Hoʻokupu Center Will Be A Hub For Youth

It’s always gratifying to recognize a group that’s doing wonderful things for our island community. They often toil in anonymity, the public unaware of their invaluable contributions to the greater good.

One such organization is Kupu, a nonprofit founded in 2007 to provide hands-on training programs that educate and mentor youth to become stewards of our culture and environment. I wrote about Kupu (which means “to sprout or grow”) in MidWeek a few years back and since then, they have trained more than 3,500 young people in conservation, sustainability and environmental education. Its work-based-learning approach has led to hundreds of internships and service-learning opportunities to support over 150 partner sites across Hawaiʻi and the Pacific.

Kupu’s CEO is John Leong, a distinguished Pacific Century Fellows alumnus, who has done a phenomenal job in developing the organization. Most recently, he has been hard at work spearheading the launch of the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Hoʻokupu Center at Kewalo Basin, slated to open mid-March.

The center will provide a space for Kakaʻako’s growing neighborhood and the general public to come together to enjoy events, workshops, exhibits and other opportunities.

Says John, “We envision the center to provide meaningful activities, educational programming, and much more for the larger public to enjoy.”

With the help of architectural firm G70, Kupu strengthened the environmental and cultural integrity of the building by meeting LEED criteria. This includes adopting reused materials, natural airflow in common areas, natural lighting and renewable energy. The center will use compostable materials and provide workshops on sustainability.

Kupu’s presence on the waterfront has added benefit of reducing litter, homelessness and crime in the area.

Young adults who work in the culinary program will operate a food truck and manage the kitchen to produce food and value-added products while turning their lives around.

The center will provide a space for Hawaiʻi’s youth. It’s a prime example of a private-public partnership that benefits the community, state and next generation of Hawaiʻi’s youth.”

Kupu CEO John Leong explains the transformation taking place at Kewalo Basin with the new Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Ho’okupu Center.

PHOTO COURTESY DEBBIE KIM MORIKAWA

Sheraton Kaua’i Resort GM Leads The Way

News of similar good work comes from the Garden Island. At Sheraton Kaua’i Resort’s RumFire restaurant, there’s a private oceanview booth numbered Table 53. It’s a unique project conceived by general manager Chip Bahouth, and was originally introduced when he was at a hotel on Maui.

Here’s how it works: Each month, the hotel features a nonprofit from a list, which now is 30 organizations deep. Sheraton then donates net proceeds from all food and beverage sales at Table 53 to that month’s beneficiary.

Past recipients have included Kaua’i Economic Opportunity, Kaua’iYWCA, Kaua’i Film Academy, Kaua’i Hospice, Supporting the Language of Kaua’i, Kaua’i Sailing, Kaua’i

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