. It was wonderful to see our Hawaiian community on the East Coast share their aloha through hula."



Trustee Akina with his three oldest children (l-r) Jenai, KeAupuni and Mauloa at the King Kamehameha I statue in Washington, D.C., in June 2017.



## Resilience, Compassion and Aloha: Lessons From the Wildfires

In June we are focusing on Maui Nui, which refers to both a prehistoric Hawaiian island and a modern biogeographic region. It originally existed as a single landmass but later separated into four islands: Maui, Molokaʻi, Lānaʻi, and Kahoʻolawe.

This theme aligns with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Board of Trustees up-coming meetings scheduled on Maui and Molokaʻi. Our lead story in this edition of *Ka Wai Ola* is about a home-grown Long Term Recovery Group helping Maui Wildfire survivors rebuild their homes.

The issue also features a story about the restoration of Mokuʻula in Lahaina, and several Molokaʻi stories (a health care update; Sustāinable Molokaʻi energy initiatives; and the future of Kalau-papa). And, although saddened by their loss, I'm also pleased to read memoriams dedicated to longtime friends, Prince David Kawānanakoa and waterman Clyde Aikau.

It is a full plate and I'm grateful to contribute and reflect particularly on the resilience, compassion, spirit of aloha and lessons learned from the devastating Maui Wildfires that occurred in 2023.

It became the deadliest U.S. wildfire in over a century, claiming at least 102 lives and causing \$5.5 billion in damages. Shortly after the tragedy, several OHA trustees (including myself), led by Maui Island Trustee Hulu Lindsey visited both Lahaina and upcountry Kula. It was a moving experience.

Disasters have a way of revealing the essence of human nature. The wildfires were not just a catastrophe measured in lost lives, homes and scorched landscapes – they were also a profound test of the human condition. We found that in the wake of destruction, the people of Maui demonstrated resilience, compassion, and the enduring power of aloha, teaching the world valuable lessons about unity and perseverance.



**Brickwood Galuteria**

Trustee,  
At-Large

Resilience is about more than surviving – it is about rebuilding, adapting, and finding strength in hardship. The Maui wildfires showcased the determination of individuals and communities reclaiming their futures. Families cleared debris together, emergency responders provided aid, and volunteers stepped up to offer comfort.

Beyond physical resilience, emotional endurance was tested. The trauma of loss was profound, yet people found solace in shared grief, leaning on each other for healing. Compassion became the force driving recovery. Neighbors shared food, shelter, and support. Volunteers from across the islands and the world arrived to aid the cleanup, demonstrating the power of community.

The Hawaiian value of 'ohana – family in the deepest sense – was evident in how people came together. Generosity extended beyond financial aid to acts of comfort and listening, reinforcing the belief that no one should suffer alone. True compassion lasts long after the flames have been extinguished.

The spirit of aloha is a way of life. It is guiding Maui's recovery as people help one another, not out of obligation, but because love and unity are at the core of Hawaiian identity. Aloha is more than words – it is action, uniting people in renewal and hope.

OHA's commitment to recovery has been a pillar of support, providing disaster relief funds for Native Hawaiian families, housing vouchers, direct grants, and long-term recovery efforts. OHA continues to uphold the spirit of 'ohana, ensuring that no one faces hardship alone. The Maui wildfires were a tragedy, but they also proved the power of resilience, compassion, and the spirit of aloha.

The people of Maui Nui, supported by organizations like OHA, show the world that love and unity endure beyond crisis. May we all carry the spirit of aloha forward, extending kindness, holding onto hope, and always standing together. Mālama for now. ■

## Pōhakuloa and the Legacy of Resistance

Mahalo nui loa to the many Kānaka who stood firmly and spoke courageously against the U.S. Army's proposed Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Army Training Land Retention at the Pōhakuloa Training Area on Hawaiʻi Island, dated April 2025. Their testimonies made it clear: the Army has failed to comply with the Hawaiʻi Environmental Policy Act (HEPA), as outlined in Hawaiʻi Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 343.

The Army is seeking to extend its lease – or potentially gain lands in fee simple – to continue its use of Pōhakuloa for military training. As part of that process, they are required to submit a Final Environmental Impact Statement. However, the FEIS, as it stands, is incomplete, dismissive of cultural concerns, and silent on key issues like environmental restoration and cleanup.

I was both proud and deeply moved to hear our people – educated, passionate, grounded in 'ike kūpuna – testify with strength and clarity. Their voices centered the concerns that matter most: the desecration of iwi kūpuna through years of live-fire training, the lack of transparency about the discovery of moepū (burial items), and the unanswered questions about whether lineal descendants are being properly notified and consulted.

Their words echoed the unity and mana we felt during the protection of Maunakea. That time reminded us of our strength when we stand side by side for what is sacred. Pōhakuloa, which stretches across the base of Maunakea, is no less sacred. It is 'āina kapu, rich with history, spirit, and the bones of our ancestors.



**Carmen "Hulu" Lindsey**

Trustee,  
Maui

And just like Maunakea, it calls us to protect it.

The military's legacy in Hawaiʻi is long and deeply complex. I served eight years on the Kahoʻolawe Island Reserve Commission and witnessed firsthand the scars left behind by decades of bombing. When the Navy finally ceased bombing Kahoʻolawe in 1990, they returned the island to the state, but the cleanup was far from complete. Funds were limited, and when they ran out, the responsibility

for full restoration was abandoned. To this day, large parts of Kahoʻolawe remain unsafe and unrecovered.

That experience serves as a stark warning for Pōhakuloa. The FEIS submitted by the Army contains no plan for cleanup, no commitment to restore the 'āina after 65 years of use. How can the Army continue to request more time, more land, without taking accountability for the damage already done?

And this is only the beginning. Soon, we will be asked to consider EIS approvals for Mākua, Kahuku, and Kawailoa-Poamoho. The leases for acres of state land currently used by the military are set to expire in August 2029. These lands were leased in 1964 for just \$1 a year. As renewal negotiations begin, we must ask: what have we gained, and what have we lost?

We must remain vigilant. We must remember the lessons of Kahoʻolawe and Maunakea. And we must continue to show up – educated, united, and grounded in our kuleana – to speak for the 'āina and for the generations yet to come.

This is not just about Pōhakuloa. This is about how we choose to protect all that is sacred. ■



## Our Self-Identity is Linked to Place

Places in the “Hawaiian sense” are inseparably linked to our self-identity to have roots in the soil of permanence and continuity. There’s history in all places across the islands. If you knew the place names, then you knew the history of them.

This is how we discover our spiritual self by the ‘āina, of the ‘āina, and for the ‘āina.

It would serve us well as Indigenous people to these lands, to seek the “sacredness” while accepting present day conditions.

The resistance to Americanization in Hawai‘i happens only for the selfish reason that this is our home, we belong here. All connections, spiritual and physical, made by us here links us to Ka Pae ‘Āina o Hawai‘i and our ancestors of long ago who continue to reach out to us because it is our time.

As we keep honoring our wahi pana where we can continue to come together as a people, it preserves our right to self-determination, while we revitalize and restore ourselves to our sense of places.

**David Kahalewai**  
Pālolo, O‘ahu

## The Tuna Industry in American Samoa

This letter is in response to your article published on May 1, 2025, “Marine National Monument in Jeopardy.”

The *Ka Wai Ola* article is misleading and attempts to distort the truth regarding tuna fishing and American Samoa’s role in the Western Pacific. Contrary to the article’s assertions, tuna is not being overfished in the waters surrounding American Samoa or elsewhere in the region. The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), which governs tuna fishing in this area, bases its rules on rigorous scientific data and confirms that tuna stocks remain healthy and sustainable.

American Samoa has hosted a tuna industry for over 60 years – an industry introduced after World War II and vital to our economic survival. The StarKist cannery in Pago Pago supports more than 5,000 direct and indirect jobs. Although StarKist’s parent company is based overseas, the company itself is registered and operates legally in both American Samoa and the United States.

To suggest that our economy’s dependence on tuna threatens biodiversity is not only inaccurate – it ignores the sustainability measures already in place. We support conservation, as

long as it is science-based and allows for economic balance. The effort to paint us as exploiters of the ocean is disrespectful, factually wrong, and ignores the real economic realities faced by American Samoans.

**Sincerely,**  
**Taotasi Archie Soliai**  
Executive Advisor,  
Natural Resources American Samoa Government

## Conservation and Commercial Fishing

We write to correct misleading claims made about WPRFMC in the article, “Marine National Monument in Jeopardy.”

The article implies WPRFMC opposes conservation – this is false. We are mandated under the Magnuson-Stevens Act to manage U.S. fisheries sustainably, ensuring stock health and protecting marine ecosystems to support wise use of these resources. We agree that conservation is critical – but it must be guided by sound science and balanced with the needs of Pacific Island communities like American Samoa.

We support the current 0–50-mile closure that remains within the PIHMNM, which continues to protect nearshore ecosystems and biodiversity. Our well-managed longline fleet, which includes kanaka lawai‘a, is also prohibited from fishing within Papahānaumokuākea and 50–75 miles around the main Hawaiian Islands.

Contrary to the article’s claims, there is no overfishing occurring in American Samoa waters. To suggest otherwise is untrue and unfair to the AS fishing community who depend on these fisheries for their livelihoods and to uphold Fa‘a Samoa.

We believe ocean protection and sustainable fishing can – and must – coexist. This is how we honor both the natural heritage of the Pacific and the cultural and economic lifelines of its Indigenous communities, such as American Samoa and Hawai‘i.

**Taulapapa William Sword Seuta‘atia**

**Kitty M. Simonds**  
Chair, WPRFMC Executive Director,  
WPRFMC and Kanaka

**Taotasi Archie Soliai Roger Dang**  
American Samoa Vice Chair,  
WPRFMC Hawai‘i Vice Chair, WPRFMC

**Dr. Judith Guthertz Sylvan Igisomar**  
Guam Vice Chair, WPRFMC CNMI Vice Chair, WPRFMC

# SHARE YOUR MANA‘O IN Ka Wai Ola

In an effort to create a place for our lāhui to share their mana‘o on issues affecting our pae ‘āina and Kānaka Maoli, *Ka Wai Ola* offers two ways to do that:

*Letter to the editor*

*"OpEd" (opinion piece)*

## Guidelines:

- Letters must be 200 words or less; OpEds must be 500 words or less.
- Please email your submission as a Word document or include it in the body of your email using standard upper/lower case formatting.
- Letters and OpEds should be submitted with the writer’s name, phone number and email.
- *Ka Wai Ola* will not print letters or OpEds that attack, slander, defame or demean an individual or organization.
- *Ka Wai Ola* reserves the right to edit letters and OpEds.
- *Ka Wai Ola* will not print letters or OpEds that do not meet these criteria.

For more information on how to submit go to:

[kawaiola.news/about/submissions](http://kawaiola.news/about/submissions)



To create a space for our readers to honor their loved ones, Ka Wai Ola will print *Hali'a Aloha - obituaries and mele kanikau (mourning chants)*. Hali'a Aloha appearing in the print version of Ka Wai Ola should be recent (within six months of passing) and should not exceed 250 words in length. All other Hali'a Aloha submitted will be published on kawaiola.news. Hali'a Aloha must be submitted by the 15th of the month for publication the following month. Photos accompanying Hali'a Aloha will only be included in the print version of the newspaper if space permits. However, all photos will be shared on kawaiola.news.



**JONNEL KEKAUOHA  
RODRIGUES**  
**JAN. 20, 1988 –  
NOV. 24, 2024**

WAIMĀNALO, O'AHU:  
Jonnel Makanamakamae Kekaouha Rodrigues, 36, of Waimānalo, fell asleep in death on Nov. 24, 2024, surrounded by her family, after a courageous battle with cancer.

Jonnel was a devoted wife, loving mom, cherished daughter, amazing sister, loyal “cuzzin,” incredible aunty, and treasured friend. She was known for her selflessness, always putting others before herself. Whether sharing laughs over drinks or cooking something ‘ono in the kitchen, her vibrant spirit and beautiful smile brought joy to everyone around her.

A proud supermom to five beautiful children (and many more who called her “mom”), Jonnel was the heart of her ‘ohana. Her love for Jehovah gave her strength through her illness and served as a powerful example of faith and resilience. We are comforted knowing we’ll see her again in Paradise. Until then, rest in love, Nel.

She is survived by her beloved husband, Moses Rodrigues, Jr.; daughter Jazlyn; sons Blayd “Bu,” Destin “Kahi,” Case “Piko,” and Phenix “Ho’a”; mother Melanie Watts; sister Kaylah Kekaouha (Jerome); brothers Carey Kekaouha (Nainoa), John Kekaouha III, and Kyle Kekaouha (Chrissy); and many nieces, nephews, and extended family members whom she loved dearly. She was predeceased by her father, John Kekaouha, Jr.

Irreplaceable in every way, Jonnel will forever live on in our hearts.



**GAYLORD KALANI  
RIETA, JR.**  
**JUNE 7, 1965 –  
DEC. 27, 2024**

Kalani Rieta, a son, brother, grandfather, and beloved friend to many passed away peacefully on Dec. 27, 2024, at the age of 59.

He is survived by his mother and stepfather, Lillian and Eric Matsumoto; father Gaylord Rieta, Sr.; brother Leonard Naluahi Rieta; son Ikaika (Natalia) Rivera; grandson Micah Rivera; and his companion and best friend Christi Maumau.

Kalani was known for his vibrant personality and infectious laughter. He was a true friend, always ready with a helping hand, a kind word, and a good story. In addition to volunteering for years at Relay for Life events at Kamehameha Schools, he also enjoyed camping, fixing things, being an entrepreneur, and most of all becoming a new grandfather to Micah.

Kalani’s memorial services will be held on his birthday, so that he can be remembered for his generosity and compassion, but also be celebrated for the joy and happiness he has bestowed upon so many of us here today, and those who have passed. Kalani will forever hold a special place in the hearts of those who knew and loved him.

His ‘ohana will celebrate Kalani’s life on Saturday June 7, 2025, at Mililani Mortuary Mauka Chapel. Visitation begins at 9:30 a.m. and service will begin at 10:30 a.m. ■

*E nā ‘ohana Hawai‘i:* If you are planning a reunion or looking for genealogical information, Ka Wai Ola will print your listing at no charge on a space-available basis. Listings should not exceed 200 words. OHA reserves the right to edit all submissions for length. Listings will run for three months from submission, unless specified. Send your information by mail, or e-mail kwo@OHA.org. *E ola nā mamo a Hāloa!*

SEARCH

**KA‘AUHAUKANE** – Na Lālā O Ana Lumaukahili’owahinekapu Ka’auhaukane will celebrate our ‘Ohana Reunion - Potluck Lunch on Sunday, August 3, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Bellows Air Force Station, Picnic Pavilion 5-A. Deadline to register: Sunday, July 13, 2025. To ensure base access, please contact your Family representative: Peter Machado 808-282-3732 (Kapiko and Quinn); Linda Ho 808-239-8081 (Iseke); Louie Peterson 808-216-9331 (Isaacs and Iseke); Colleen Tam Loo 808-729-8662 or Puanani Orton 808-235-2226 (McKee).

**KAUAAU** - Attention all Kauaua Ohana members, we will be having a Kauaua Ohana reunion in 2026 on Maui and will hold our first general meeting on Saturday, March 8th at the Maui Botanical Gardens / old Maui Zoo in Kahului from 10a to 12 noon. Please come to assist with reunion planning and coordination. Information can be found on websites: kauauamaui.org or Facebook – Kauaua Maui Ohana. Please call Lisa Kunitzer (808) 281-4537 or Josephine Harris (808) 344-1519 if you have questions re: this Kauaua ohana reunion.

**NAEHU-SAFFERY REUNION** - Descendants of Edmund Saffery, wives Kupuna & Waiki Naeahu holding reunion meetings. Combined 14 children: Fanny (Kaiaokamalie), Edmund II (Wallace), Henry (Kaanaana), Caroline (Rose), William (Cockett & Makekau), John (Kahaulelio & Nahooikaika), Thomas (Luna), Mary (Palena), Emma (Pogue), Anna (Kealoha & Nahaku) Juliana (Freitas), Charles (Hawele & Kauwahi), Helen (Tripp), Emalia Nellie (Ernestberg & Conradt & Kaloa). Interested in helping? [tinyurl.com/NSOASite](https://tinyurl.com/NSOASite) Contact Dayton Labanon, 808-232-9869, [dlabanon@gmail.com](mailto:dlabanon@gmail.com), Manu Goodhue [manu\\_losch@hotmail.com](mailto:manu_losch@hotmail.com), 808-551-9386 or Naomi Losch, 808-261-9038. ■

CONSULTATION REQUEST – NORTH KAWAIHAE

The Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DLNR - DOBOR), on behalf of the State of Hawai‘i, invites you to participate in the consultation process under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) for the North Kawaihae Small Boat Harbor Breakwater Improvements Project.

The proposed undertaking includes repairing and modifying the existing west main breakwater at the harbor by raising its height from 6 feet to 10 feet above mean lower low water level and extending the breakwater 80 feet inland. The area of potential effect (APE) is 5.22 acres.

Pursuant to 36 CFR§800.3(f), DOBOR seeks to identify and consult with individuals or organizations who may have knowledge regarding historic properties, including archaeological sites, historic buildings or structures, and traditional cultural properties, that may be located within the APE.


The State Historic Preservation Division has previously determined that the proposed project will have no effect on historic properties. DOBOR is continuing with additional consultation in accordance with NHPA Section 106 to ensure that all potentially relevant information regarding historic properties is considered.

If you have information regarding historic properties within the APE or wish to participate in the Section 106 consultation process, please submit your response in writing or by email within 30 days of this notice. Responses may be sent by mail to Shannon Gomez, Pacific Consulting Services, 1130 N. Nimitz Hwy, Room C300, Honolulu HI 96817 or by email to [Shannon@pcsihawaii.com](mailto:Shannon@pcsihawaii.com). More information is available at [www.pcsihawaii.com/NHKSBBH\\_106](http://www.pcsihawaii.com/NHKSBBH_106). ■

*E Ō Mai, e Kuleana Land Holders!*

**THE KULEANA LAND TAX** exemption helps Native Hawaiians keep their ancestral lands by reducing the rising cost of property taxes. All four counties have ordinances in place that allow eligible kuleana land owners to pay minimal to zero property taxes. Applications are available on each county’s website.

For more information on kuleana land tax ordinances go to [www.oha.org/kuleanaland](http://www.oha.org/kuleanaland) and for assistance with genealogy verification, contact the Office of Hawaiian Affairs at 808-594-1835 or 808-594-1888.

 **OHA**  
OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS





## OFFICE LOCATIONS

Office hours for all locations are 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

*All Offices are closed on State holidays*

### Main Phone (all islands):

808.594.1835

### Email:

info@oha.org

### HONOLULU

560 N. Nimitz Hwy., Ste. 200,  
Honolulu, HI 96817  
Phone: 808.594.1888

### EAST HAWAII (HILO)

2100 Kanoiehua Ave.,  
Unit 9 & 10  
Hilo, HI 96720  
Phone: 808.204.2391

### MOLOKA'I / LĀNA'I

Kūlana 'Ōiwi, P.O. Box 1717  
Kaunakakai, HI 96748  
Phone: 808.582.0516

### KAUA'I / NI'HAU

4405 Kukui Grove St., Ste. 103  
Līhu'e, HI 96766-1601  
Phone: 808.241.3390

### MAUI

1887 Wili Pa Loop, Ste. 1  
Wailuku, HI 96793-1400  
Phone: 808.873.3364

oha.org/offices

Classified ads only \$12.50 - Type or clearly write your ad of no more than 175 characters (including spaces and punctuation) and mail, along with a check for \$12.50, to: **Ka Wai Ola Classifieds, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 560 N. Nimitz Hwy., Suite 200, Honolulu, HI 96817.** Make check payable to OHA. (We cannot accept credit cards.) Ads and payment must be received by the 15th for the next month's edition of *Ka Wai Ola*. Send your information by mail, or e-mail [kwo@oha.org](mailto:kwo@oha.org) with the subject "Makeke/Classified." OHA reserves the right to refuse any advertisement, for any reason, at our discretion.

**AINA REALTOR** - Do you or someone you know own a property in the Waimānalo or Papakōlea Homestead areas and are open to selling? I represent a Native Hawaiian buyer, currently on the Hawaiian Homes waitlist, who is ready, willing, and able to make a serious offer. If you've considered selling or know of a property that might become available, please reach out. This is a special opportunity to help a fellow Hawaiian return to the 'āina. All inquiries will be handled with care and confidentiality. Jordan Aina Realtor RS-85780 - Cell: 808-276-0880 Email: [jordan.aina@locationshawaii.com](mailto:jordan.aina@locationshawaii.com)

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**DHHL PAPER LEASE** - Looking to purchase DHHL Waiohulu paper lease on Maui. Please email Richard at [haiohana@outlook.com](mailto:haiohana@outlook.com)

**HOMES WITH ALOHA** - Paukukalo, Waiehu, Maui - Single level 4 bed/ 2 baths. Renovations throughout the home includes kitchen, bath. \$625,000 This is a leasehold property -Charmaine I. Quilit Poki (Realtor) (808) 295-4474. RB-15998 Keller Williams Honolulu RB-21303.

**HOMES WITH ALOHA** - Papakolea - two story custom home built in 1996, wrap around porch w/ocean view. 3 bedrooms/ 3 bath 12,676 sf lot \$650,000 This is a leasehold property -Charmaine I. Quilit Poki (Realtor) (808) 295-4474. RB-15998 Keller Williams Honolulu RB-21303.

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**UNDIVIDED INTEREST IN MAUI LAND** - Kīpahulu, Hāna, Maui. 13.47-acre parcel. TMK (2) 1-5-011-009, Parcel # 9. Location via House No. 42-656 Hana Hwy 96713. Currently occupied. Please Do Not Disturb. For information: email Davidson 'Ohana, [puawai@myyahoo.com](mailto:puawai@myyahoo.com)

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*Let us help you and your 'ohana!*

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**Kanani Miner**

Hina Hawai'i | Pearlridge, O'ahu



### Malama Education

Help with tuition and other fees for preschool, K-12, trade school, and undergraduate and post-graduate college.

**Loan amounts:**

**\$2,500 - \$20,000**

**5% - 6%  
TO APR**



### Mālama Home Improvement

Expand your home or make repairs.  
Loans over \$50,000 require non-real estate collateral.

**Loan amounts:**

**\$2,500 - \$100,000**

**5% - 6%  
TO APR**



### Mālama Debt Consolidation

Consolidate and pay off existing debts.  
Loans over \$20,000 require non-real estate collateral.

**Loan amounts:**

**\$2,500 - \$20,000**

**5% - 6%  
TO APR**



### Mālama Business

Purchase equipment or inventory, or obtain working capital.  
Loans over \$50,000 require non-real estate collateral.

**Loan amounts:**

**\$2,500 - \$149,999**

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APR**



### Hua Kanu Business

Whether it's to purchase equipment or inventory, or you need a loan for working capital.

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