



ISLAND MATTERS *Mufi Hannemann*

How KAI Benefits Palolo

Our schools are perennial contributors to our betterment, whether as educational institutions or as engaged civic leaders.

So it is with my alma mater, 'Iolani School, which is involved in the Pālolo area through KAI, or Kūkulu Alaka'i 'Iolani ("Creation of Leaders"). Allison Blacken-ship, an 'Iolani '02 alumna, is founding director of KAI and has developed this partnership between 'Iolani and the Pālolo Valley community.

Now in its eighth year, KAI is a summer learning program that offers select Pālolo students in their seventh- to 12th-grade years the opportunity to continue their education during the summer months. Students attend classes, participate in exercise and fitness programs, and go on field trips. They are active participants in a career-shadowing program offered by the Pacific Century Fellows alumni group, co-hosted by Hawai'i Pacific University.

Nearly 90 percent of all KAI students will be the first ones in their families to either graduate from high school or college.

KAI's unique feature is that it focuses on one community and emphasizes the importance of creating opportunities that enable students to develop leadership skills and empower them to improve their community.

As part of the KAI curriculum, students entering their junior year are tasked with identifying a need within their Pālolo community and creating a plan to fulfill that need. Completely student-led by the KAI juniors, this year's Pālolo Pride Children's Day, held July 15 at Pālolo Elementary, was the re-

sult of the class brainstorm.

The students organized rhythm games, ball-pass activities, and a variety of arts and crafts for the children, most of whom were 8- to 10-year-olds

lo Valley students, provides a free KAI summer preschool, and offers year-round tutoring support for KAI students and college support for KAI graduates.



Daylan Blake-Kala'i (center, in yellow) was presented with the Don Ho Legacy Scholarship by (from left) Dean Nakasone, Alex Roth, Haumea Ho, the author,

living in Pālolo Homes. In addition to the fun exercises, the children learned lessons in leadership.

Nixann, a KAI junior, said, "I thought of the Pālolo Pride Children's Day as another bonding activity with my group, but this time we took our leadership skills that we learned over the past years of KAI and made something out of it by giving back to the community. We were able to successfully conclude with the event, which was a big success not only because we made it happen, but also because everyone there was laughing, smiling, and had loads of fun."

A parent of a KAI student added, "I am very glad that my kids were involved and learning all these values of giving back to their community. I'm very thankful for everything that (KAI has) offered."

What's noteworthy about KAI is that it doesn't begin and end with summer. KAI now serves more than 70 Pālolo

Don Ho's Legacy Lives On

Over the weekend, tourists and locals got a glimpse of Hawai'i's golden days as a statue of music legend Don Ho was unveiled in the very place he used to reign supreme at Duke Kahanamoku's.

To celebrate the statue, which was designed by noted sculptor Kim Duffett, a blessing ceremony with speakers and performances by the Ho family and Kimo Kahoano took place in the early afternoon, followed by special entertainment from a cast of Hawaiian music all-stars: Melveen Leed, Marleen Sai, Nina Keali'i-awahamana, Nathan Aweau, Henry Kaponono and more.

During the entertainment portion, my staff and I presented our Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association Don Ho Legacy Scholarship to this year's inaugural recipient, Daylan-Blake Kala'i, who will be attending New York University to pursue performing arts.

HLTA introduced and pre-

sented the Na Po'e Pa'ahana Legacy Award in honor of Don Ho to his widow Haumea and son Dwight in 2016 and vowed then to also create a scholarship in his name. In addition, Tihati Productions' Jack and Cha Thompson, in my opinion easily the first couple of Hawaiian entertainment today, spearheaded HLTA's push a few years back to raise funds to support the arts, music and entertainment. Thus, the Don Ho Legacy Endowment Fund was created by working with our partner, the Pauahi Foundation, to provide scholarships for students of Native Hawaiian ancestry who are pursuing music and the arts.

We were honored to present the inaugural scholarship to Daylan, a recent graduate from Kamehameha Schools on Hawai'i Island, where he was heavily involved in the school's performing arts program.

Last year, Daylan starred in the Hawaiian-language opera *Ha'upu*, which took him and his classmates to Edinburgh, Scotland, to perform in the world's largest performing arts festival. After he completes his studies in New York, Daylan plans to come back to Hawai'i to create more opportunities for youth to participate in performing arts.

He certainly aspires to follow in the footsteps of the legendary showman of Waikiki, who helped local entertainers launch their careers, such as my brother Nephi, Sam Kapu, Al Lopaka and, of course, his backup band for many years, the Ali'is, led by Joe Mundo and featuring Danny Couch, among countless others.

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