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FOUNDATION**

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

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# Building Connections

A Newsletter for Resource Families



**Volume 5, Issue 4**

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## A.F.T. (A Fostering Thought)

### Tools for Tomorrow

*By Dr. Paul Brennan*

The tools in my workshop would make more sense to my grandfather than to my grandchildren. The latter are fascinated by them, but my grandfather could make his living by using them. From augurs to awls, from block planes to draw knives, he could make beautiful furniture, whereas my grandchildren would need to be supervised lest they cut themselves or damage the tools.

By contrast, my grandchildren know the difference between an iPod and an iPad, to say nothing of sending email messages and using the word processor. My grandfather, who milked cows and plowed neat rows for planting, would find such modern technology downright baffling and probably unnecessary. Wow, how "workshops" change in the passage of such a short time!

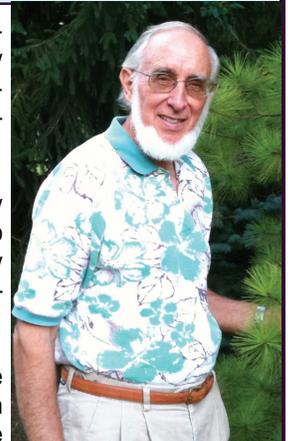
Not only do our youth need proper tools appropriate to their vocational fields, but these days they could benefit tremendously from possessing proper attitudes about work in general. It was important generations ago to hold in your hands the right tools for the given task—and so it is today—but to have the right mindset for undertaking and accomplishing your task was every bit as important. Today's tight job market and discouraging economic conditions suggest that a healthy attitude for our youth transitioning into job-entry employment is absolutely critical. Let me explain.

One of the greatest "tools" I now recognize as I reflect on my own employment history was that of motivation. Although I was only seven years old when World War II was finally finishing, I became quickly aware that my efforts were important to my family. My wise mother saw to that. Taking me aside, she explained that she, a single parent, could use my help in paying for some basics for us three children--namely, the purchase of our underwear. It worked. I got a job as a news paperboy (although I had no bicycle), and every morning faithfully delivered to our neighbors, with most of my earnings going towards our clothing fund. I felt honored, complemented beyond my years—an ally with my mother to help keep us clothed in the cold winters of Ohio. Six years later when my mother was purchasing our first house, my brother and I could contribute \$1,000 to our down payment from our paper route and grass mowing profits. Motivation is a powerful tool when important goals are recognized.



Another tool is flexibility. Just because one may be trained to be a mechanic or a teacher, doesn't mean, of course, that their skills apply to only those vocations. Today's job market calls for well-rounded youth who constantly are learning, adapting, finding niches that need filling. The successful job earners are often filled by people who have taken their previous experience and knowledge, and transferred it to positions they previously might have thought they were "untrained" for. Often a background as a volunteer is the avenue of entry into a different field professionally. As resource caregivers, my wife and I have tried to expose our youth to personal friends whose careers might have appealed to them, as they visualize potential careers.

Inventiveness is a third quality in great demand in today's marketplace. Schools may encourage such a mindset, but often the home background is where the experimentation more often occurs. Parents, of course, need to weigh the practical limits of what they can provide. Our twelve year old grandson, Milan, recently asked with all seriousness, "What if there won't be any job for me when I graduate?" He was aware that many applicants these days were applying for openings in the job market. The likelihood is great that youth like Milan may have to be the creators of positions not only for themselves for others as well. The example of the late Steve Jobs, a foster youth some fifty years ago, is a sterling example of one who employed his creative mind with great usefulness, not only in the field of computer technology, but in related industries as well. What an inspiration to the whole world, especially to our special families!



**Dr. Paul Brennan**

**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)

Partners in Development Foundation  
2040 Bachelot St.  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817-2433

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!**



# IMPORTANT INFORMATION THAT AFFECTS LICENSURE!

**Due to a Federal mandate, all States must establish a requirement of ongoing training hours for the continued licensure of Resource Families. The Training Requirement must be established by September 30, 2012. It is critical that we inform you of these changes as it will affect your license.**

**We are looking at other states, other local agencies, etc. as to their licensing requirements. We are seeking suggestions and input, in various ways, from Resource Caregivers through:** 1) the Annual Survey that was mailed out in June; 2) upcoming trainings in August, coordinated by Family Programs Hawai'i and DHS; 3) the Resource Advisory Committee and ITAO Advisory Committee; and 4) a workgroup of resource caregivers, providers, and DHS staff. **We look forward to your suggestions and feedback through the various opportunities. We will continue to communicate with you as we move forth together.**



## A Senior Legacy Project

*By Michele Carvalho*

For her Senior Legacy Project, Chantel Pohina, a senior at Kamehameha Schools Kea'au Campus chose to collaborate with Partners in Development Foundation, Hui Ho'omalua in East Hawai'i with the PIDF's E. Hawai'i General License Community Liaison, Michele Carvalho. The Senior Project introduces a process for lifetime learning and is based on the premise that learning is ongoing and does not end with formal education. As young adults about to forge into the "real world", seniors learn that adults research, read, write and collaborate with others in an effort to solve problems, expand opportunities, and to satisfy their curiosity, among other reasons.

The collaboration and focus that Chantel selected was to raise awareness of the need for more Resource Caregivers. Chantel stated that the reason why she wanted to focus on foster care was mainly because she loves working with and helping children. "I wanted to do something that would hopefully benefit them," Chantel said. "Becoming a Resource Caregiver is not as publicized and known as it should be so I wanted to try to raise/promote awareness. There are more children in the community that need our help than I realized. Children are our future...it's important for us to guide and support them. Every child needs love and Everyone deserves a family. My goal is to reach out to the people so they can reach out to them".



**Chantel Pohina**

### MAHALO TO...

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)

### 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!

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

## 'OHANA CONNECTIONS CORNER

Dear Reader,

If you work with or parent teenagers, this probably isn't a news flash: Teenage Brains are Different from Adult Brains. We see that difference in the impulses that drive them, the risks they take, and the choices they make. We scratch our heads when a teen acts mature and focused one moment, then scattered and self-destructive the next. Just when a goal is in reach, he may skip school, flunk a class, or get into a fight. Why, we wonder, is it so hard for teens to just listen and stay out of trouble?

In this 'Ohana Connections Corner and the next, I will be writing about the teenage brain. In this installment, I'll be sharing information about the development of the teenage brain under optimal circumstances – when a child has a secure home life, stimulating environment, and is free from excessive stress. In the second installment, I will talk about the impact that trauma has on teenage brain development. Coupled with their ordinary developmental tasks, a history of trauma can result in the brain developing in ways that are protective, but which may not contribute to a happy, healthy life.

I hope you find these articles informative and helpful. Understanding your teen's brain development isn't meant to excuse his or her behavior. Instead, understanding the growth and development of this vital organ may unravel that timeless mystery of why teens act the way they do. Having that bigger picture may help keep things in perspective, especially on those days when trying behaviors cloud our memory of why we love teens so much and believe so strongly in their future.

–Wilma Friesema, OES  
EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing, Inc.



### The Teenage Brain

By Wilma Friesema, OES

Adolescence is the wind up before the big pitch, developmentally speaking. Mentally, emotionally, and physiologically it's preparation for the launch into adulthood and independence. Hormones are raging. Questions of: *Who am I? Who will I become? How do I fit in?* are preoccupying. On top of that, the brain itself is undergoing an important, though often challenging, growth spurt.

What is going on inside the brain during this phase? With the help of magnetic resonance imaging, or MRI machines, answers to that question are beginning to emerge. Scientists are finding that between the ages of 12 and 25 there's a *lot* going on, and what they're finding can help explain how teens and young adults think.



When we launch something – say a baseball -- energy is propelled forward. In the teenager, scientists have discovered a brain in the process of being hardwired in a forward direction. At the beginning of puberty, adolescents make decisions relying primarily on their brain's limbic system which is the emotional center located toward the mid to back part of the brain. Teens are more likely to make impulsive, reactive decisions rather than thought out ones. As they grow older, the wiring between the brain's limbic system and the prefrontal cortex -- the region in the front of the brain capable of reason, judgment, impulse control, and understanding others -- grows stronger and more efficient. It isn't until the youth is in his or her mid to late 20's that the hardwiring is complete and the prefrontal cortex is the area where most decisions will be made. It's not that teens don't ever make sound, thought out decisions; accessing that part of their brain is just slower and takes effort. A parallel would be the experience of trying to change a habit. If you're accustomed to desserts, when you diet it takes thought and determination to not eat sweets. Dieting is not your automatic fallback position, just as making reasoned choices isn't the automatic response of teens.

So how do the limbic system and prefrontal cortex get hardwired together? Throughout life, the prefrontal cortex communicates with the rest of the brain through synapses. In adolescence, there's a huge growth in synapses, which is why teens are so capable of learning and absorbing new information. Introduce a new video game or technological device to a teen and you'll see that process in action.

At the same time, too many synapses can cause circuitry overload so the brain also actively prunes synapses that aren't being used. The synapses that remain become stronger and more efficient with use, and are coated with a protective substance called myelin. What this means in everyday terms is this: the skills and habits we develop in adolescence help to form the capacities we carry on into adulthood. Basically, within the teen brain, we lose what we don't use which is why encouraging teen creativity and decision making is so important.

One part of the limbic system that is well developed in teens is the area which registers pleasure and reward. During adolescence the levels of dopamine (the chemical that affects concentration, memory, problem solving and connects action with pleasure) are shifting so teens need to be more stimulated to feel pleasure. This is why they take more risks, use drugs, gravitate towards intense video games and movies, and may be bored with activities they used to like. The new and jolting are what's exciting, the old and familiar might be tolerated but aren't as compelling. While this risk taking may give adults gray hairs, some of it is actually important to the launching process. Without a desire to take risks and try new things, leaving home and going out into the world would be much more frightening and difficult. Youth learn what they're capable of when they take chances, and healthy risk taking helps them develop confidence.

During this same time, teen brains are highly attuned to social relationships which activate a hormone that also feeds their pleasure center. Teens love to be with other teens because that hormone, plus the dopamine, gets stimulated simultaneously. They're being social, plus their friends are more cutting-edge and willing to take risks than adults.

(Continued on pg. 5)

# Welcome to FPH's Resource Family Support Services Corner

By Sabrina Lee Dixon, RFSS Family Resource Specialist

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



FAMILY PROGRAMS HAWAII

## Ask the Warm Line



Sabrina Lee Dixon

**QUESTION:** "Sometimes I feel overwhelmed and stressed out while constantly taking care of the kids. How can I handle these feelings without it having a negative impact on the children?"

**ANSWER:** Stress is a daily part of our lives. It is how we manage stress that makes all the difference. Caring for children, especially children with difficult life circumstances can be overwhelming at times. Caring for yourself is essential; because how are you going to take care of someone else's needs if you don't make time to take care of your own?

Replenishing your reserves is key in combating stress and having enough fuel to keep up with your kids. When we forget to take care of ourselves or we constantly neglect our own needs, we are basically "running on empty". When we have insufficient fuel in our tanks, our ability to control our vehicle diminishes and our level of stress rises. So instead of "running on empty" and stretching yourself too thin, try

filling up your reserves throughout the day, so when you do hit traffic or face an obstacle in life, you will feel centered enough to stay calm and know what to do.

Here are some ways to effectively manage stress:

- ◆ **Stay Positive:** When you are feeling overwhelmed and negative thoughts seem to multiply by the minute, try to keep a positive mind set by countering each negative thought with a positive thought. Practice mindfulness in recognizing your thoughts, so you can have greater control in how you think and how your thoughts affect you.
- ◆ **Give Yourself Credit:** Instead of minimizing your efforts and dismissing compliments, accept praise for your efforts (big or small). Reinforce positive behaviors and attitudes within yourself just like you would with your children.
- ◆ **Use Positive Coping Mechanisms:** Think of ways that will help you manage stress. Some people benefit from taking deep breaths or writing down their thoughts. Others need to talk it out or find possible solutions to their problems. What are some healthy ways you can de-stress?
- ◆ **Connect with Social Supports:** No man or woman is an island. By opening yourself up to others, you can gain emotional support, which in turn helps you manage your stress in a positive way. Connecting with people in similar situations can be beneficial. Try attending a support group for resource caregivers, so that you can share your experiences with other parents and network in the community. Childcare and dinner is included for the whole family, so call FPH if you are interested in attending: 808-545-1130.
- ◆ **Take Care of Your Own Needs:** It only takes 15 minutes to calm your mind and rejuvenate your spirit. Whether you choose to take a walk or a bath, meditate or read, it should be an activity that you can indulge in and that will be solely for your own benefit. Thoroughly enjoy your "me time" because you not only need it, but you deserve it.

## Care to Share



**Do you have something that a family could use? Do you care to share?**

Then here's a great opportunity to help children in foster care and their generous resource, adoptive or guardianship families. "Care to Share" is a way for people to share their gently used items with resource, adoptive or guardianship families who need your support.

Items that are in high demand include:

- ◆ Children's desk
- ◆ Clothes for 7 yr old boy size 14-15 (junior)
- ◆ 2 double bed frames and mattresses
- ◆ Feeding booster seat with tray
- ◆ Bunk beds
- ◆ Desk lamp
- ◆ Twin beds with mattress
- ◆ Children's dresser
- ◆ Toddler bed
- ◆ Computer chair
- ◆ Trundle bed (hideaway bed)
- ◆ Dressers
- ◆ Bed sheets (twin)



Examples of items currently available include: Luggage, potty chair, strollers, high chair, and women/children/newborn clothing in specific sizes.

For an up-to-date list of items by island, check out Care to Share at [www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org](http://www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org), under "Resources"

**Do you have a question? Contact the Warm Line (Mon-Fri 8:30 am—5pm)**  
**545-1130 (O'ahu) ★ 1-866-545-0882 (Toll-free for Neighbor Islands)**  
**E-mail: [WarmLine@FamilyProgramsHi.org](mailto:WarmLine@FamilyProgramsHi.org)**

*This program, brought to you by FPH's Resource Family Support Services (RFSS), is funded by the Department of Human Services*

## Mahalo

The following individuals, agencies, and organizations have generously donated their sites to hold pre-service resource family trainings. MAHALO for supporting our resource families and keiki in foster care!

### O'ahu

- ★ Goodwill Industries Hawai'i—'Ohana Career & Learning Center
- ★ Pastor Jerry Saludez and the Waipio Baptist Community Church

### Kaua'i

- ★ 'Ae Kamali'i Preschool
- ★ Kapa'a First Hawaiian Church

### Maui

- ★ Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center



## 'OHANA CONNECTIONS CORNER (cont.)

Developmentally, "hanging out with friends" is important because it is one way teens invest in their future. Teens enter a world made by adults, but they will live and grow in a world that is made and remade by their generation. Knowing how to build relationships and navigate peer interactions and pressure is crucial for later success. While family members and caregivers may feel discounted because teens want to spend more time with friends than with family, it is part of the separation and launching process. Time with friends needs to be monitored, but supported too.



In teens we have a brain that's flexible and growing, needs extra stimulation to feel its pleasure center, turns to its peers for its social contact, and isn't fully connected to its rational, sensitive-to-others, mature judgment side. Sound like a set up for a disaster? Catastrophes can and do happen, of course, but more often than not, the teen years are a time of positive development and creativity. For the youth, in each risk is an opportunity to learn strengths and weaknesses, to develop resiliency and mastery. It's a time when mistakes are made, but lessons are learned. For teens it's the beginning of truly coming into their own.

As adults, our role is to act as a bridge to the world of adulthood. Like a coach providing guidance, we can give directions, require compliance and discipline, but we must also allow for independence. Working with teens, engaging their hopes and dreams, encouraging them to come up with strategies to solve their own problems are all ways we can help their brains grow healthy and strong. A coach can't throw the ball for the pitcher, just as we can't control every aspect of our teens' experience. Young adults must become active decision makers in their own lives. With engaged and supportive adults, however, teens are more likely to launch into adulthood with confidence and clarity, and to hit their developmental mark.

If you'd like to read more about the teenage brain here are two articles I'd recommend:

"Teenage Brains" by David Dobbs: <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2011/10/teenage-brains/dobbs-text>

"The Adolescent Brain," Jim Casey Foundation, Youth Opportunities Initiative: [http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/sites/default/files/The%20Adolescent%20Brain\\_prepress\\_proof%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/sites/default/files/The%20Adolescent%20Brain_prepress_proof%5B1%5D.pdf)

*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*



### 2012 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 ★

#### Resource Families Celebrated on Secret Island



The 2012 National Foster Care Month appreciation event on O'ahu was spectacular! On May 6<sup>th</sup>, resource families gathered together on Kualoa Ranch's Secret Island on the Windward side. Over 300 people attended this event.

As families arrived they were greeted by Shrimp Louie and the Bubba Gump team. Families were able to take pictures with Shrimp Louie and spend some time at the Bubba Gump's booth coloring and doing arts and crafts. Families then boarded a boat to take a short boat ride to reach this secluded island. The amazing and beautiful Ko'olau Mountains lay behind them with a strip of land covered by a canopy of trees obscuring the open ocean on the other side of the island before them.



Once on the island, families were free to ride on kayaks, outrigger canoes, standup paddle boards, snorkel & swim in the ocean. On the beach, families played volleyball and danced to music. An ono bento lunch was enjoyed by all.



**Wells Fargo Volunteers**

The event was truly an opportunity for families to have fun and play, relax, eat, and spend time with one other and with other families.

Throughout the day prizes were given away from McDonalds, Big City Diner, Glow Putt, Bucca Di Beppo, Consolidated Theatres, Germaine's Luau, Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, Zippy's and HMSA!

**Thanks to the help of the Glue Committee fundraising throughout the year and the generosity of Kualoa Ranch and Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, this year's O'ahu National Foster Care Month event was a success!**

*(Continued on pg. 6)*

## 2012 NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH EVENTS (cont.)

### ★ O'AHU ★

#### Governor Proclaims National Foster Care Month in Hawai'i

On May 9th, Governor Abercrombie proclaimed May as National Foster Care Month. Representatives from the Department of Human Services, Hale Kipa, Partners in Development Foundation, Family Programs Hawai'i, as well as former foster youth and resource caregivers were present for this wonderful event. Cynthia Goss, Assistant Child Welfare Services Branch Administrator for the State Department of Human Services, received the proclamation from the Governor.



#### Visitor Industry Charity Walk

Partners in Development Foundation participated in the 34th Annual Visitor Charity Walk on May 19th and took this opportunity to share with others that May is NFCM. Blue sashes to represent foster care adorned several walkers. This fun filled event took walkers from Ala Moana Beach Park through Waikiki and then back to the park, treating participants to ono food and goodies along the way.



### ★ EAST HAWAI'I ★

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

Each year the month of May is recognized across the country as National Foster Care Month. The activities and celebrations that occur during the month provide an opportunity to show appreciation for the dedication of resource caregivers who care for children and youth in foster care placement.

East Hawai'i Friends of Foster Families (EHFFF) held an Appreciation Dinner/Dance on May 4, 2012 at the Church of the Holy Cross to commemorate May as National Foster Care Month. EHFFF is made up of partner agencies, such as Partners in Development Foundation Hui Ho'omalulu, Catholic Charities Hawai'i - Hui Ho'omalulu, Catholic Charities- Na 'Ohana Pūlama, The Salvation Army-Family Intervention Services, Hawai'i Behavioral Health, Family Programs Hawai'i, and Department of Human Services Child Welfare Services. They recognize the tremendous efforts of success in regards to those committed to the foster care mission. Dinner was catered by KTA Superstores who also donated a cake in honor of the resource families. Each resource caregiver who attended received a door prize, and Peggy Hilton, Area Supervisor of East Hawai'i Child Welfare Services, read a proclamation from Mayor Billy Kenoi recognizing May as National Foster Care Month on the Big Island of Hawai'i.

### ★ WEST HAWAI'I ★

#### Healthy from Head to Toe: At Home, at School, and in our Community

To help raise awareness of children's mental health concerns and garner support for children and youth in foster care, a free community event was held on May 18, 2012, from 3:30 to 7:00pm, at the Old Kona Airport Events Pavilion in Kailua-Kona. This event brought together local programs, clubs, businesses, schools and a variety of agencies to provide information and activities that promote healthy living for families in our community.

*Healthy from Head to Toe* was sponsored by the Kona Community Children's Council, Child & Family Service, Hawai'i State Department of Health, Hawai'i Families As Allies, Partners in Development - Hui Ho'omalulu and The Institute for Family Enrichment. The event was organized by a committee formed of representatives from each of these agencies.

Of the 304 participants there were 175 adults and 129 children. Forty six percent of the attendees claimed Hawaiian heritage. More than 25 vendors provided exhibits offering information and family-friendly activities. Emceed by local radio personality, Ka'ea Alapai, entertainment was provided by several local music and dance groups throughout the event. *Only Us*, a non-profit, youth-driven restaurant/caterer served more than 190 meals to participants. Several door prizes were given away, culminating in a raffle for two children's bicycles and helmets.



### ★ MAUI ★

#### Resource Caregiver Recognition Luncheon

This year, on May 3rd, DHS and the Hanai Coalition sponsored a luncheon to recognize the resource caregivers on Maui. The luncheon was held at the Maui Beach Hotel and included a seminar on Cyber-Bullying. Maui Mayor, Alan Arakawa, presented certificates to all caregivers in attendance, thanking them for their service to the children in care and to the community at large. Everyone enjoyed themselves and the time that was set aside to honor and recognize Maui's resource caregiver community.



#### Sign-waving

May was National Foster Care Month and the signs were waving on May 10th and 24th with gusto again this year! We had a good turnout of service providers and other community members (some resource caregivers, too!) joining in the celebration. Everyone gave full effort to raise awareness that we need more homes and offered up genuine thanks to all those already helping Maui's keiki & youth in foster care! Several people said they would join in another sign waving during the month, so we set an afternoon event for the 24th. Although not as many people returned, we still got the message out to all the commuters heading home because hands were waving and horns were honking. Thank you, Maui, for all you do to support our keiki in care!

(Continued on pg. 7)

**2012 NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH EVENTS (cont.)**

**★ MAUI ★**

**Keiki Kōkua Foster Care Awareness Day**



For the fourth year now, Keiki Kōkua Thrift Store has hosted Foster Care Awareness Day in May. On May 19th, Hui Ho'omalua was there, again, to host an informational table and answer any questions folks had regarding foster care and the process of becoming resource caregivers. Although the turnout was smaller this year, the word was still being spread that Maui needs a larger pool of committed caregivers willing to open their hearts and homes to keiki and youth in foster care. It was another great day of putting the message out there so someone who knows someone who heard it from someone who heard it on May 19th, 2012 at the Keiki Kōkua Foster Care Awareness Day will pick up that phone and call Hui Ho'omalua at (808) 268-5122 to start the process of becoming a licensed caregiver to children in foster care.

**★ KAUA'I ★**

**Mayor Carvalho Signs NFCM Proclamation for Kaua'i**

Mayor Bernard Carvalho, Jr. signed the proclamation exclaiming May as National Foster Care Month for Kaua'i! There were people who played different roles in the foster care system represented at the signing and photo op: Caregivers, DHS social workers, and a recruiter.



**Adoptive Families Needed Through Wendy's Wonderful Kids**

*Families are sought to provide permanent homes for several Native Hawaiian children. We are featuring Mike in this newsletter who is currently in foster care and legally free for adoption. Please help to spread the word.*

Mike is a 16 year old male of Hawaiian, Chinese, Korean, and Portuguese ancestry. He is going into the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. He enjoys being on the football team, drawing, going to the beach, and spending time with friends. Mike describes himself as athletic and names Physical Education as his favorite subject in school. Mike loves music and plays both the guitar and ukulele. He would prefer an active, two parent family of Polynesian descent. He does not mind other children or animals. He would prefer to live in the North Shore area. His parents' rights have been terminated and he is under the custody of the Department of Human Services. If you are interested in learning more about Mike please contact Katie Joosse at Family Programs Hawai'i at 540-2552.



**Planting the Seed of Higher Education Early**

*By Judith Wilhoite, FPH-ITAO*

As the world continues to change, the need to have a quality education to compete in our society is more important than ever. Many of us deliver this message to our children from the time they are very young. This may not be true for your foster youth. He or she may have never heard the words "When you go to college..." or "You can be whatever you want to be." Instead, they may have had a negative message delivered to them on a daily basis.

It is up to us to help them see the possibilities that lie before them. We must guide them through this phase of growth instead of leaving them to do it on their own. Our youth have gone through tough times. But one of the benefits our kids can utilize from their experience is the availability of several higher education scholarships and grant opportunities. One such opportunity is the Geist grant. Foster youth can qualify for this grant regardless of their grade point average. However, most funding grants are competitive, meaning our youth must maintain a grade point average of at least 2.7 to apply.

So how can you help? Talk to your youth about their strengths and help them realize their potential. Here are some tips to get you started:

- ◆ Help them put together a plan to reach their goals.
- ◆ Encourage them to do well in school and explain that it is important to keep their grade point average up so that they can apply for scholarships.
- ◆ Learn about the opportunities available to them & assist them in going through the necessary steps.
- ◆ Accompany them to events designed to help them learn about colleges and to apply for financial aid.
- ◆ Take them on a college campus tour.
- ◆ Help them connect with other foster youth.
- ◆ Help them research colleges.



Did you know that if your foster youth decides to stay in Hawai'i and attend a community college, they can in essence get paid to go to college? How can that be, you ask? First, foster youth qualify for the Pell Grant, Geist Grant, higher education payment as well as the Education and Training Voucher. These can add up to over \$14,000 a year. Additionally, if their application is submitted in a timely manner to the school, community colleges often have additional monies that they give to students in need, which might mean their tuition is paid in full. This is not even taking into account other scholarship opportunities available.

**Advertise in the Newsletter—Promote Your Business**

*100% of the proceeds will be used towards supporting our resource families*

**Display advertisements with borders:** business card size = \$30; 1/4 page = \$50; 1/2 page = \$75; full page = \$115.

Send information to: **Hui Ho'omalua—RAC, 680 Iwilei Rd., Ste. 500, Honolulu, HI 96817**

**Phone: 441-1125 (O'ahu) ★ 888-879-8970 (Toll Free) ★ Fax: 441-1122 ★ E-mail: RAC@pidfoundation.org**

RAC reserves the right to accept, reject or edit advertisements, articles and notices of events based on publication schedule, space limitations, and appropriateness.

## Fostering CommUNITY: Connecting Our 'Ohana

### 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference for Resource Families and Service Providers

By Eva Chau, RFSS Program Manager

Our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference for Resource Families and Service Providers took place this year statewide in 6 locations throughout the month of May. The title of the conference this year, "Fostering CommUNITY: Connecting Our 'Ohana", successfully captured the idea that it takes all of our efforts to reach the goal of healthy families. Speakers Dr. Kimo Alameda, Laurie Jicha, and Lynne Kazama discussed the importance of providing 'Ohana Time to families.

What is 'Ohana Time? 'Ohana Time provides children, their parents, their siblings, and other family members the opportunity to bond with each other in a safe environment. 'Ohana Time should occur on a regular basis to support reunification and/or healthy family connections. It promotes safe parenting by demonstrating appropriate parenting skills, which assists in the goal of reunification. Another positive is that 'Ohana Time helps decrease trauma and anxiety in children in foster care when they see their parents and resource caregivers working towards the same goal.

Laurie Jicha and Lynne Kazama discussed how 'Ohana Time is in the best interest of our keiki because it maintains their family connections and enhances a child's well-being when provided in a safe manner. Laurie discussed the ways in which 'Ohana Time meets one of DHS' values of being family focused. She also discussed how to create plans, levels of supervision, roles and responsibilities, locations, activities, and documentation for 'Ohana Time. Special considerations for specific situations were also presented, such as providing a safe 'Ohana Time even when parents may be intoxicated. DHS hopes that 'Ohana Time success will result in more frequent parent-child contact, more visits in natural settings, more siblings placed together, and that reunification or permanency will occur more quickly and more often.



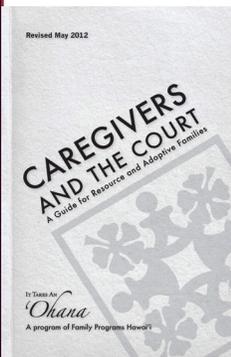
Dr. Kimo provided Eight Great Traits to 'Ohana Time success: 1) Stay Motivated; 2) Expect the Best; 3) Increase Your People Skills; 4) Increase Your Engagement Skills; 5) Expand Your View of Culture; 6) Increase Your Resource Awareness; 7) Increase Your Assessment Skills; and 8) Self Care. The first trait, "Stay Motivated", will keep yourself "in-check" by having an honest understanding of where you are coming from, where you are at, and how you feel. The second trait, "Expect the Best", reminds us that when we come from a positive standpoint, we will more likely get positive results. The third trait, "Increase Your People Skills", reminds us that disagreements happen and need to be handled with tact. The fourth trait, "Increase Your Engagement Skills", teaches us to focus on developing positive relationships so that we can engage others more easily. The fifth trait, "Expand Your View of Culture", assists us in the area of thinking about where the children we care for and their families come from culturally. The sixth trait, "Increase Your Resource Awareness", is a way to assist parents and children towards reunification by offering them community resources. In this way, we become a part of the solution and the team. The seventh trait, "Increase Your Assessment Skills", reminds us of the process of change and what to look for when working towards the goal of reunification. The eighth trait, "Self Care", reminds us that we need time for ourselves to take care of our own needs. With these traits, we can look forward to successful 'Ohana Time interactions.

Together, our speakers showed us that the goal of healthy 'ohana is very possible, regardless of whether the result of our efforts end in reunification or permanency. 'Ohana Time helps strengthen bonds between children and family members. It stresses the importance of all of us, the COMMUNITY, uniting towards the goal of ensuring happy and healthy keiki.

Thank you to those of you who were able to attend the Annual Conferences this year! If you weren't able to attend and are interested in watching the event, look for the rebroadcast on 'Ölelo and on the 'Ölelo website. We will also have copies available on DVD following the 'Ölelo broadcast. Please call the Warm Line at 545-1130 on O'ahu and 1-866-545-0882 Toll-free from the Neighbor Islands for more information.

## Resource Caregivers and the Court

By Judith Wilhoite, FPH-ITAO



Because of recent law changes, It Takes An 'Ohana, a program of Family Programs Hawai'i, has revised its *Caregivers and the Court Guide* for resource caregivers and will be sending the updated copy to every resource family statewide. Watch your mail box for your copy!

It is important for resource caregivers to attend court hearings because of your unique perspective on the needs of the children in your care and the regular contact you have with therapists, teachers, and other service providers. By giving the Family Court current and detailed information about the child, you can assist the Court in making the best possible decisions about the child in your home. This guide will provide you with the "Whys" and "Hows" of attending court hearings.

It is also important to transport, accompany and support all foster youth to attend their court hearings. Attending court benefits foster youth, too. In Hawai'i, foster youth are strongly encouraged to attend their court hearings. This can help them to develop a sense of control and understanding on how they can impact the court process. Plus, the court learns more about the youth when they attend than simply what is presented in reports.

When a foster child or youth attends court, judges conduct the hearing in a way that assures the child's safety and well-being. Judges may allow a child or youth to bring a trusted adult with them into the courtroom or allow them to speak to the judge alone. Resource caregivers should report any concerns they have about the effects of coming to court to the GAL and on how the GAL and the court can help the child feel comfortable in the courtroom.

The most important thing to remember is that when it comes to court, resource caregivers have a vital role to play. Although judges have the responsibility to make decisions about children and their families, they can only make good decisions if they receive good information. Resource caregivers can have a huge impact on the lives and welfare of children by attending court hearings and sharing information about the children in their homes.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**O'AHU:**

- ★ **Aug 10 (Fri): Windward Resource Families Support Group.** 6 pm—8:30 pm. Faith Baptist Church. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 x245.
- ★ **Aug 24 (Fri): Central O'ahu Resource Families Support Group.** 5:30 pm—8 pm. O'ahu Veteran's Center. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 x245.
- ★ **Sept 21 (Fri) - Tentative: Waianae Resource Families Support Group.** 5:30 pm—8 pm. 'Ohana Ola O Kahumana. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 x245.

**MAUI**

- ★ **Aug 16 (Thurs) - Tentative: Maui Resource Families Support Group.** 5:30 pm—8 pm. Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center, Wailuku. RSVP to Kim Bowlin at 250-4457.

**WEST HAWAI'I:**

- ★ **Sept 17 (Mon) - Tentative: West Hawai'i Resource Families Support Group.** 5 pm—7:30 pm. Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity, Kailua-Kona. RSVP to Susan Acacio at 885-5043

**EAST HAWAI'I:**

- ★ **Sept 8 (Sat): East Hawai'i Resource Families Support Group.** 12 pm—2:30 pm. Hilo Missionary Church, Hilo. RSVP to Michele Carvalho at 987-5988.

**KAUA'I:**

- ★ **Kaua'i Resource Families Support Group.** Date TBD. Call the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0082 for updated information.

## 1st Quarter Training: Permanency, 'Ohana Time, & Ongoing Training

Stay tuned for our 1st Quarter Training scheduled tentatively statewide for July/August/September. Go to [www.familyprogramshawaii.org](http://www.familyprogramshawaii.org) or call the Warm Line, 545-1130 (O'ahu) and 1-866-545-0882 (Toll Free Neighbor Islands) for more information.



### 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



### '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 like these individuals!



**Kau'i Keola  
Denise Medeiros  
Dea Schlupp  
Lora Sullivan**



Call Hui Ho'omalua today at 441-1117 or 1-888-879-8970 (toll free) for more information!

**KEIKI KOKUA THRIFT STORE**  
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First-Time Foster Kids Enjoy a \$50 Shopping Spree  
[www.keikikokua.org](http://www.keikikokua.org)  
575-5393



*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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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'omalū 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'omalū  
Department of Human Services  
EPIC, Inc. 'Ohana Conferencing  
Family Court  
Family Programs Hawai'i—Hui Ho'omalū & It Takes An 'Ohana  
Resource Caregivers  
Adoptive Parents  
Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition  
HOPE INC, Inc.  
Partners in Development Foundation—Hui Ho'omalū  
University of Hawai'i, School of Social Work