



STATE OF HAWAII

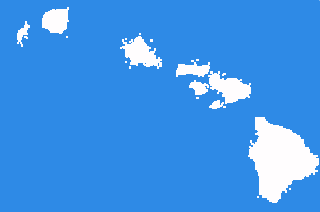
OF INTEREST:

- * Retirement
- * New Hires
- * Giving and Receiving Recognition
- * DHS Incentive Awards

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Across DHS: Island to Island



SPRING 2013

From the Director

Patricia McManaman

Great News! Most of the 26 DHS Administrative Bills have passed out of their subject committees to WAM and FIN. These include bills proposing the elimination of the asset limit eligibility requirement for TANF families, and the voluntary extension of foster care to age 21 for youth who are pursuing higher education, trade school, employment training, or who are gainfully employed. There's also an emergency contraception bill for sexual assault victims. A special thanks to Lisa Nakao/SSD for assisting the DHS Legislative Coordinator, Susan Yamamoto, track bills and coordinate Division testimonies.

As we continue to rebuild the Department workforce, the BESSD/SNAP program is achieving timeliness rates of 96% for application processing. This is a vast improvement over the same time period last year. The SSD/Child Welfare Services has hired a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Questioning (LGBTQ) Coordinator to address the unique needs of this growing population within Hawai'i's youth and foster youth communities. The DHS also hired a Limited English Proficiency Project Manager and team to ensure the Department's vital documents are written and translated at a grade level that clients who speak limited English will comprehend.

Other DHS initiatives this year include, formatting documents on the DHS website so they are accessible to the sight-impaired population, e-imaging documents, building the new KOLEA system to prepare Hawaii for the January 1, 2014 launch of the Affordable Care Act, and upgrading the MQD website.

Thanks to everyone who worked with our Communications Office to update program materials, and to breath new life into the DHS website. Please, let us know if you like the new look of this valuable Department resource.

As always, thank you for your on-going commitment to the DHS. Your jobs are not easy, but they are so very important to improving the quality of life for Hawai'i's residents.

Celebrating Hawaii Social Workers



Back row (l to r) Zelda Viernes (DDIR Secretary); Kamaile Brown (DIR Secretary); Barbara Yamashita (DDIR); Patricia McManaman (DIR); and front row (l to r) Jay Goss (Deputy Attorney General); and Cynthia Goss (CWS Assistant Administrator). See story on page 3.



Administrator Joe Cordova retired in April 2013.

Aloha Joe — Retirement from DHS

An increasing number of people with disabilities are contributing members of society. Many of those individuals will tell you, they owe their success to vocational rehabilitation (VR) services that were specifically tailored to help them obtain and retain employment.

“The economic benefits of VR are significant,” explains Joe Cordova, Administrator of the DHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). “Our data show that clients who graduate from DVR programs experience increased earnings and purchasing power, pay more taxes, and decrease their dependency on public assistance.” The average annual earnings per individual before receiving VR services were \$5,548.40. After receiving VR services the average annual earnings per rehabilitated individual increased over 300% to \$18,555.16.

Joe is the first person with a disability to lead the Hawaii Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. “Wow, that’s a powerful statement” says Lea Grupen, Administrator of Ho’opono Services for the Blind since 2002. “When Joe arrived to the DVR, staff and clients looked at him and said, if he can . . . I guess I can.”

Joe was born legally blind in rural New Mexico to a poor farming family that spoke only Spanish. Joe attended a residential boarding school for the blind 300 miles from home, which he says exposed him to a whole new world. “I saw that other blind kids came from good families, so I knew there was a chance for me.” Joe excelled in athletics. “Track and wrestling were good sports for the visually impaired. In my senior year of high school I was the runner up wrestling State Champion for all schools, not just blind students. Sports made me competitive.”

Joe’s academic turning point came after a blind VR counselor from the local rehabilitation office visited the residential school for the blind. He told the students they can accomplish more than society expects from them.

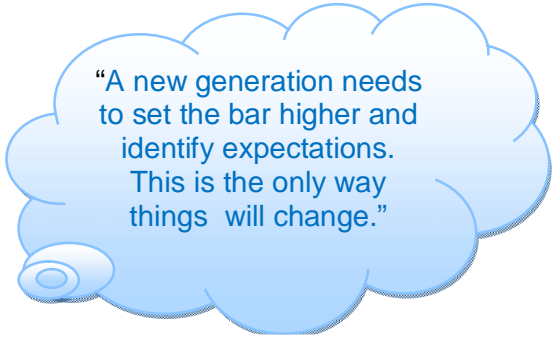
Joe has carried that life-changing message through his career. Today, the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) recognizes the Hawaii DVR Transition Age Youth (TAY) summer program as a national emerging practice. “These kids need encouragement to exceed the limited expectations of their abilities,” explains Joe. “Society conditions them to be dependent on government services and to achieve low. A new generation needs to set the bar higher and identify expectations. This is the only way things will change.”

After receiving a BA in data processing and an MA in guidance and counseling from the University of Mexico, Joe worked for the State of New Mexico and the federal government. Prior to arriving in Hawaii, Joe was working in Chicago as the Regional Commissioner for the US Department of Education. He had federal oversight over policy and compliance for 10 different states.

Joe’s leadership style “is quiet and efficient”, says Lea Grupen. “He is calm, reassuring, and optimistic. He helped us see that what we do is valuable. He strengthened our belief in the (VR) program, and served as a role model for consumers. Joe helped us see the results that our daily work can achieve.”

When Joe began his job at the then-Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind (VRSB) in 2006, the program served an estimated 8,000 people annually. “Anyone could walk in,” explains Joe, “but, given our funding level and our shortage of qualified personnel, the Division could not continue serving clients at that level.” In 2008, the Division implemented an ‘order of selection’ that placed clients on a waitlist for services.

Today, VR programs supported by the DVR are 80% federally funded (\$12M) and 20% State funded (\$4M). All other programs, including independent living and the program for older blind people, are funded through separate grants. Currently, the DVR supports a maximum of 5,000 clients statewide and still operates under the 2008 order of selection. However, last spring the DVR opened up services for the Most Severely Dis-



“A new generation needs to set the bar higher and identify expectations. This is the only way things will change.”

Welcome to the DHS!



Jeremy White - LGBTQ Coordinator for Child Welfare Services
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Helena Manzano - Limited English Proficiency Project Manager for Director's Office
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Of Special Note

- ◆ The Senate Health Committee has recommended approval of Leslie Tawata (MQD Deputy Administrator) to the Council on Developmental Disabilities.
- ◆ The Senate Judiciary and Labor Committee has recommended approval of former State Representative Marilyn Lee and Judy Kern (DOH Education and Training Coordinator, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Branch) to the Commission on the Status of Women.
- ◆ Selina Unga of Laie is a contestant in the 2013 Mrs. Hawai'i contest. A licensed resource caregiver, her platform is foster care and foster children.

Congratulations to Everyone, and many thanks for your continued dedication to Hawai'i's people!

(Cordova—Continued from page 2)

bled category. The Division hopes that later this year it will be able to open the Significantly Disabled category, but it all depends on available funding and staff.

"Recruiting qualified staff is a challenge because of the limited local resource pool, and Hawaii's physical distance from universities and disability centers," DHS Director Pat McManaman explains. "It's a critical shortage, especially on the neighbor islands. We are confident that successful DVR programs will continue to inspire strong state and federal funding, and that we will be able to offer competitive salaries for DVR staff. The DHS appreciates Joe's can-do attitude, and that he increased visibility and self-confidence of people with disabilities."

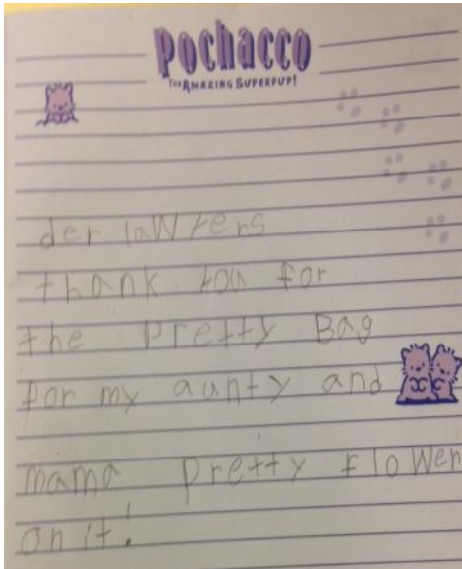
Joe says his personal and professional missions are, and have been, to increase the average working wage for people with disabilities, compared to the general population. "I attempted to raise the expectation of employers and the community. People with disabilities can compete with their peers and earn higher paying jobs. They can start in minimum wage jobs, but there is lots of room to grow," he says. "When I first arrived to Hawaii, I felt like the only blind person in town. Today, there are lot's more blind people out catching the bus, going to public events, and working good paying jobs."

"Joe also demonstrated the importance of building partnerships with consumers," says Ho'opono's Lea Grupen. "He would tell us, rehab is not being done to them; It's being done with them. He gave us hope and the tools to decrease tensions."

Joe retired from the DHS on April 1, 2013. "I loved the job because it provides direct services with immediate feedback and interaction with consumer," says Joe "and you are in closer touch with the very consumer you serve. But, I am now at the age where I want to spend more time with family in New Mexico. My wife and I will keep a condo in Waikiki and visit Hawaii in the winter."

Susan Foard is the Acting DVR Administrator until the position is filled. She says, "Joe leaves a legacy of footprints. Each footprint has a different meaning for each person he met. For me, his footprint means every day is a new opportunity for optimistic thoughts to become a reality."

"I'm so sad Joe is leaving," says Lea Grupen. "He led DVR through a tough time. He was our boss and our leader. He increased the number of staff with disabilities. He made it real. Joe gave us a chance to walk the talk. That's one of the main things I will miss the most. He strengthened the staff and it was reflected in the work environment." **Joe, your DHS colleagues wish the very best!**



2013 Mother's Day Project

The Hawaii Women's Legal Foundation and the Hawaii Women Lawyers sponsor this project.

This year, statewide volunteers will help CWS children deliver 1,150 Mother's Day gift bags to their resource mothers.

Since 2004, volunteers have packaged and delivered more than 19,000 gift bags from children throughout Hawaii.

May 2013 is Foster Youth Awareness Month.



National Association of Social Workers

DHS Director, Patricia McManaman, received the Friend of Social Work Award in recognition of the valuable and sincere support she provides Department social workers throughout the State.

The three other Social Worker awards went to :

Charlie Nakoa – Lifetime Achievement
 Barbara Fujimoto – Practitioner of the Year
 Adriana Ramelli – Social Justice

*"I accept this award with the understanding that it really belongs to the DHS social workers. You make me and the Department look good."
 ~ Patricia McManaman*



Green Champion Senate Proclamation

Senator Mike Gabbard recognized the Super Green Champions and the winner of the Capital 10 Energy Challenge during a Senate Floor Presentation on February 15th. The Super Green Champions pictured (L to R) are Jimmy Kurata (DAGS), Will Tungol (DHS), Senator Gabbard, Brandon Mat-suoka (standing in for Paulette Abe of House Sgt. of Arms), and Jon Chin (DBEDT). Not pictured Roxanne Moore (Department of Taxation).

Hawaii Public Housing Authority Extinguishes Smoking in All Units

Tenants living in properties managed by the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) will be protected from the dangers of second-hand smoke thanks to the HPHA's new "No Smoking" policy, effective January 31, 2013.

"Everyone benefits from a smoke-free living environment. The No Smoking policy is being implemented to protect the health and safety of our keiki, residents, staff and guests," says Hakim Ouansafi, Executive Director of the HPHA. "Not only is this an important health measure, it also saves the HPHA - and therefore taxpayers - money on cleaning and refurbishing apartment units when a smoker moves out."

It is undisputed that second-hand smoke contains the chemicals arsenic, lead, polonium-210, formaldehyde, and benzene, which are toxic and cause cancer, and can aggravate COPD, asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, and kidney disease. Doctors say there is no known safe level of exposure. Second-hand smoke can travel through doorways, windows, wall joints, plumbing spaces and even light fixtures, so second-hand smoke from one unit can adversely affect the health of residents in other units.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) heard this message and responded with two separate memos strongly encouraging all HUD-funded and subsidized properties nationwide to pass smoke-free policies.

Although many HPHA residents might need time to adjust, the HPHA has received numerous letters and emails in support of its new No Smoking policy. One tenant wrote, "As a 71 year-old non-smoker, and having allergic asthma and bronchitis, I thank you for the no smoking policy that will provide relief to tenants and visitors alike."

The policy does not prevent individuals who smoke from living in HPHA-managed properties. It does, however, prohibit anyone from smoking inside a unit or common area such as a community laundry room, lobby, or stairwell. Currently, all properties are in the process of scheduling community meetings to establish designated smoking areas. Those areas must be outside, and at least 20 feet from building entrances and windows.

The HPHA has partnered with the Department of Health and the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawaii to promote the federal no smoking policy.

WANT TO QUIT SMOKING? Call the Hawaii Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) or visit www.clearthesmoke.org for free patches and coaching. Other options include contacting your nearest community health center or cessation service provider for nicotine replacement therapy (e.g. patches, gum, lozenges) and to connect with a quit coach.

DHS and The Affordable Care Act

The Med-QUEST Division and its contractor KPMG, LLP are currently building the Kauwale On-Line Eligibility Assistance (KOLEA) system. The integrated eligibility solution is multi-year initiative that will eventually replace the Hawaii Automated Welfare Information System (HAWI). Med-QUEST will launch the first phase of KOLEA on October 31, 2013 in time to meet the requirements for the Affordable Care Act. Monthly progress updates are posted on the DHS website <http://humanservices.hawaii.gov/aca>.



Aileen Hiramatsu of MQD introduces Craig Grivette of KPMG, LLC. The contractor is helping to build KOLEA system, which will eventually replace HAWI.

Pride in Public Service

Did you know that housekeepers who clean the restrooms at the Clifford Center throw away unused rolls of toilet paper at the end of the day? When Suzy Mahelona (SSD) found out, she started collecting the partially used rolls and donating them to Waikiki Caravan programs that support the homeless.

May is Collection Month. Suzy will be asking all DHS staff for donations of toiletries, including soap, shaving cream, razors, and shampoos.

Join the Campaign for Pride in Public Service.





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Dedicated to Improving People's Lives

Have a story idea to submit for the DHS summer newsletter?

Contact your DHS Communications Specialist, Kayla Rosenfeld

586-4892 or krosenfeld@dhs.hawaii.gov

ATTENTION: ALL DHS EMPLOYEES

Want to acknowledge your colleagues and staff for their hard work and accomplishments?

Nominate them for a 2013 DHS Incentive Award!

- ◆ Sustained Superior Performance Award
 - ◆ Manager of the Year Award
 - ◆ TEAM of the Year Award

Go to the Q:PERS/ERS/Awards folder for information and nomination forms, or call 586-4982.

Deadline to submit nominations: May 3, 2013

Don't miss this opportunity to recognize your outstanding employees!