



PŪPŪKAHI

HAWAII ISLAND UNITED WAY NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER 2023



On August 8, 2023, an entire community changed in an instant. We all remember how devastating this fire felt, not just to the residents of Lahaina and Kula, but to the entire state of Hawai'i. It's unimaginable what people did to try and protect themselves and their families during the most horrific tragedy in more than 100 years. However, when our communities are in desperate need of support, the people of Hawai'i come together to do what needs to be done and that includes Hawai'i Island United Way. Angela Williams President and CEO of United Way Worldwide and her team along with other United Way organizations, including Hawai'i Island United Way, Kauai United Way and Aloha United Way came out to support the Maui United Way in any way we could, with the goal to be able to help as many people in the community as possible and as quickly as possible. It's going to be a long road, but Maui is strong and as the saying goes, "Like a phoenix, she will rise from the ashes of despair and soar."

688 KINO'OLE ST. #201
HILO, HAWAII 96720

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A message from our President:



As 2023 winds down and the holiday season is in full swing, it's a good time to pause and reflect on the past year, both the good and not so good. Many find it difficult to remain positive when there is so much turmoil in the world, including right here at home. The residual effects from the pandemic, the increase in houseless individuals, relentless inflation, and the horrific Maui Fires on our sister island of Maui all come to mind. Yet, the community unites again to combat these challenges and we are right here with you.

This year, HIUW provided supplemental funding to 28 nonprofits with 36 human service programs including those with programs that are addressing the houseless crisis on our island. HIUW administers the Emergency Food and Shelter program which has provided close to \$100,000 in funds to address the ongoing food insecurity issues this year. HIUW jumped into action and raised over \$20,000.00 in less than a week including our own contributions after the fires ravaged Lahaina and Kula. There is so much work to be done, but as we reflect on this year, we do so with overwhelming gratitude to all our donors, volunteers, partner agencies, vendors, staff, board of directors, and community connections. Together, one day at a time, we are helping our island community move toward a healthier and brighter future. We are all doing what we can to support our other island communities in great times of need as well.

I'll end my message with something to consider. The holidays can often be a time of struggle for many people. Please be sure to check in on ohana and extended ohana, a neighbor, or a friend to make sure they are doing okay. Sending you the best wishes for a happy, healthy, and bright new year from all of us here at Hawai'i Island United Way!

In Service,

Karen Davis, President and CPO
Hawai'i Island United Way

Did you know...

DID YOU KNOW THAT THE NORAD SANTA TRACKER BEGAN WITH A WRONG NUMBER CALL?

Every Christmas Eve, the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) adjusts its satellites to track Santa on his journey around the world. The famous holiday tradition all started in the 1950s when a young child accidentally called a NORAD command center looking for jolly old Saint Nick. Today, the program has over 1,500 volunteers who answer calls and emails from children all over the world, providing updates on Santa's location and spreading joy and cheer.



IMPACT: FAMILY SUPPORT HAWAII

Family Support Hawai'i

SUPPORTING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES SINCE 1979

One father's path to self-improvement: One of the fathers from the group who hadn't seen his child in over a year and a half, and through support and encouragement, has been able to reach the point where he now has weekly supervised visitation with his son. He consistently continues to show improvement in communication with the mother of his son. He has also formed strong relationships with other fathers in the group and offered support outside of group meetings, including opening his home to a father who was experiencing temporary homelessness. He continues to work on self-improvement, with the eventual goal of achieving 50% custody of his son.

Success



Congratulations



Volunteer Spotlight



I VOLUNTEER FOR HAWAII ISLAND UNITED WAY BECAUSE....

We ♥ our Volunteers

“ County of Hawai'i
RSVP Volunteers

Pat: "Fellowship, to help agencies"

Sue: "I feel good helping"

Charlyn: "Getting to understand what you do, meet new people, even exchange recipes!"

Mahalo



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON VOLUNTEERING VISIT: HIUW.ORG/VOLUNTEER/

CHECK OUT THE HIUW STORE !





Practicing Gratitude

As this holiday season approaches, and 2023 comes to an end, I can't help but feel a little weighted this year. The Maui fires, the war in Gaza, the government shutting down, so many negative things. I am finding it a little harder to get into the holiday spirit. Then I see a quote; "There is always, always, always, something to be thankful for." And it hits me. I need to be more grateful. Maybe we all need to be more grateful! So, I googled it. How can I be more grateful? Earlier this year the national news station (CNN) had posted an article about reducing stress and boosting happiness which turns out could happen if we practice more gratitude! This is perfect. Let me share what it said.

"It's easy to have a sense of gratitude when things are going your way or when holidays, like Thanksgiving, dictate it. But just as showing love shouldn't be reserved only for good times and special occasions like anniversaries, being grateful shouldn't happen only during optimal conditions or on designated days. With just a little effort, you can find reasons to be grateful every day – and practicing gratitude regularly offers many health and wellness benefits that can boost your happiness year-round.

Stress is undoubtedly one of the biggest obstacles to long-term happiness. Thankfully (pun intended), one of the biggest benefits of being grateful is its power to mitigate stress. Numerous studies during the pandemic showed that— even in the face of significant psychological stressors – practicing gratitude had the capacity to reduce stress and improve mood.

Gratitude practices can also decrease depression and increase self-esteem. This mood and confidence booster is especially helpful for young adults experiencing stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms correlated with social media use.

One study of more than 1,000 high school students found that a daily gratitude practice fostered greater life satisfaction and motivation, while another study showed a link between gratitude and decreased suicide risk in college students.

Science has shown us that gratitude is an important, powerful skill for anyone at any age – and like any skill worth mastering, it takes practice."

Makes sense right? If you want to do something well, you need to practice. I know you're already rolling your eyes thinking "I don't have time for this." You do, I promise. Give it a try! Here are a few simple things we could do:

- 1) Create a photo album on your phone and make a point every day (set a reminder) to add an image or a saying, whatever helps you feel grateful that day. Anything, even a text message.
- 2) Everyone is busy and wants instant gratification. Each day, just take 90 seconds two times a day to just do some deep breathing. While you do this concentrate on how grateful you are that you are breathing. This practice can actually curb impatience and cultivate patience.
- 3) Have an attitude of gratitude. Tell someone you're thankful for them, sharing gratitude with someone else can boost happiness for you and them.
- 4) Before you go to sleep each night think about 3 things that make you feel grateful.

If you want to write them down, you can do that, but just consciously thinking of these three things before you go to bed has been proven to improve sleep.

I thought about this and then, as I was scrolling on my social media, a post from Michael J. Fox appeared that said "if you don't think you have anything to be grateful for, keep looking. Because you don't just receive optimism. You can't wait for things to be great and then be grateful for that. You've got to behave in a way that promotes that." Well, if that isn't the universe speaking! I am going to give this a try. Who's with me?

-Carol Pacheco
HIUW Office Coordinator



A Day of Giving...



Swept out pavillions

A few months ago Hawaii Island United Way was approached by a tech company (Aha) who were coming to Hawai'i for an employee retreat and wanted to give back to our community. We were able to connect them with the Girl Scouts of Hawai'i for some much needed work at Kilohana Girl Scout Camp. It was a fun afternoon and we are so grateful to Aha for their volunteering efforts in our community.



Aha also donated some funds!



Pavilions are ready to use!



Mahalo Aha for all your hard work!

We ♥ our Volunteers



Bed frames got a fresh coat of paint



A satisfying afternoon!

WORK TOGETHER!



Chelsea Ahern of the Girls Scouts of Hawai'i and her dog Murray are excited!



Hawaiian Telcom



Ohana Fuel

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

Coming Soon



21st Annual Luck of the Irish GOLF TOURNAMENT MARCH 16-17, 2024

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