

# Building Connections

## A Newsletter for Resource Families

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## Resource Caregivers

By Wilma Friesema, OES  
 EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.

*This article originally ran in The Garden Island newspaper on April 9, 2014 and is being reprinted with permission.*

Owen and Merna Tango laugh when asked why they are resource caregivers.

"We don't know why," they replied in our recent interview. "Some days we think we're crazy, but then, deep down, we know the man upstairs has this in his plan for us. It's part of our destiny, our purpose, to help these kids."

The road to this destiny wasn't easy. Merna grew up in the Philippines and came to Hawai'i when she was 19. Her early years were filled with hardship and poverty. Owen was born and raised on Kaua'i. He was only a baby when his father died. One of 10 children, Owen was raised by his grandparents. Eleven years later, his grandfather died.

It is their childhood experiences that fuel the Tangos' passion for fostering today.

"Being a resource caregiver isn't easy," Owen said. "It takes a lot of patience and perseverance. It's all worth it though, when you see the positive changes. Sometimes it's big things like the children do better in school, but often it's little things, like an apology when I had never heard one before, or a boy sharing about his painful past for the first time, or a teen — who'd always been so tough — crying and telling me I'm the only one who's been there for him. All of that keeps me going."

"It's taught me patience," Merna said, "and has made me appreciate life. These kids have been through so much. I look at my life and think what a gift it all is. I'm so fortunate to have a loving husband, our two biological sons who are doing well, our home that we can share with the children. We've fostered five boys over the past 10 years. I'm so lucky. Parenting these children has been very meaningful."

Abuse or neglect impacts a child's ability to trust others, and regaining that trust doesn't happen overnight. The Tango's advice to potential resource caregivers? Give the children your time and energy, and let them know you're with them every step of the way. Everyday activities like going out to dinner or playing sports may be something the children have never experienced. It's important to give them guidance and encouragement as they learn new skills in an unfamiliar environment.

And don't be afraid to get support from therapists and other resource caregivers. Accept help from family, friends, and others in your community. It's a big job to raise foster children; letting others pitch in can make a real difference. For the Tangos, their religious faith has been their bedrock support. They draw on their faith to give them courage and to keep their hearts open. When at a loss, their faith reminds them of their purpose.

"What surprised me," added Owen, "is that the children have really become part of our family. Before doing this I didn't think a non-biological child could really become that close, that there could be that deep attachment. But there is. I just know, no matter what, I can't give up on these boys. Merna and I are there for them. Loving them has enriched our lives."



*EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing is funded through the Department of Human Services  
 For more information about 'Ohana Connections work  
 contact Wilma Friesema at EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing, Inc. at 748-7921*

**HUI HO'OMALU  
STATEWIDE RESOURCE  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

*The Hui Ho'omalua Statewide Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) provides support to the resource family community through identifying ongoing needs, facilitating communication and by sharing resources.*

The Building Connections Newsletter is published four times a year to provide information regarding foster and adoptive care to resource families, service providers, and to the public.

This newsletter may be viewed on the following websites:

[www.hawaii.gov/dhs/protection/social\\_services/child\\_welfare/foster](http://www.hawaii.gov/dhs/protection/social_services/child_welfare/foster)

[www.pidfoundation.org](http://www.pidfoundation.org)

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If you would like to receive this newsletter, please call:

441-1125 (O'ahu),

888-879-8970 (Toll Free) or

E-mail: [RAC@pidfoundation.org](mailto:RAC@pidfoundation.org)

**GO GREEN!**

Want to help our environment? Contact us today and request an electronic copy!



**★ ★ ★ OUTSTANDING DHS WORKER!**

**Korin Wakuta-Kenney  
Kaua'i CWS Social Worker**



**Korin  
Wakuta-Kenney**

It Takes An 'Ohana's Advisory Committee (IAC) would like to send a big MAHALO to Korin Wakuta-Kenney. Korin, a social worker on the island of Kaua'i, is with the Kaua'i West Child Welfare Services Unit 3. Resource caregivers, foster youth and service providers tell us of the good work that she does. Korin is known for her availability and responsiveness. Resource families feel they can approach her with any number of issues and she will find them the support they need to help the children and youth in their home. Korin is also known for taking foster youth to various activities, engaging them in conversation and helping them plan for their future. Thank you, Korin, for all you do to make Hawai'i a better place for all!

Do you know a DHS-CWS worker(s) that you would like to acknowledge for his/her exceptional work? Share their name(s) with us and what makes them so special so we can let others know how wonderful they are!

441-1125 (O'ahu) ★ 1-888-879-8970 (Toll Free) ★ [RAC@pidfoundation.org](mailto:RAC@pidfoundation.org)

**Important Information To Which You Are Entitled To  
Regarding Your Foster Child**

*By Tracy Yadao, DHS Assistant Program Administrator and  
Judith Wilboite, FPH It Takes an 'Ohana*

Information about your foster child and the case plan is necessary to have so that you can provide the best care for each child in your home. Resource caregivers and relative caregivers are entitled to the following information at the time a child is placed in the home:

**HEALTH/MEDICAL INFORMATION:**

- ❖ Hospital Reports
- ❖ Doctor /EPSDT Reports
- ❖ Developmental screenings
- ❖ Occupational/Physical Therapy
- ❖ Speech Therapy Report

**PSYCHO/SOCIAL INFORMATION:**

- ❖ Psychological evaluation on child
- ❖ Multidisciplinary Team Report
- ❖ Therapy/Counseling Progress Reports

**EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION:**

- ❖ IEP
- ❖ Report Cards
- ❖ School Reports

**SAFE FAMILY HOME REPORT (SFHR)**

If the SFHR is available at the time of placement, it will be in the CIF.

If any of the above information is not available at the time of placement, the child's DHS worker will provide it to you later. If the information is not provided in a reasonable amount of time, you can request it from the child's DHS case worker or from your licensing worker.

In addition to the information provided at the time of initial placement, resource caregivers and relative caregivers

*Continued on pg. 3*



## NEVER GIVE UP

By Judith Wilboite



**Gwen Comer**

Gwen Comer and her late husband, Charles Comer, began fostering in 1970. Since then, hundreds of foster children have come through their door and into their hearts. Most have moved on but several have stayed to become permanent members of the Comer 'Ohana.

The Comers' journey started on O'ahu. Their first foster child was a 13-year old girl who was pregnant. She gave birth to a son and, at age 16, she emancipated and went off on her own. The Comers later adopted the boy who is currently married with two daughters and is a lieutenant in the Green Beret.

In 1982, the Comer 'Ohana moved to Hilo, bringing 13 children with them. Four were in guardianship, 5 were in long term foster care, and 4 were adopted.

Gwen and Charles had a pig farm on both islands. Working with the animals was therapeutic for the boys and girls and it was also fun! As an added bonus, every time a pig was sold, the children got a cut of the profit! This taught them how to budget their money, a very important skill for foster youth who may not receive the support that many other young adults experience.

Gwen also teaches all of the children and youth in her care how to cook, clean and keep organized. On Saturdays, there is a general inspection. As long as they pass the inspection, they are able to go out with their friends to the beach, to the stock car races—whatever their interest is.

One of Gwen's most challenging youth was a teenage girl who loved to party and drink. Once she turned 18, she left. But, Gwen's door is always open to youth and this girl came back. With the right support and encouragement, she went to school and is now a Registered Nurse. Gwen proudly adds that she is also a wonderful mother and wife.

One of Gwen's first foster child, whom she adopted, is now a social worker. This is very meaningful for Gwen, for she indicates that part of her staying power as a resource caregiver can be credited to her social workers. Her current worker, Carlene Greenlee, goes above and beyond the call of duty. Gwen will often call Carlene and say, "Please tell me if I'm doing something wrong or right!" Carlene always takes the time to listen and helps to figure out what can be done to ensure that the children's needs are met. Gwen states, "Sometimes Carlene is so busy at work that she can't get back to me during the day, but she then will call me in the evenings. She is always there." Gwen goes on to say, "We cannot take care of our foster children alone! We may not agree with everything our workers say and do, but when we work as a team, they can really help us! I could not do this without the support of my worker!"

Another factor in Gwen's success is taking advantage of trainings. She indicates that, "The workshops are the greatest things for me because we are so used to our own lifestyle – what our parents did and didn't do. But, there are newer and better ways to do things with children. Now days, there are so many new ways that make life easier for us and helpful for our children. This is especially true because most children in foster care have experienced some sort of trauma." She smiles and adds, "I am 75 and proud of it. You are never too old to learn new tricks!"

Gwen still fosters and currently cares for a 16 year old boy and four girls, ages 17, 10, 7 and 6.

I asked Gwen what is the most important thing for resource caregivers to know. Her answer was immediate. "Never give up! The main thing to remember is that our foster children are looking for someone to love and care for them." Gwen went on to say that things were not always easy, in fact, there was a lot of "crying in the shower." But now, when she sees the adults her foster children have grown into, she knows it was all worthwhile.

### Important Information To Which You Are Entitled To Regarding Your Foster Child (cont.)

are also entitled to the following information throughout the duration of the case:

- ❖ Court order when the court order involves the resource caregiver. An example would be when the court grants the resource caregiver permission to travel outside of the state with the child for vacation. While you will not be able to get the actual court report, you should have access to the SFHR that is updated every 6 months and any other updated information on the child. You can ask the SW for that info.
- ❖ All of the child's medical, educational, and mental health reports. This applies only to information regarding the child. Reports having to do with the child's parents are NOT shared with the resource caregiver.

**Note:** Resource caregivers and relative caregivers are required by law to keep all information about a foster child's case strictly *confidential*.

## Lighting New Torches

By Wilma Friesema



Resource caregivers step into a world most people are reluctant to enter. Nearly all of us feel a pang of sorrow or outrage when we hear of a child being abused, but few of us so fully open our homes – and our hearts – to children who have been mistreated. We may be responsive and supportive in other important ways, but on a daily basis we don't see the very real impact abuse or neglect has on children: the startle responses, the nightmares, the intense acting out behaviors. We don't struggle to emotionally connect with a terrified child who was hurt by someone he or she loves.

For two veteran resource caregivers, Lani Bowman and Allene Uesugi, facing the aftermath of abuse and neglect, while helping to restore safety within families so they can be reunified, has been a highly gratifying experience. Both Lani, who lives on the Big Island, and Allene, who lives on O'ahu, have been fostering children for over 20 years. Though their journeys haven't been smooth or easy, they have few regrets. They have learned, through their lived experience, how to weather the ups and downs of fostering, and what traumatized children really need to heal. Love, understanding, consistency, and patience are at the top of their lists. They have also learned that abuse affects the entire family and that with support, instead of judgment, even the most troubled families can grow and change. They have come to know – not just believe – that diving in and engaging with the children and their families has the power to transform lives, including their own.

Lani and Allene are passionate about what they do, and they share their enthusiasm and wisdom with new potential resource caregivers in Hui Ho'omalua's H.A.N.A.I. training. They are "co-trainers," a title that reflects the H.A.N.A.I. practice of teaching as a team. As co-trainers, they strive to paint a picture of the challenges resource caregivers will face. Yes, children wet their beds and throw temper tantrums. Yes, parents can be angry and hostile. Yes, navigating the child welfare, legal, and mental health systems can be frustrating. Throughout, Lani and Allene want new recruits to understand that while the world they are about to enter isn't for the faint of heart, it is a world that will *expand* their hearts. Even though the new trainees will encounter much pain and heartache, they will also witness redemption and be the recipients of true gratitude. Though their patience and resolve will be tested, their judgments and fears will also be softened. Lani and Allene have learned that it is through acts of giving that many unexpected "gifts" are received in return.

Lani and Allene list co-training as one of those gifts. Lani says teaching helps her hone her skills as a caregiver and keeps her fresh. Every time she teaches, a light bulb goes off and she thinks of some new angle or way of approaching a challenging situation. It also helps her to step back and digest all that she has learned and experienced. Being a co-trainer enables her to appreciate the value of her efforts and the life lessons she has learned along the way. She sees training as "empowering people to care more and be enlightened about what the children and families go through." Even if some recruits do not become resource caregivers, she feels participating in the training is invaluable because it expands everyone's awareness and heightens empathy.

Allene says she loves seeing the enthusiasm of the new caregiver recruits and that it rekindles her fire for the work. The trainees remind her of how exciting it is to take action. All the H.A.N.A.I. participants are not just *thinking* about making a difference, they're actively *doing* something to help. For Allene, being a resource caregiver has been a true adventure. When she shares her stories with the new recruits, it brings back the richness and wonder of her journey with the hundreds of children that have crossed her doorstep. As she so eloquently put it, "The heart remembers the moments when a little love made all the difference."

Both Lani and Allene highly recommend the co-training experience to all active resource caregivers, even those who aren't "veterans." Though, at first, it can feel scary and intimidating to become a trainer, the Hui Ho'omalua staff is available to give support and the curriculum is well established. Several pairs of trainers co-lead within each training series so the responsibility is always shared. Per Lani and Allene, co-training is wonderfully rejuvenating because it is a powerful reminder about why the work of fostering is so crucial and worthwhile.

The time commitment of a co-trainer varies and is flexible depending upon the trainer's availability. Trainings are held on all islands: monthly on O'ahu, Maui, Kaua'i, and the east and west sides of the Big Island; as needed on Moloka'i and Lāna'i. Meetings are typically held on either weeknights or weekends though weekday sessions do occur. The position is on-call, part time, and flexible. Co-trainers are paid staff so there are basic employee requirements to be completed prior to the first teaching session. Currently, Hui Ho'omalua is looking to add co-trainers to their roster to train both General License and Child Specific resource families.

There's an old adage: if you want to learn something well, teach it. Co-training has helped Lani and Allene deepen their understanding about what they do, day in and day out, with the children in their care. With each training they are filled with gratitude for the work that has given so much meaning and purpose to their lives, and excitement for the passion that is igniting within the new recruits. They see their legacy of caring continue on in the new generations of resource caregivers. It is a view which feeds their hope for Hawai'i's vulnerable keiki and their families.

If you are a resource caregiver and interested in becoming a co-trainer, please call:

Hui Ho'omalua 441-1117 or visit their website: [pidf.org](http://pidf.org). Click on the careers page. A job description and application are accessible on the site.

**A. F. T.  
A Fostering Thought**

## NO CHILD LEFT INSIDE

By Dr. Paul Brennan

*This article was originally published in the previous newsletter (Volume 7, Issue 4). Unfortunately, the last two paragraphs were missing so it is being reprinted here in its entirety.*



As a boy growing up in rural Ohio, the outdoors was our playground. Yes, work needed to be done first, so in summer we mowed lawns, in fall we raked leaves, in winter we shoveled snow, and in spring we prepared our gardens. But, we also found delightful, ample moments to connect with ourselves, our imaginations, and those around us. The “Old Mill Stream” flowed through our town, so its banks often pulled us in pursuit of elusive bass, catfish and carp. Here too I spent many hours scanning the soil for evidence that previous cultures had lived there; my flint arrowheads, stone hammers and grinding stones made the Ottawa Indians especially come to life. Closer to home there was baseball and softball, “Kick the Can”, kite flying, and croquet on massive lawns. Two railroad tracks beckoned us into the countryside where skunks and raccoons might be encountered. Likewise, on our bicycles we followed winding, country roads through corn, sugar beet, wheat, and alfalfa fields. We didn’t need much money in our pockets to entertain us, nor did we have television to take us to distant lands. The world was in our grasp and—

poor though we all were—we felt we could claim it.

One connecting memory remains especially indelible. My best friend (aside from my brother), Jim, and I, building on our summer practice of designing tree houses, decided when we were about to enter high school, to construct our masterpiece high in a tree overlooking the river. Hauling our crate material and cardboard by hand over our railroad bridge, we succeeded in building a platform on which we could, we believed, sleep the night away. Mosquitoes, passing trains, and our own storytelling, however, didn’t yield us much sleep, but together it still brings smiles to our faces as we recall our wholesome, innocent youth. Such outdoor connections, more than 60 years ago, provided some of our most important foundation stones for fulfilling lives.

Today’s kids aren’t so fortunate. Technological gadgets of many kinds spill from their hands in the likes of BlackBerrys and iPhones. Seduced by this technology, they have fallen prey to the widespread belief that these devices magically provide significant connections. The opposite is actually true: connections of such superficial (expensive!) kind actually pull us away from a sense of who we are and what really matters. An MIT professor, Sherry Turkle, author of the book, *ALONE TOGETHER: WHY WE EXPECT MORE FROM TECHNOLOGY AND LESS FROM EACH OTHER*, states: “From social networks to sociable robots, we’re designing technologies that will give us the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship.” One film which has illustrated this theme well is the 2013 release *DISCONNECT*. The writer, Andrew Stern, conceived the movie after he had invited friends to dinner, only to find them emailing and texting other people continuously through the meal. Sound familiar?



Over the past few years social scientists especially have been observing this pervasive trend, pointing out future disturbing consequences. The U.S. National Park Service, for example, has noted that though the roads to some national parks have remained clogged, increasingly fewer Americans actually get out from their vehicles to connect with the land and to camp in the parks. Yellowstone National Park is but one example, prompting officials to launch the program, “More Kids in the Woods.” If future sustainability of Hawaii’s fragile natural environment is to take place, then our children and our youth must be encouraged and shown how to once again be connected to the ‘aina. How might this happen?

One effective way is through ongoing restoration programs at sacred Hawaiian sites. Ulupō Heiau on the windward side is one example. Here, under the guidance of ‘Ahahui Mālama I Ka Lōkahi and the Kailua Hawaiian Civic Club, monthly work days invite the public to participate in weeding, planting, and other restoration efforts. I have noticed over the past twenty years how satisfying this can be for families especially when working together. The eighth of March was one recent example, when nearly 200 people (mostly organized by Keiki o Ka ‘Aina), responded to the invitation. Mostly in family groups, children weeded in the lo‘i, mothers and fathers cleared the overgrowth, removing invasive plants, and others prepared for the planting of new kalo. Energy was in abundant supply, the children were safe (and muddy!), and the ‘aina once again was made pono. For a few hours on a Saturday morning, the burdens of normal living were forgotten as we together engaged in the sacred, ancient task of being good stewards. It was good for the land, for each individual, and for all of us together.

John Muir, the environmentalist from a century ago, reminds us that, “Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in where Nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike.” The children most vulnerable among us, the ones most disconnected, would say “Amen!” to that.

# 2014 National Reunification Month Event

On June 20, 2014, the State of Hawai'i held its second annual National Reunification Month Event at the Ronald T. Y. Moon Kapolei Court Complex. National Reunification Month, recognized by the American Bar Association, Center on Children and the Law, and other national organizations, celebrates both the importance of and successful reunification of families involved with child welfare services. Though the national movement recognizes that reunification is achievable through collaboration among the family and the community, Hawai'i's event emphasized a "team effort" approach. The Kim-Seu family, who was involved with the First Circuit Family Drug Court Program and the Hawai'i State Department of Human Services (DHS) but has since successfully reunified, was honored along with the Family Drug Court Program, DHS' Child Welfare Services (CWS) and other community supporters.



"Reconnecting Hearts" was once again the theme for this year's event as it perfectly describes DHS' primary mission of successful reunification and strengthening families through a collaborative approach. Everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch courtesy of Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center and EPIC 'Ohana, Inc. A video of the Kim-Seu family, DHS-CWS and Family Drug Court was shown and a proclamation, signed by Governor Neil Abercrombie, was read. The proclamation recognized June as National Reunification Month, underscored the importance of reunification as the preferred outcome for families involved in family court and child welfare services, and emphasized the "team" approach to effectuate successful reunification. The Kim-Seu family, Family Drug Court, and CWS were each presented with a framed copy of the proclamation.

The coordination of the event itself was a collaboration of various agencies and community organizations, including the DHS, EPIC 'Ohana, Inc., William S. Richardson School of Law, Family Programs Hawai'i, and Partners in Development Foundation-Hui Ho'omalua (PIDF). A Big Mahalo also goes out to the following for their donations: California Pizza Kitchen, Carol Sullivan, Consolidated Theaters, First Circuit Family Court, Glue Committee, Andrew McHowell of Aina Imagery Gallery, Malu Productions, Inc., Pacific Aviation Museum, Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center, Sea Life Park, and Waikiki Aquarium.

It has been a little over a year since Vivian Kim-Seu and her husband Randy graduated from the Family Drug Court Program and, soon after, was able to reunify with Vivian's four daughters. They have since welcomed another addition into their family and continue to be solid parents for their children. Vivian and Randy hope that their experience can help to inspire other families and professionals; that successful reunifications are possible.

The State of Hawai'i DHS plans to continue the collaborations and hold annual National Reunification Month celebrations to honor families who were successfully reunified and their support team members.

## Foster Care Board Payment Increase

We are pleased to share details of the new foster care rate! The new foster care board payment, effective July 1, 2014, is determined by the age of the child as follows:

0-5 years	\$576
6-11 years	\$650
12 years and older	\$676

The increase will be seen in your Foster Board check received in August. As a reminder, the foster board payment is for care provided in the prior month. The increase will be prorated according to the child's birth date.

As reported in our last newsletter, the annual clothing allowance for foster children has also risen. It is now \$600 per child, per year, no matter the age of the foster child. The payment will be made in \$300 increments two times a year. Another change is that the clothing allowance can now be used for diapers.

MAHALO NUI LOA to all who helped bring this much needed support to resource, guardianship and adoptive families as well as to former foster youth involved in either the Imua Kākou or Higher Education Programs.

## Newest Program for Teens and Young Adults

By Melody Rolnick, YES Hawai'i Program Coordinator

*Youth Empowerment & Success (YES Hawai'i) serves youth aged 14-26 that are involved in the child welfare system. The program is designed to engage youth in meaningful and supportive events and activities, prepare youth for adulthood, and build confidence and a feeling of empowerment.*

Family Programs Hawai'i is offering a new opportunity for teens and young adults ages 14-26, who have any involvement in the child welfare system, to prepare for successful adulthood. Launched in January 2014, Youth Empowerment and Success Hawai'i (YES Hawai'i) is a youth driven statewide program that provides activities and support in Wai'anae, Central O'ahu, Honolulu, and East Hawai'i. More than 120 youth and young adults have already participated in events and activities that encourage healthy socialization, outreach and support, peer mentoring and leadership and skill-building. Future activities are being planned on Kaua'i, Maui and West Hawai'i to begin after July 2014.



Previous events included a beach barbeque, Prom Prep (pictured), lo'i and hiking, Summer Skills Workshop, bowling for high school graduates, laser tag, and movies. Upcoming events include a Dream Board Workshop, beach cleanup, Dave and Busters, hiking, career exploration, and pumpkin carving for Halloween. Youth benefit from participating in YES Hawai'i by successfully preparing for adulthood, building life-long peer relationships with other foster youth, feeling a sense of confidence and empowerment, and enhancing their safety net system.

Here's some of the feedback from our youth participants:

"Today brought me so much joy that I haven't felt in a very, very long time."

"Everyone was so enthusiastic and positive. We all enjoyed ourselves and enjoyed each others' company."

"This was the bomb. Loved it!"

"We want to do this every weekend!"

Family Programs Hawai'i is looking forward to working collaboratively with its partners, the Department of Human Services, Epic 'Ohana Inc. and Hale 'Opio, in providing support and outreach to more youth who are involved in the child welfare system.

For more information about Youth Empowerment and Success Hawai'i or to refer a youth, please contact Melody Rolnick at (808) 540-2546 or visit [www.yeshawaii.org](http://www.yeshawaii.org).

## Care to Share

By Family Program Hawai'i's Resource Family Support Services

We are always looking for baby items such as cribs, strollers, unused diapers, wipes, and unopened cans of baby formula. These items are always needed Statewide. If you have these items and would like to donate them please call the Warm Line on where to drop off.

Also, if you live on Kaua'i and know of a resource that would like to donate snack items for children in foster care, please call the toll free Warm Line number. Many of the social workers pay out of pocket to provide snacks for children in foster care when children are in their offices or being transported to court, school and doctor appointments.

Warm Line (O'ahu): 545-1130

Warm Line (Toll Free): at 1-866-545-0882

*This program is funded by the Department of Human Services*

## 'OHANA REWARDS

Want to know how you could receive a  
**\$200.00 gift card?**

Would you like your name to appear in a future RAC newsletter?

**All you need to do is help us find more homes for  
Hawai'i's keiki in foster care!**

If you can refer, help, cheer, and see your referral to the finish line to become licensed, you could earn a **\$200 gift card** of your choice and be listed here as an 'Ohana Rewards recipient!

Sherry Campagna

Call Hui Ho'omalulu today at 441-1117 or  
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RAC reserves the right to accept, reject or edit advertisements, articles and notices of events based on publication schedule, space limitations, and appropriateness.

# Welcome to FPH's Resource Family Support Services Corner

By Lorie Naftel, RFSS Family Resource Specialist

Resource Family Support Services (RFSS) is funded by the Department of Human Services



FAMILY PROGRAMS HAWAII

## Ask the Warm Line



Lorie Naftel

The Warm Line not only answers questions but also serves as a support system for resource caregivers struggling with difficult behaviors. As we embark on a new school year, it's never too late for new and seasoned resource caregivers to learn and add new tools to help them with the task of caring for children in foster care. Here are a few helpful tips for the journey.

**Set time to sit down and talk.** When a child is newly placed in your home (this is for kinship families too) get to know the child by asking questions such as: What do you like to do? What's your favorite food? What is your favorite subject in school? For older youth, you may want to start with an open-ended question such as: Tell me about yourself? You can then segue into specific questions based on your conversation.

**Listen carefully.** Pay attention to what the children are saying and allow them to finish their thoughts before jumping in.

Refrain from making judgments on their history and allow them to tell you their story from their perspective. Remember that you will be their teacher during the time they are in your home. Helping them to establish routines, teaching them basic life skills, motivating and encouraging them with the smallest successes helps to build their self-esteem and keeps them safe.

**Be a role model for the children.** Your role is not just being a caregiver but being a positive role model. Before telling the children your expectations, make sure that what you're asking is in line with what you do as a caregiver. For example, what does it mean if you tell a child/youth that everyone in the household will be respectful towards each other? You could explain it by saying, "When we want something we say please and, when it is given to you, we say thank you" or, "If you are mad at someone in the household we don't call them names but we use words to explain why you are mad at this person." Then make sure to model those positive behaviors in your day to day activities.

**Teach children to use words to communicate.** Help children communicate by giving words to their feelings and actions. Children in care often don't have the tools to communicate their feelings due to past trauma. You can help them by letting them know that it's safe in your home to talk about what they are feeling and give them words and ways on how to manage their feelings and actions.

**Allow them to make mistakes, and help them learn how to overcome them.** Adults are not perfect and neither are children. Children will make mistakes but that's their job. Our job is to help them to learn from, and overcome, their mistakes. For example, if a child does not do her homework then the consequence might be an automatic "F" for failing to turn in her work. Instead of scolding the child for not doing her homework, you might ask her why she didn't do it. Help her to understand the importance of being responsible and doing the assigned work. You might have to sit with her while she does her homework and/or create a space and time for her that's conducive to studying. Let her know that it's okay, and that over time doing homework will become a good habit for the future. Be proactive and check with her teacher(s) for assigned work so she doesn't fall behind. If she is struggling in a specific area, work in partnership with the teacher(s) and ask for suggestions on how you can help.

**Structure.** All children need structure. Deviating from, or not incorporating, structure into their day makes it difficult for children to know what's expected of them. When children come home from school establishing routines -- such as: homework first, then dinner, chores, shower, relaxation and bedtime -- is vital to helping them self-regulate. If, for some reason, you have to deviate from the structure, do your best to let the children know in advance so they can mentally prepare for the change. Try to get back to the normal routine as soon as possible.

**Be the bigger person.** As caregivers we will make mistakes -- and that's okay -- but be the first to admit it and apologize, if need be. Young children learn to say, "I'm sorry" when they do something to another child on the playground, but they may not really understand what they are apologizing for. Your apology can be a teachable moment. For example, you might say, "I'm sorry that I yelled at you last night when you didn't do your chore. I was wrong, and should have reminded you nicely instead. It's important for all of us to take responsibility in the household and you are part of our household." Teaching children to say, "I'm sorry" helps them to have remorse for wrongdoings.

These tips are based on on-line resources and previous trainings. They are not step-by-step instructions, but work in conjunction with each other. Your role as a caregiver is a tough one; because the children have been through so much expect and allow a child to be resistant to change at first. Typically, with consistency and acceptance, the child can find his/her place in your home. If you are aware that the child entering your home has behavioral issues, it is important to work with the child's therapist to develop a plan to address those behaviors. By working with the therapist and the team of service providers, everyone can be on the same page and contribute to the child's experience of consistency and stability.

Support Groups and trainings are available statewide. Both can provide you with valuable information and a network of people who can assist you in guiding the children placed in your home. As they say, "Two heads are better than one" so take the advantage of the trainings and support. And, if you just need someone to bounce around ideas with or need additional resources, please call the Warm Line on O'ahu at 545-1130 or toll free for the neighbor islands at 1-866-545-0882.

## YOUTH RESOURCES

### STATEWIDE:

**Hawai'i Youth Conservation Corps:** (808) 735-1221  
Fantastic statewide opportunities for youth interested in the conservation field.

**Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition:** (808) 545-5683  
E-mail: fosteryouthspeak@gmail.com. Youth led organization that advocates for foster youth.

**Imua Kākou:** 1-844-588-IMUA (4682); www.imua21.org  
NEW program that helps young adults who exit foster care at 18 or older with money, medical coverage, and support.

### Independent Living Program Providers:

*O'ahu*-Hale Kipa, Inc.: (808) 589-1829, ext. 202  
*Big Island*-Salvation Army:(808) 959-5855, ext 14  
*Kaua'i*-Child & Family Service: (808) 245-5914  
*Maui/Moloka'i/Lana'i*-Maui Youth & Services: (808) 579-8414

**'Ohana Connections:** Helps foster youth find & reconnect with family & kinship family members. Referrals made through your social worker or GAL.

**shakatown.com:** Safe place to upload documents, connect to your social workers and more.

### Youth Circles:

*Neighbor Islands:* 1-866-636-1644  
*O'ahu:* (808) 358-2220  
Brings together people *you chose* to help you develop a plan for your future.

**Y.E.S. Hawai'i:** (808) 462-2144  
Youth driven program that provides peer support and outreach services to youth involved in the child welfare system aged 14-26.

### O'AHU:

**eXcel:** (808) 540-2552  
Helps high school seniors in foster care & former foster youth to prepare for college or vocational training.

**Horizons House:** (808) 527-4952  
Provides guidance, housing and independent living skills to males aged 18 - 25.

### O'AHU (cont.):

**'Imi 'Ike:** (808) 955-6100  
FREE tutoring for current & former foster youth up to age 20.

**Journey to Success:** (808) 941-7070  
Mentors for Native Hawaiian current & former foster youth ages 14 to 20.

**Mentoring Connection:** (808) 540-2565  
Provides support to 17 to 21 year old current & former foster youth through mentors.

**Step Up Housing Program:** (808) 754-7643  
Provides access to affordable housing.

**Youth Services Center:** (808) 768-5777  
Provides tutoring, occupational training & more.

### KAUAI:

**First Jobs Academy:** (808) 245-2873 ext. 8205  
Provides jobs to foster youth by matching youth with employers who agree to be "business mentors" to youth trained in Work Readiness Skills.

### O'AHU/BIG ISLAND/MAUI/KAUAI:

**Hawai'i Job Corps:**  
*O'ahu, Kaua'i & Kona:* (808) 536-0695  
*Hilo & Maui:* (808) 579-6505  
Educational/vocational training for youth between 16 & 24 years old. Housing also available.

**Hawai'i Youth Opportunities Initiative:** (808) 748-7052  
E-mail: dulima@epicohana.org  
Provides Financial Literacy Training, bank accounts and matched asset purchases for foster youth ages 14-24.

### O'AHU/WEST HAWAII:

**Project Visitation:** (808) 540-2544  
Reunites brothers and sisters separated by the foster care system through visits.

### EAST HAWAII:

**Ho'ololi Mua No Ke Ola Senior Program:** (808) 935-2876  
Helps high school seniors in foster care prepare for & successfully complete post-secondary education or vocational training.



Information is subject to change. Call Y.E.S. Hawai'i at (808) 540-2546 or visit [www.ittakesanohana.org](http://www.ittakesanohana.org) for current information

## Help! Looking For Stories!

Would you like to share some helpful tips? Got an inspirational story to tell? Know of some useful resources in your community?

These are just some of the many possibilities that you can contribute to this newsletter. Please send them over so we can all benefit from each other's wisdom!

We would also appreciate any feedback, comments and suggestions on ways that we can improve this newsletter so that it is useful to you. What would you like to see in it? Topics of interest?

We look forward to hearing from you!



# Bake Sale Fundraiser

On June 24, 2014, the Glue Committee had another successful Bake Sale fundraiser that included a Silent Auction and White Elephant Sale! We were very fortunate to partner with and receive an abundance of help from our Dole Cannery neighbor, Hawai'i Information Service (HIS). With 100% staff participation, HIS handled the Silent Auction and White Elephant Sale, solicited donations and provided an array of delicious baked goods! All of the money raised goes towards supporting state-wide events for Hawai'i's resource families and youth in foster care.

The day was filled with so many delectable goodies! There was an array of tantalizing homemade treats such as cookies, brownies, cupcakes, and caramel covered popcorn with macadamia nuts, all of which drew in the crowds. At the White Elephant Sale, you could find amazing deals and treasures and the Silent Auction had wonderful things to bid on, such as: a Toshiba TV, an ukulele autographed by Jake Shimabukuro, a print and hardcover book autographed to the lucky winner by local professional photographer, Andrew McHowell, and many, many more awesome items. The success of this event wouldn't have been possible without the help, support and donations of many individuals, organizations, and companies!

A BIG MAHALO to the following donors for their generous contributions:

# Mahalo!

**Andrew McHowell of Aina Imagery**  
**Catholic Charities Hawai'i**  
**Child and Family Service**  
**Colleen Yasuhara**  
**Department of Human Services**  
**Diana Haraguchi**  
**EPIC 'Ohana Inc.**  
**Family Programs Hawai'i**  
**FCTC Committee**  
**Glue Committee**  
**HAPA Committee**  
**Hawai'i Information Service**

**Jake Shimabukuro**  
**Jewelry by Carol Morimoto**  
**Jill Matsui**  
**Leonard's Bakery**  
**Malia Militante**  
**Michelle Geronimo**  
**Partners in Development Foundation**  
**Tanya Escritor-Yamada**  
**Toshiba Business Solutions**  
**Ukulele Hale**  
**Whole Foods**  
**Zippy's**



HIS Gang

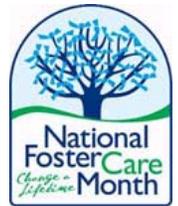
Back Row: Mark Yasuhara  
L-R: Diana Haraguchi, Raun Ohama, Sue Ann Militante, Leslie Rosa, Colleen Yasuhara, Ryan Ozawa, Katie Ozawa, Novena Saludares, Jocelyn Yanos, Gay Rapisora  
Front Row: Michelle Geronimo



## 2014 NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH EVENTS



May was National Foster Care Month. Wonderful events took place statewide, all with the same goal, to honor and thank the compassionate people who make a difference in the lives of Hawai'i's children and families.



### ★ O'AHU ★

#### **PACT Keiki Day**

Every year, Parents and Children Together (PACT) looks for volunteers to help them sell a special edition of The Honolulu Star Advertiser's *Parents and Children Together Keiki Day* newspaper to raise funds for their programs. On May 7, 2014, the Foster Care Training Committee (FCTC) assisted in this community endeavor. This committee, made up of representatives from the Department of Human Services, Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center, EPIC Foundation, Family Programs Hawai'i, Catholic Charities Hawai'i and Partners in Development Foundation, gathered in the early morning and enthusiastically sold papers in support of PACT. There was much support from patrons who bought papers, provided additional donations, tooted their horns and gave thanks for the services provided to children and families. It didn't take long before we were out of newspapers! It was a fun day for a worthy cause.



Continued on pg. 11

## National Foster Care Month (cont.)

### ★ O‘AHU ★

#### Resource Families Celebrated on Secret Island

Does the name “Secret Island” bring to mind pictures of an island surrounded by stormy, dark clouds? That is exactly how our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Resource Family Appreciation Day began on May 24<sup>th</sup>. Thankfully, the sky cleared and a beautiful day emerged so that our families were able to enjoy outrigger canoe paddling, volleyball, kayaking, swimming, stand up paddle boarding, snorkeling and glass bottom boat rides.



Resource Family Appreciation Day is an opportunity to show our appreciation for the love and commitment that Hawaii’s resource families give to our foster children and youth. We are happy to report that the 350 family members who braved the stormy sky and rain to make the trip to the island were rewarded with a break in the weather as well as a goody bag, bento lunch and lots of fun in the sun.



The Foster Care Training Committee, who planned this event, would like to thank our community partners for helping make this great event possible. Big contributors this year were the Wells Fargo Mortgage of Hawaii’i, GEICO, the Glue Committee and Queen Lili’uokalani Children’s Center.

### ★ EAST HAWAI‘I ★

#### East Hawai‘i Celebrates National Foster Care Month

The East Hawai‘i Friends of Foster Families was excited to have the opportunity to recognize the selfless work of our resource caregivers. An appreciation dinner was held at Nani Mau Gardens Restaurant on Saturday, May 3, 2014 from 5-8pm. Dinner was a buffet with a special “pop in” presentation from our County of Hawai‘i Mayor, Billy Kenoi, who read the proclamation for May being National foster Care Month in East Hawai‘i. Senator Gil Kahele also attended the event and read a second proclamation for National Foster Care Month from the Senators. All resource caregivers who attended also received a specially designed, locally printed t-shirt that read “I love Big Island Children” as well as favors donated from Big Island Delight. Entertainment was provided free of charge by Friday Night Band II. Door prizes, as always, added an element of excitement to the dinner. Grand prizes were two 3 month memberships to Penn Fitness valued at \$200, a crab dinner for two at Mauna Lani hotel valued at \$115, and a dinner for two at Red Water Cafe valued at \$150. The garden provided a nice setting for individual pictures and a photographer was present to take pictures to give to the resource caregivers.

### ★ WEST HAWAI‘I ★

#### Healthy from Head to Toe Event and Sign Waving

On Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, the Healthy from Head 2 Toe event at Lanihau Shopping Center kicked off NCFM. A reporter and photographer from West Hawai‘i Today were there and an article of the event was on the front page of the Saturday newspaper. There were resources for families, popcorn, giveaways, games, and kid friendly activities (making sock puppets and making bookmarks). About 80 families participated in this event.



A fun sign waving event on May 17<sup>th</sup> occurred in Kona Town to bring a greater awareness to foster care and NCFM!

### ★ MAUI ★

#### Sign Waving

Many of Maui’s great horn-honkers returned again to “voice” their support for the wonderful Foster Care Community of Resource Caregivers at our 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Sign-waving event in downtown Kahului. We had wavers from CCH, DHS, PIDF, MYFS, & MYSS! It’s always a joy to hear the audible support for the Fostering Community from the many who drive by -- It really does take a village!



*Continued on pg. 12*

## National Foster Care Month (cont.)

### ★ MAUI ★

#### Whole Foods Display

Maui also collaborated with Whole Foods again this year to have a vibrant table full of information available for those searching for something a little more than the great produce and deli sections in the store. National Foster Care Month was billed on the store's sidewalk calendar with many other great events for the month. Mahalo to Whole Foods!



#### Talk Radio

This year also brought about a new avenue to reach out and show our support to those who foster as well as encourage others to consider the journey: Talk Radio. Hui Ho'omalulu was invited to share information via a talk radio venue with the Maui Non-Profit Notes hour on KAOI 96.7 FM/1110 AM. Mahalo to Maui Non-Profit Director's Association!

### ★ KAUA'I ★

#### Sign Waving

What better way to kick off the first day in May than sign waving for National Foster Care Month! Erica Owan, a sophomore at Kaua'i High School, helped organize the sign waving event. Resource caregivers, Department of Human Service staff, and Hui Ho'omalulu staff joined together to promote awareness for the need of more resource families by waving signs in their community on the island of Kaua'i. Their cheerful homemade signs had such sayings as, "Hug Your Keiki, Foster Care Month, and Love Your Keiki."



Kaua'i County Council, JoAnn Yukimura, who is also a resource caregiver, provided much support and thanked Erica and all those who helped organize the event. Yukimura stated, "Mahalo to all of you who recruit and support resource families. Mahalo to the awesome resource families!"

With comments such as, "Good to be able to be of help...call me again next time" (Adult Protective & Community Service, Jefferson Venzon), "Had a nice time yesterday sign waving!" (Kaua'i CWS Sector Administrator, 'Iwalani

Ka'auwai-Herrod), and "Count us in again for next year" (Na Lei Wili, Fran Becker), we are sure to continue spreading Foster Care awareness through signs and cheers.

### ★ LĀNA'I ★

#### Resource Family Luncheon

This year, to celebrate National Foster Care Month, several members of the community joined together to hold a special luncheon to honor the families of Lāna'i who are fostering great care for children and youth in foster care. The Department of Human Services, Parents and Children Together, Partners in Development Foundation, Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center, and several other community supporters collaborated to present a new laundry basket full of goodies for each family (gift cards, toiletries, household goods, fun foods, etc.). The families truly enjoyed the well-deserved attention and accolades, as well as the ono food for lunch!



# Calendar of Events

## O'AHU

- Aug 8 (Fri)** **Windward Resource Families Support Group.** 6pm-8:30pm. Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center, Ko'olau Poko Unit. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531, ext. 245 by 8/1.
- Aug 22 (Fri)** **Central O'ahu Resource Families Support Group.** 5:30-8pm. 'Aiea United Methodist Church. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531, ext. 245 by 8/15.
- Sept 9 (Fri)** **Wai'anae Resource Families Support Group.** 5:30pm-8pm. 'Ohana Ola O Kahumana. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 ext. 245 by 9/12.

## MAUI COUNTY

- Aug 21 (Thur)** **Maui Resource Families Support Group.** 5:30pm-8pm at Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center. RSVP to the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882 (toll free) by 8/7.

## EAST HAWAI'I

- Sept 13 (Sat)** **Hilo Resource Families Support Group.** 12pm-2:30pm Haili Congregational Church, Hilo. RSVP to Michele Carvalho at 987-5988 by 8/31.

*\*\*Please check [www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org](http://www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org) for any additional or updated events.*

Funding for FPH support groups, trainings, and annual conferences is provided by the Department of Human Services

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!!

How long have you been a resource caregiver? We would like to honor you by printing your name and current years of service in our newsletter. We know you are out there but we need your help. Please send your name and years of service to:

RAC@pidfoundation.org ★ (O'ahu) 441-1125 ★ (Toll Free) 1-888-879-8970

*Mahalo for your dedication and heart for Hawai'i's keiki and families!*

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

*Child Care Providers needed in East Hawai'i, West Hawai'i and Maui to provide child care (i.e., during trainings), in the evenings and week-ends on an occasional basis. Training and compensation provided.*

### HUI HO'OMALU

*A Program of Partners in Development Foundation*

See [www.pidfoundation.org/about/careers](http://www.pidfoundation.org/about/careers)

Email resume & application w/cover letter to:

HR@pidfoundation.org

or fax to 440-6619



**PATCH**

Supporting Hawaii's Child Care Needs

*PATCH publishes a quarterly newsletter -- Training Tracks, to inform the community of our upcoming trainings around town, and provide the latest child care news and information to professionals and the public. PATCH offers over 100 FREE child care workshops open to all caregivers such as family child care, preschool and infant and toddler staff, before and after school care programs, parents, resource caregivers, medical professionals, babysitters and informal child care. Please visit our website for the latest news and training schedule:*

[www.PatchHawaii.org](http://www.PatchHawaii.org) or contact your local PATCH office

O'ahu: 808-839-1988

Maui: 808-242-9232

Lāna'i & Moloka'i: 1-800-498-4145

Kaua'i: 808-246-0622

Hilo: 808-961-3169

Kona: 808-322-3500



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Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817-2433

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## Statewide Resource Advisory Committee

2040 Bachelot St.  
Honolulu, HI 96817-2433

441-1125 (O'ahu)  
888-879-8970 (Toll Free)

Fax: 441-1122

E-mail:

RAC@pidfoundation.org

*The concept for the Statewide Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) was created by the Department of Human Services (DHS) as a means to support the resource family community. Hui Ho'omalua facilitates this committee comprised of adoptive parents, resource caregivers and various community agencies, all dedicated to providing services and support to Hawai'i's keiki and the resource families who care for them. The purpose of the RAC is to identify ongoing needs, facilitate communication, share resources, provide information through a statewide calendar of events and a quarterly newsletter and report on local projects and other topics of interest to benefit Hawai'i's resource families.*

*This committee, the newsletter and many of the represented agencies are supported and funded by Department of Human Services contracts.*

RAC Committee Members:

*Catholic Charities Hawai'i—Hui Ho'omalua*

*Department of Human Services*

*EPIC, Inc. 'Ohana Conferencing*

*Family Court*

*Family Programs Hawai'i—Hui Ho'omalua & It Takes An 'Ohana*

*Resource Caregivers*

*Adoptive Parents*

*Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition*

*Partners in Development Foundation—Hui Ho'omalua*