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megan conley and ocean music action

the man who saves lives || living legacy in Mānoa || is it 'ulu season yet?

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	Average number of copies of each issue during preceding 12 months	of single issue published nearest to filing date
Total Number Copies Printed	376,520	379,683
Mail Subscription (Requested)	375,477	378,059
Total Requested Circulation	375,477	378,059
Free Distribution		
Total Distribution	375,673	378,255
Copies Not Distributed		1,428
	376,519	379,683
Percent Requested Circulation	99.95%	99.95%



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health matters

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## island scene

fall issue : 2023 || islandscene.com

#### PUBLISHER/EDITOR Lisa Maneki Baxa

**ART DIRECTOR** Lawrence Esperanza

#### ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR

aryn Sait

FOOD EDITOR Marlene Nakamoto

COPY EDITOR

#### WRITERS

Craig DeSilva David Frickman Michelle Liu Marlene Nakamoto Lynn Shibuya Courtney Takabayashi Allison Valdez

#### DESIGNERS

Jocelyn Cua-Racoma Tedra Hackett Fannie Niiyama Garry Ono Megan Wakayama Brandon Young

#### WEB TEAM

Rodney Amian Courtney Takabayashi

#### ADVERTISING

Alissa Mandich Lynn Shibuya

#### CIRCULATION

Kay Yasufuku Tam

#### HEALTH INFORMATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Stefanie Park, M.D. Andrew Perry, M.D. Jeffrey Tom, M.D. Mark M. Mugiishi, M.D., F.A.C.S.

#### NUTRITION ADVISERS

C. Alan Titchenal, Ph.D. Joannie Dobbs, Ph.D. Island Scene (ISSN 1064-8674) is published quarterly by the Hawai'i Medical Service Association – an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. HMSA, 818 Ke'eaumoku St., Honolulu, HI 96814-2365.

Island Scene is published as a benefit for HMSA members. A copy of each issue is mailed to plan subscribers. Additional copies are available to dependents on request. Subscription: No cost for all HMSA plan members. Nonmembers, call (808) 948-6839 for subscription information. Periodicals postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to *Island Scene*, P.O. Box 3850, Honolulu, HI 96812-3850.

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  - For other HMSA correspondence Call HMSA at (808) 948-6079 or 1 (800) 776-4672.

Island Scene, P.O. Box 3850, Honolulu, HI 96812-3850

Editorial: (808) 948-6839 Circulation: (808) 948-6575 Advertising: (808) 227-5662 Email: feedback@islandscene.com HMSA website at hmsa.com *Island Scene* website at islandscene.com

**COVER:** Megan Conley uses the power of music to raise awareness about ocean conservation. See story on page 40 by Craig DeSilva. Photo by Nicole Izak.

## Free Grief Support

Maui wildfire support

If you're experiencing distress, help is available.

## Managing your stress

Call the number shown here to receive the help you need. Be patient; call centers may be receiving many calls and texts.



Trained staff can help you manage your stress and help you determine the next steps for yourself and your family.



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Be kind to yourself and others. Take a break from the news. Try to find ways to be productive to give yourself a sense of action and control in this difficult time.

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## Celebrating 85 years in the community



### **Purpose**

Together, we improve the lives of our members and the health of Hawaii. Caring for our families, friends, and neighbors is our privilege.



### Vision

A Hawaii where families and communities live ever-healthier lives.

### History

HMSA was founded in 1938 by social workers to assist those unable to afford health care.



For 85 years, HMSA's mandate has been to be a community asset to ensure the people of Hawaii receive quality, affordable care.



### Accolades

U.S. News & World Report, 2023: Hawaii **#1** state in health care when measuring access, affordability, quality, and public health.



### Membership

**780,000** members. Adding **200,000** members in 2025 when the TRICARE contract starts with active military and dependents.



### Network

- 7,500 physicians
- 28 urgent care providers
- 3 health systems and 23 hospitals
- 223 pharmacies
- 9 provider organizations

### **National/Global Blues**

- 34 plans and 110 million covered lives
  96% of hospitals
  95% of doctors
  - 95% of doctor
    190 countries

  - 68,000 pharmacies

### Community Giving



- \$6 million from the HMSA Foundation.
- \$5 million in HMSA corporate giving.
- \$11 million total invested into all five pillars of the social determinants of health (economic stability, education, neighborhood built environment, social context, health care access) to improve community health.
- Named Hawaii Philanthropic Corporation of the Year in 2022 on National Philanthropy Day.



### Affordability

**95 cents** of every dollar goes to health care benefits and an industry-low **5%** is spent on administrative costs.

## up front



## aloha members,

Our hearts ache for Maui in the aftermath of the August wildfires. I had written my column for this issue, which centers around the importance of 'āina, long before the wildfires started. I contemplated pulling the column and writing a new one.

But it's actually perfect. The wildfire tragedy highlights the need for us to care about our 'āina. The need for healing and reconstruction highlights how we must care for each other. And Hawai'i is uniquely positioned because of our history and our culture to be an example to the world on how we move forward, caring about both.

There's much more to be done in the coming months and even years to assist in recovery efforts, and I have no doubt that the values and resolve of the people of Hawai'i will get us there, as they always have. And HMSA will be here with you.

Also related to our 'āina, I was fortunate to be invited by Kamehameha Schools Kapālama to a presentation on regenerative economics by Kate Raworth, world-renowned 21st century economist and international best-selling author, and Kamanamaikalani Beamer, Ph.D., Native Hawaiian scholar, songwriter, and thought leader on Hawaiian resource management.

The transformative thinking of Raworth's "doughnut economics" thesis is that after a century or more of growth economics, we need to strive to live in the substance of a doughnut where the doughnut hole is all the needs of the people and the space outside the doughnut is all the natural resources that we are blessed to have. Living in the actual substance of the doughnut is the aspiration to meet community needs without exceeding the limits of the environment.

Hearing her speak alongside Dr. Beamer, who was able to share the traditional Hawaiian value of aloha 'āina and how that prioritized care for each other and the place we inhabit together, one thing became apparent to me: Our thinking and values in Hawai'i can make a valuable contribution to the kind of global pivot the world might need to start to address climate change and preservation of our earth in a meaningful way.

In this issue, we celebrate our collective respect and aloha for the 'āina and how that's made Hawai'i a unique place. Our wish, of course, is that the world learns from us and becomes more like us.

Sincerely,

Mark M. Mugiishi, M.D., F.A.C.S. President and Chief Executive Officer

## Let's grow together



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## publisher's note

## dear friends,

Several years ago, we sold our family home in East Honolulu and moved into a condo in Salt Lake. It was a practical decision after my parents passed and a big change for us.

In East Honolulu, we had a yard that always needed tending. There were endless weeds to pull and I liked to water the plants and sweep the tree-lined walkway on the side of the house. Being outdoors with my hands in the soil was good for my soul. The commute we complained about also gave us a view of the ocean every day ... when we remembered to pause and look.

I miss the house, the yard, the neighborhood, and the drive. But even with no private green space in our new home, there are ways to experience and appreciate Hawai'i's 'āina.

We wrapped up this issue of *Island Scene* in August, when the news and social media were filled with stories and images of the recovery efforts on Maui and the Big Island.

Our hearts go out to those of you who were affected by the wildfires, we thank the first responders and countless others who jumped in to help, and we join the worldwide community in supporting the recovery and rebuilding efforts.

It also reminds us of our ties to this 'āina, to this very special place that we are lucky enough to call home.



Mānoa Heritage Center gardens and heiau

This is our 'āina issue, with articles about the people and programs doing good work to protect it, including:

- Mānoa Heritage Center gardens (a living classroom) and heiau (page 10).
- Jefferson Elementary School's aquaponic and hydroponic gardens in Waikīkī (page 20).
- Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail on the Big Island (page 36).
- Harpist Megan Conley and Ocean Music Action, using the power of music to raise awareness about ocean conservation (page 40).
- Hawai'i 'Ulu Cooperative, a farmerowned business working to revitalize 'ulu and other Hawai'i-grown staple crops (page 56).

I hope you enjoy the articles and learn about caring for our āina. And no matter where you live, remember to pause and look around and appreciate nature.

Best wishes,

Lisa Maneki Baxa Publisher and Editor

## around the 808

## maui, moloka'i, and lāna'i

#### Moloka'i recovers care

On an island that had eked by for decades with a minimal amount of health care providers, Moloka'i residents were suddenly without two beloved doctors in 2022. The passing of Noa Emmett Aluli, M.D., and William Longfellow Thomas, M.D., left a void that needed to be filled.

Ka'ohimanu Dang-Akiona, M.D., a Big Island physician, recognized the need for accessible health care on the island. She contacted Donna Gamiao, Dr. Aluli's former nurse and office manager, with a plan to help restore health care to the rural community.

As a result, Molokai Family and Urgent Care Clinic opened earlier this year in Dr. Aluli's former Kaunakakai office. The Moloka'i clinic is a branch of Dr. Dang-Akiona's Waimea clinic and offers primary and urgent care to residents and visitors.

Dr. Dang-Akiona is steadily building the practice and says, "I'm cautiously optimistic that we can keep providing care, learn firsthand about what the island needs, and adjust and expand accordingly."

The clinic is open Monday through Friday. Appointments are recommended, but walk-ins are welcome. Call (808) 553-5353 or visit kohalacoasturgentcare.com.

Have a great story, place, or event that makes your Neighbor Island community special? Share it with us at feedback@islandscene.com or call (808) 948-6839.



From left: Dr. Ka'ohimanu Dang-Akiona, Cristin Moore (UH Nursing student), and Dr. Pono Casteneras

## kaua'i

#### A new energy on Rice Street

Over the last few decades, the Rice Street area of Līhu'e began to lose its luster. Once the commercial and culture heart of Kaua'i, new highways and development started to change its nature. But now there's an initiative to re-energize the area, says Abbey Seitz of Better Block Hawai'i, which has partnered with the Rice Street Business Association on a two-year project.

The Līhu'e Placemaking, Forestry, and Gardens Initiative is developing trees, gardens, and other enhancements along Rice Street. Seitz says these improvements will attract more people to the community and create safer pedestrian spaces.

"Rice Street is becoming more active with the second-Saturday market with artists and vendors, public art activities, and so much more," says Seitz. Public art activities include murals painted on sidewalks and bus shelters.

The goal, says Seitz, is for the enhancements to be maintained long after the development phase ends. "Our hope is to develop a hui of volunteers to maintain the spaces." To find out about volunteer opportunities, visit downtownlihue.com/ gardens or call (808) 647-0685.

## big island

#### Top marks for Hawai'i educators

What do a Big Island principal, Kalihi principal, and East Honolulu teacher have in common? They're all at the top of their class!

On the Big Island, Ka'ū High & Pāhala Elementary Principal Sharon Beck recently received the 2023 Masayuki Tokioka Excellence in School Leadership Award that recognizes outstanding public school principals for their efforts to provide high-quality learning opportunities. Beck was chosen for her accomplishments and ability to bring the Ka'ū community together despite the challenges of the rural district.

On O'ahu, Fern Elementary School Principal Glen Miyasato was named the state's 2023

National Distinguished Principal by the National Association of Elementary School Principals. Miyasato was praised for exuding the Hawai'i Department of Education's Nā Hopena A'o learning outcomes of belonging, responsibility, excellence, aloha, total well-being, and sense of Hawai'i.

The 2023 Hawai'i State Teacher of the Year title belongs to Michael Ida, who has taught math and science at Kalani High School in East Honolulu for nearly 30 years. Ida, who is visually impaired, is known for his passion for teaching, dedication to helping his fellow teachers grow, and commitment to serving the needs and interests of his students.



Sharon Beck



Glen Miyasato



Michael Ida



## living legacy in mānoa

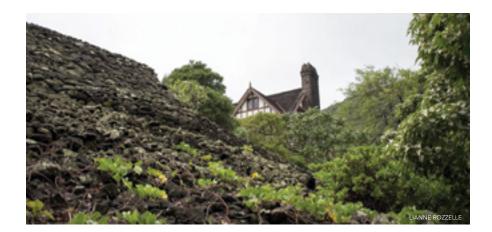


Kūka'ōō is a 500-year-old heiau (ancient temple) believed to honor Lono, the god of agriculture.

It's like a step back in time. Tucked deep in Mānoa Valley, the Mānoa Heritage Center's Hawaiian garden is lush with native and Polynesian-introduced plants that once thrived in the Islands hundreds of years ago before western contact.

"Hawai'i is the endangered species capital of the world," says Jenny Engle, the center's education director, as she walks on the lava rock path winding through pōhinahina, 'ilima, naupaka, and kupukupu ferns. "So when people see how well native plants grow here, they realize that we must care for them or else they'll be gone forever."

There are also taro, sweet potato, ti, noni, and other "canoe" plants that were brought to Hawai'i by the first Polynesians for food, medicine, cordage, or dye.



Kūali'i, the 1911 Tudor Revival home of Sam and Mary Cooke, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Although steeped in the past, the center also helps guide the future by serving as a valuable lesson on the importance of being good stewards of the land. "These plants help keep our watersheds healthy and water supply clean," Engle says.

Preservation is at the heart of Mānoa Heritage Center. Missionary descendants Sam and Mary Cooke created the nonprofit organization on their property in 1996 to teach people about Mānoa's cultural and natural heritage. The Cookes have passed away, but their legacy continues.

Sitting high above the valley floor next to their home is a 500-year-old heiau (ancient temple) that they preserved with guidance from the Hawaiian community. At one time believed to honor Lono, the god of agriculture, Kūka'ōō (which means upright digging stick) is the only intact restored heiau in the Waikīkī ahupua'a.

"It takes your breath away," says Engle as she peers over the heiau and into the valley framed by the Ko'olau Mountains and Wa'ahila Ridge. "You can feel the mana (spiritual energy)."



Group tour of Mānoa Heritage Center's 3.5-acre garden.

It's believed that the heiau was built in its location to mark the seasons. Engle shows a recent photo showing the sunrise directly above the heiau's eastern corner during the spring and fall equinox. "It's a reminder of how connected indigenous people are to the world around them," she says. "In a way, we've lost some of that connection in today's digital age."



Sunrise directly above the heiau's eastern corner during the spring equinox.

As a Mānoa resident, Engle feels immense cultural pride when giving public and school tours about this gem in her neighborhood. The center includes a new education hale for hula, oli, hala weaving, and kapa making. The Cooke's 1911 Tudor-style home is being restored to eventually open as a museum.

Engle is grateful for the Cooke's gift to Hawai'i. "It shows the good that can happen when you realize your dream with good intentions," she says. (5)

To learn more or sign up for a tour, visit manoaheritagecenter.org or call (808) 988-1287.

## caring for our families, friends, and neighbors

words Mark M. Mugiishi, M.D., F.A.C.S.



Gov. Josh Green at the blessing of the Kauhale project.



From left: HMSA's Jennifer Diesman, Gov. Josh Green, Judy Mohr Peterson, and HMSA's Mark Mugiishi at the Kauhale project blessing. Peterson is director of the state's Medicaid program. At HMSA, we have a singular purpose – everything we do is to improve the lives of our members and the health of Hawai'i. We consider it a privilege to be able to care for our families, our friends, and our neighbors.

But improving the health of Hawai'i isn't something we can do on our own. It's why we work in partnership with key stakeholders: providers caring for their patients, employers caring for their employees, the government caring for its citizens, and communities caring for each other.



HMSA employees volunteered for Wahine Build, a Honolulu Habitat for Humanity event that inspires self-reliance in women as they help build affordable homes. From left: Aloha Kim, Jen Gibo, Kris Onaga, Ann Tabieros-Amian. and Allison Valdez.

Through our work, we've learned that community conditions impact health, well-being, and quality of life more than any other factor. This is because the neighborhoods we live in impact the social determinants of health – the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, work, play, worship, and age.

The social determinants are grouped into five domains:



**Economic stability:** Poverty, employment, and food.



Education: Access and quality.





#### **Neighborhood and built environment:** Housing, transportation, infrastructure, and natural resources.



### Social and community context:

Relationships, support, and interventions.

HMSA works tirelessly to promote health care access and quality. But we are keenly aware that this is just one of the social determinants of health.

Through the HMSA Foundation and corporate gifts, grants, and sponsorships, we invest in partnerships with communities to improve health by addressing their needs in all five of the social determinants.

Between 2020 and 2022, HMSA and the HMSA Foundation gave \$11 million to organizations that focus on addressing and improving the social determinants of health in Hawai'i's communities, at a time when it was needed most.

Here are some of those investments to help care for our families, friends, and neighbors:



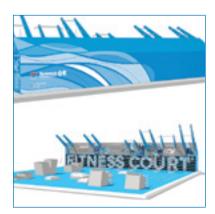
Volunteers on the Kauhale project



#### Housing is health care

The average spending on emergency room care for a homeless person in Hawai'i is \$82,000 per person per year. It's why HMSA is supporting Gov. Josh Green's efforts to build tiny homes, where homeless people who are discharged from the hospital can live with easy access to follow-up care.

As a community-centered model, Kauhale village is a new approach to addressing the needs of people in Hawai'i who are homeless. Offering these individuals a community that they can call home will hopefully instill a sense of pride and motivate them to take better care of themselves.



#### National Fitness Campaign

Since fitness memberships aren't affordable for everyone, HMSA wants to bring fitness areas to communities across the state. Working with the National Fitness Campaign and state lawmakers, HMSA has committed to funding five fitness courts that can be used by adults of all ages and abilities.

"HMSA is proud to be a part of an effort that will bring community organizations and government agencies together to provide exercise courts that are accessible and free," says Jennifer Diesman, HMSA senior vice president of government policy and advocacy. "Physical fitness is important for overall health and well-being, and it's exciting to be a part of this community health initiative."



From left: JABSOM students April Hamachi, Ricky Ma, Duke Escobar, Justin Abe, Tamlyn Sasaki, and Johnathan Kim help the North Shore Food Bank.



The 77 students in the incoming JABSOM Class of 2027 are excited to start working in their Learning Communities.

#### The future of health care

In 2020, the HMSA Foundation committed \$5 million over a period of five years to support a new and innovative way of educating our future health care workforce. The grant, which was awarded to the University of Hawai'i's John A. Burns School of Medicine, supports the Learning Community Program.

"In the classroom, we can tell the students that there are things that need to be done, but being immersed in the community brings them a new perspective," says Stefanie M. Park, M.D., HMSA vice president and chief medical officer.

"Not only are they learning how empathy, understanding, and compassion are equally if not more important than the science behind medicine they learn in the classroom, they're creating real-life connections to patients and communities. One of our great hopes for this program is that it will give students a reason to stay and serve these communities they're learning from."



Kona Moku tour of Kōkua Kalihi Valley's Ho'oulu 'Āina led by Director Puni Jackson.



From left: HMSA employees Erica Pobre, Jayme Higa, Jana Onosaki, Marvin Buenconsejo, Kerri Odo, and Allison Valdez volunteer at the Kapi'olani Radiothon.



#### Adolescent mental health

While it's true that kids are often resilient, they still need to learn how to process complicated situations and emotions. This is especially evident in the increased number of suicides among Hawai'i's teens.

Suicide is a topic that we generally don't talk about openly. But we should. According to the Hawai'i Department of Health, suicide is a significant public health problem in Hawai'i. On average, one person dies by suicide every two days.

Working with our partners at Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children, HMSA is supporting the start-up of a teen resiliency program that will help teens who are at risk for suicide. (3)

## HMSA is Hiring Health Plan Navigators

If you're a strong communicator, have excellent problem-solving skills, and enjoy helping others, apply today!

At HMSA, we embrace our responsibility to improve the health and well-being of Hawaii. We offer a wide range of jobs with:

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### 0ahu

#### **HMSA Center**

818 Keeaumoku St., Hau Room

**10 a.m.–noon** Saturday, Oct. 7, Nov. 4, Dec. 2 Tuesday, Oct. 17 & Nov. 14

#### **HMSA Center in Pearl City**

1132 Kuala St., Suite 400 **10 a.m.–noon** Saturday, Oct. 21 & Nov. 18 Tuesday, Oct. 31 & Nov. 28 Wednesday, Dec. 6

#### Premier Benefits Consultants – Honolulu

1221 Kapiolani Blvd., PH30

**10 a.m.–noon** Saturday, Oct. 21 & 28, English Wednesday, Oct. 25 & Nov. 15, Japanese

Mililani Golf Course 95-176 Kuahelani Ave. 10 a.m.–noon Wednesday, Oct. 25

**Big City Diner - Kaneohe** 46-056 Kamehameha Highway, D-01 **10 a.m.–noon** Monday, Oct. 30

#### Aina Haina Library

5246 Kalanianaole Highway **10 a.m.–noon** Thursday, Nov. 9

### Hawaii Island

### **HMSA Center in Hilo**

303A E. Makaala St. 10 a.m.–noon

Saturday, Oct. 14 & Nov. 11

Premier Benefits Consultants – Hilo 1437 Kilauea Ave., Suite 204 **10 a.m.–noon** Tuesday, Oct. 17 & 24 Friday, Oct. 20

Suite Possibilities – Kailua-Kona 75-5915 Walua Road Noon–2 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 18

#### Naalehu Hongwanji Temple

95-5695 Hawaii Belt Road **11 a.m.–noon.** Saturday, Oct. 21 **9-10 a.m.** Saturday, Nov. 4

### Maui

HMSA Center @ Kahului 70 Hookele St., Suite 1220 10 a.m.–noon Saturday, Oct. 28 & Nov. 25

#### **Kihei Lutheran Church**

220 Moi Pl. **10 a.m.–noon** Friday, Oct. 13 **9-11 a.m.** Thursday, Oct. 26

#### **Heritage Hall Paia**

401 Baldwin Ave. **9–11 a.m.** Tuesday, Oct. 17

Kahului Maui Beach Hotel 170 W. Kaahumanu Ave

**10 a.m.–noon** Wednesday, Nov. 1

### Kauai

Kauai Island Utility Cooperative 4463 Pahee St., #1, Video Conferencing Room 10 a.m.–noon Friday, Oct. 20 & Nov. 17



### Online

#### **Oahu Presentations**

**10 a.m.–noon** Monday, Oct. 9, Nov. 6, Dec. 4 Wednesday, Oct. 18 & Nov. 15 Friday, Oct. 27 & Nov. 24

## Neighbor Island Presentations 2–4 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 9, Nov. 6, Dec. 4 Wednesday, Oct. 18 & Nov. 15 Friday, Oct. 27 & Nov. 24





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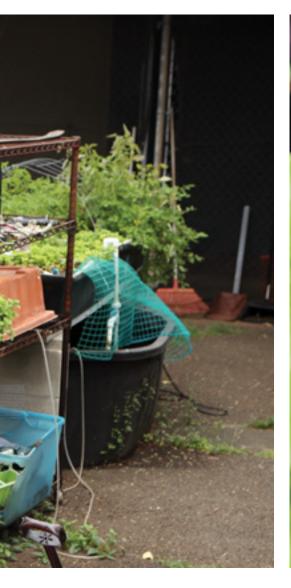


## hands-on learning in a school oasis

words Michelle Liu photos Earl Yoshii From spearmint to basil to

**cilantro**, all kinds of herbs are growing on the sprawling campus of Jefferson Elementary School in Waikīkī. But instead of soil, the garden in the original 21st Century Learning Center is powered entirely by fish.

Students came up with the idea for an aquaponics garden eight years ago and Principal Garret Zakahi was happy to bring it to life.





"Students are always at the heart of any school administrator's decision-making process," Zakahi says. "Our students wanted to learn about different types of gardening and compare traditional gardens with 21st century gardens."

That's why he transformed an old tennis court into an aquaponics garden. Students learn about the delicate, symbiotic relationship between plants and fish, where the waste produced by fish provides plants with nutrients. The plants purify the water that returns to the fish tank.

"We're teaching them that life is all about balance. Humans, animals, and plants all need to live in balance to thrive," says Zakahi.

Left: Andree Paradis, with two of her STEAM enrichment students, explains the importance of balance of spearmint (plants), fish (tilapia), and water flow within the aquaponics system. Right: Water enters the plant bed containing Mānoa lettuce. Expandable clay and roots from the plants help clean the water before it returns to the pond.

23 features





### "We're all connecting with our 'āina."

: Principal Garret Zakahi

Science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) teachers incorporate the garden into their curriculum. Students have studied growth rates on certain types of plants. They've experimented with filtered and unfiltered water and how each impacts the growth of blue tilapia.

Andree Paradis has been teaching the school's youngest students about earth science.

Kindergarteners and first and second graders are learning what makes up soil, the difference between aquaculture and gardening, and the importance of composting.

"My students are developing a love of nature and the environment, learning how to take care of it, and giving back to the planet in a positive way," Paradis says. "Students are learning the vision that we set for our learning centers – connecting classroom knowledge with real-world, hands-on, inquiry-based learning opportunities," Zakahi says. "We're all connecting with our 'āina."

The 21st Century Learning Center has expanded over the years. While the original Learning Center focuses on aquaponics, Learning Center II is filled with hydroponics systems that grows lettuce to feed students' families, faculty, and staff. But the produce is just a bonus to these hands-on science lessons.

"Our keiki are learning about the importance of taking care of our 'āina and appreciating everything it gives to us," Zakahi says. (3)

Read about Jefferson Elementary School's community garden for nearby residents. Visit **islandscene.com/more**.

Above: One of the school's 3rd graders checking on the Mānoa lettuce in an aquaponic garden.

Opposite, clockwise from top left: Garret Zakahi, Andree Paradis, and her students show off Mānoa lettuce grown in an aquaponic garden; Jefferson Elementary's goal is to provide each family with a head of Mānoa lettuce. A school volunteer designed and painted a storage container. Ti leaves, kalo plants, and hybrid tilapia living in balance in the school's 3,000-gallon pond.



Kawailoa Solar is the largest solar project in the state, with Kamehameha Schools producing more clean energy than any other private landowner



## powering a sustainable future

words Allison Valdez photos courtesy of Kawailoa Solar farm

It's a sunny day on O'ahu's picturesque North Shore. While many people relax and enjoy the beauty of the area, the Kawailoa Solar farm works hard to power 8,000 homes each year.

With more than half a million solar panels on 250 acres of Kamehameha Schools (KS) land, Kawailoa Solar is the largest solar project in the state. Operating since 2019, the company is spearheading the transformation of Hawai'i's energy landscape to support the state's ambitious goal to reach 100% clean energy by 2045.

Relying on 'āina – land – and other bountiful natural resources is a concept deeply rooted in Hawai'i's culture. "Sustainability is central to a strong Native Hawaiian identity, resilient communities, and a thriving lāhui (nation)," says Crystal Kua, a Kamehameha Schools spokesperson. "KS produces more clean energy than any other private landowner. And as of 2022, roughly 40% of the state's commercial renewable energy comes from our land."

#### A brighter outlook

The benefits of energy independence abound. Renewable energy reduces air pollution, improves air quality, and lessens the short-and long-term health and environmental impacts of burning fossil fuels. The added jobs and reduced electrical costs of switching to solar also benefit residents and our overall economy.

With education as its core mission, Kamehameha Schools wanted to ensure that 'āina-based learning was integrated into plans for the solar farm leading to educational internships as a teaching tool to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards. Students learn about solar energy, its benefits, and its role in combating climate change. Incorporating real-world applications of renewable energy allows the school system to instill a sense of responsibility in its students and empower them to become advocates for a greener future.

The solar farm is also adjacent to the largest wind farm in the state. Together, they're the biggest renewable energy operation in the state. KS is setting an example for other educational institutions, businesses, and communities.

These projects demonstrate that sustainable solutions can be culturally, environmentally and economically beneficial, paving the way for a greener future in Hawai'i and beyond. With each ray of sunlight, the solar farm's panels generate more than just electricity – they generate hope for a cleaner and brighter tomorrow. (B)



The solar farm generates enough electricity to power up to 8,000 homes annually, with about 40% of Hawai'i's commercial renewable energy generated on Kamehameha Schools land.



## QUEST members, watch for your pink letter in the mail.



Between April 2023 - March 2024, QUEST (Medicaid) members will get an important pink envelope with instructions on how to keep getting QUEST benefits. Check your mail and follow the instructions in the pink envelope, so you can stay well and stay covered. Learn more at medquest.hawaii.gov

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CONTRACTOR OF A

## nourishing the land and its people



words Courtney Takabayashi art Garry Ono He had a vision to change the way communities approach food. Jesse Mikasobe-Kealiinohomoku majored in sustainable community food systems at the University of Hawai'i – West O'ahu. Now, he's working to fulfill his vision as food access manager at Elepaio Social Services, the nonprofit sector for Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC).

#### Meant to be

While Mikasobe-Kealiinohomoku was a student, he attended a farm-to-school meeting at UH West O'ahu. During a breakout session, each person shared a solution to address the future of Hawai'i's food system. "I shared my dream of developing a food forest where communities could learn to grow and harvest food," he says. "I talked about creating a social, intellectual, economic, and political space that addressed systemic change in our food system."

"I shared my dream of developing a food forest where communities could learn to grow and harvest food."

#### : Jesse Mikasobe-Kealiinohomoku



As food access manager, he's responsible for helping individuals and communities adopt healthy behaviors through programs such as workshops, farmers markets, and food pantries.

Though it's his first full-time job after college, Mikasobe-Kealiinohomoku knows

it's the career he was made for. "I love being able to serve the community that raised me by addressing social issues and providing access to food," he says. His colleagues are another reason he loves his job. "They're very passionate about what they do," he says. "They inspire me to do my best in the service of others."

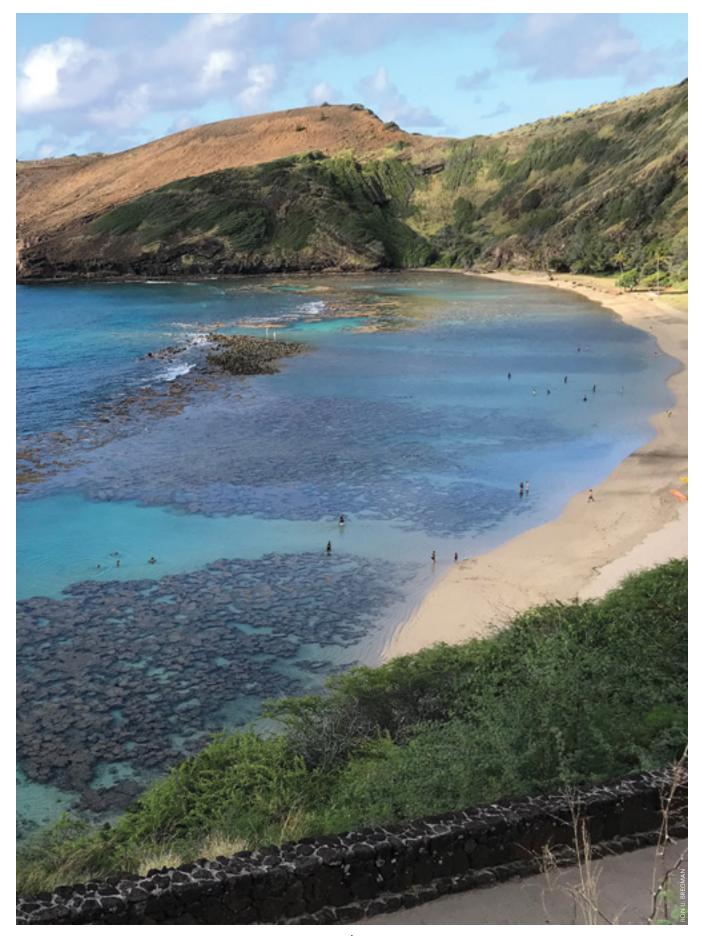
#### Lifelong volunteer

Mikasobe-Kealiinohomoku is also active in the community, volunteering with organizations that help nourish the land and its people:

- Malama Learning Center Awawalei Site. This nonprofit organization teaches communities sustainable living through art, science, conservation, and culture. Their site at Awawalei provides plant material and the knowledge to create home and school gardens. Mikasobe-Kealiinohomoku helps cultivate 'uala (sweet potato), kalo, native plants, and other indigenous crops.
- The Uluniu Project. While Mikasobe-Kealiinohomoku was the president of the Aloha 'Aīna student club at UH West O'ahu, he helped advocate for a space on campus for plant carryout workshops, a seedbank, and a breadfruit and coconut grove. This became The Uluniu Project. Though he graduated, he's still a part of the planning team.
- Loko Ea Fishpond. In addition to planting 'uala, Mikasobe-Kealiinohomoku teaches people how grow it. "It's a great place to gather together and learn," he says. "The 'ike, or knowledge, that's shared through the cultivation of the plant material is a continuum of loving the land and serving people."

"I learned from my mentors that caring for the 'āina is a privilege," Mikasobe-Kealiinohomoku says. "I've found my purpose and work to fulfill it every single day."





## saving hawai'i's coral reefs

words Michelle Liu

Hanauma Bay is one of Hawai'i's

best-known natural wonders. Its iconic keyhole lagoon with calm, crystal-clear water and colorful fish would draw up to 6,000 people daily. But COVID-19 changed that. For nearly nine months in 2020, the bay was closed to visitors. It ended up being a blessing.

"Overtourism and sunscreen pollution have impacted Hanauma's fragile ecosystems and wildlife for decades," explains Ron Bregman, a Friends of Hanauma Bay board member. "But this pause in human usage allowed the bay to experience an unprecedented natural resurgence. Marine animals had a chance to thrive without the pressure of human disturbance and sunscreen contaminants."

Hanauma Bay has since reopened to visitors, but with new restrictions emphasizing conservation over commercialization. A reservation system enforces a daily visitor cap and the bay is closed twice a week. Daily visiting hours have also been reduced.

In addition to these measures, efforts are underway to restore coral in Hanauma Bay. Six coral colonies were installed on the southern side of the bay this spring, where a large log damaged coral in 2020. "These modules each represent 20 to 25 years of natural coral growth," says Bregman. "They should be large enough to survive and thrive in the bay's natural environment."

That's important because a variety of marine life depend on coral reefs for survival. Reef fisheries also provide a significant food source for people and protect shorelines from severe erosion.

But the reefs around Hawai'i are dying. Poor coastal development practices have buried corals in mud and silt. Fertilizers from agriculture and sewage have caused an overgrowth of seaweed that smother corals. While certain fish species would normally eat the seaweed and keep it from killing the coral, they've been overfished.

Coral bleaching is also a significant issue. It's caused by climate change – when the ocean waters are too warm, corals eject the algae living in them, depriving them of their food source. Corals then lose their color, turning white. If their environment remains stressful, the coral will die.



Ron Bregman

Facing page: Hanauma Bay in May 2021, just over one year after the initial pandemic shut down, well into the restoration/rejuvenation phase

That's why there's a push to restore coral around O'ahu. While this is the first large-scale coral restoration project in Hanauma Bay, there have been other pilot projects. In 2016, the Hixon Lab at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa added "fish condos" made of concrete blocks to the outer sand flats of Hanauma Bay. Their goal was to determine if these condos would provide enough shelter for fish to colonize, clean the nearby seafloor of seaweeds, and result in replenished coral growth.

"Off Waikīkī Beach, we learned that providing shelter for fish enhances the local abundance of coral," says Mark Hixon, Ph.D., Hsiao Endowed Professor of Marine Biology in the School of Life Sciences at UH Mānoa. "We also found that living fragments of colonies dislodged by storms, waves, or other disturbances thrived when attached to these artificial structures."



Mark Hixon, Ph.D.



Left: An employee of the Hawaii Coral Restoration Nursery and a member of Friends of Hanauma Bay display corals being grown. Right: One of the coral modules from the restoration project planted in Hanauma Bay.

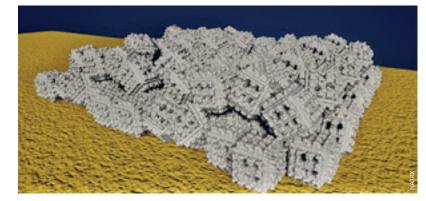


Progress of coral growth using concrete block "fish condos"

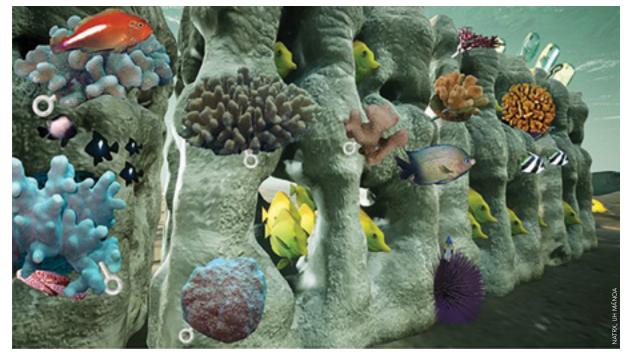
January 2021

December 2021

June 2022



Preliminary visualization of a portion of a REEFrame permanent coral nursery immediately after placement. Each 3D-printed concrete module measures about one cubic yard.



Close-up preliminary visualization of 3D-printed concrete modules with corals-of-opportunity mounted on attachment points, as well as colonizing species beneficial to corals, including trapezoid crabs that defend coral from predators (lower left), surgeonfishes and sea urchins that control seaweeds, and various fishes known to fertilize corals.

The miniature versions that Hixon created for the pilot project are being tested on a much-larger scale. The REEFrame project will build two coral nurseries off Waikīkī – each about 100-by-100-feet and seven feet tall. They'll help restore reefs in the area, where most of the coral has died and collapsed.

"The organic shapes of the structures will attract colonizing fishes and other organisms, stimulating natural growth of corals," says Hixon. "The structures will eventually become coral reefs in their own right."

They'll be built about three-quarters of a mile off the beach, so surf spots and boating won't be affected. The REEFrame project is also working with Waikīkī fishermen, surfers, residents, and hotels to design and build the coral nurseries in ways that will best serve the community.

"This and other coral restoration projects will help ensure that our children and grandchildren will enjoy the same benefits of a thriving ocean ecosystem as previous generations," says Hixon. (3)



The ancient coastal trail system known as the Ala Kahakai or Ala Loa leading east through Kahuku toward Pōhue Bay, Ka'ū

## a trail of history and culture

words David Frickman

photos courtesy of Ala Kahakai Trail Association

### Before the invention of cars and the modern roadways,

Hawaiians used the trail system to get around their island. Remnants of these trails can be found on every island today.

On Hawai'i Island, a lengthy trail system is preserved through the efforts of the National Park Service and volunteers dedicated to its historic and cultural significance.

The Ala Kahakai Trail is a 175-mile corridor that connects culturally and historically significant trails along the coastline (ala kahakai means "trail by the sea") from 'Upolu Point at the northern tip of the island, down the Kona Coast, and all the way into Puna at the eastern boundary of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. In 2000, the National Park Service designated the Ala Kahakai Trail a National Historic Trail.

Soon after, a group of volunteers was formed to help the National Park Service preserve the trail system. The nonprofit Ala Kahakai Trail Association, or ATA, is made up of volunteers, most of whom have ancestral ties to the trail.

"These are people whose family members had grown up with either a lineal connection to the lands the trail was on or had grown up using the trail to go fishing or go to the beach," says Ethan Souza, ATA vice president. "They were worried about the preservation of these trail systems and still having access to them."





Keoni Fox, ATA President

Ethan Souza, ATA Vice President





Top: Community members descend the steep trail along the Pohina Pali toward the coastline of Kaunāmano, Ka'ū. Bottom: Part of the trail in north Kona near Kiholo Bay looking south toward Hualālai.

Part of the challenge in preserving the trail system involves managing development that could impact or even destroy portions of the trail. In Kohala and North Kona, the trail is preserved around and through subdivisions and resorts that have sprung up. Farther south, the ATA helped the county acquire land around Ka'u to spare it from development.

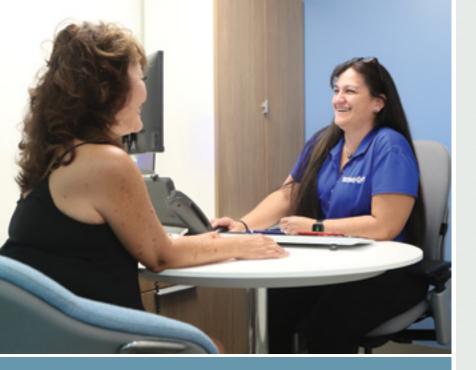
"Our goal is to help communities take stewardship of the resources in their areas," Souza says. "For us, that means making sure that these ancient historic, archaeological, and cultural sites on the trail and adjacent to it aren't developed. That would be the worst-case scenario for the lineal descendants, cultural practitioners, or people who want to respectfully interact with the trail."

Souza says preservation includes caring for the plant and animal life along the trail.

"There are a lot of native and, in some cases, quite rare and endangered plants. In our coastal areas, you see a lot of migratory seabirds like kōlea, 'ūlili, and even kioea, which is a little bit more endangered. There's a potential threat from non-native species like mongoose and feral cats that pose a risk to native species."

The preservation efforts don't include keeping people off the trail. Souza says hikers and nature lovers can come and experience the Ala Kahakai Trail for themselves.

"One of the best things people can do is scrub down their shoes before going on the trail to make sure they're not bringing seeds from harmful plants. Then go and enjoy walking the trail and see the same things that people would have seen hundreds of years ago." (3)



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### water music

words Craig DeSilva

Megan Conley loves the ocean as much as she loves music. So it's entirely fitting that the harpist is inspired to use music to affect global change.

"Like many people in Hawai'i, I feel a powerful connection to the ocean," says Conley. "Hearing how there'll be more plastic than fish in the water by 2050 and how forever chemicals contaminate drinking water made me want to take action."

Conley created the nonprofit organization, Ocean Music Action, to use the power of music to raise awareness about ocean conservation. She organizes concerts featuring ocean-inspired music that's followed by a clean-up project.

Earlier this year, she organized a concert with local and international musicians in Orvis Auditorium at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. A couple days after the concert, the musicians and audience members volunteered for a limu huki (literally "pull") with Mālama Maunalua, a nonprofit environmental organization that works to rid invasive seaweed and pollution from Maunalua Bay in Hawai'i Kai.

"It was a great opportunity for us to connect with the local community, learn about Maunalua Bay, and give back to this beautiful place," she says. Conley, who's originally from Texas, fell in love with the ocean after frequent trips to the Islands with her husband, Honolulu bassist Shawn Conley. They'd often hike to the top of Diamond Head, where they'd be in awe of the different shades of blue in the water and coral reef. The couple moved to Hawai'i at the start of the pandemic to raise their 5-year-old son, who they named Osian.

"We're so grateful to live in Hawai'i," she says. "Volunteering is a way for us to show our gratitude and respect for the land and the people."

Ocean Music Action has sponsored beach cleanups on the Mainland and participated in conservation programs at the Waikīkī Aquarium, Bishop Museum, and Kapi'olani Park. Conley plans to organize more events locally and nationally.

"Whether cleaning up the bay in Maunalua or a bayou in Houston, I hope to continue the spirit of mālama 'āina and use art as a way for us as global citizens to give back."

Learn more about how Ocean Music Action uses music, art, education, and community service to help protect the environment at oceanmusicaction.org.

To get involved with Mālama Maunalua, visit malamamaunalua.org.



Top: Megan Conley (left) with her son, Osian. Bottom: Mālama Maunalua volunteers pull invasive seaweed at Maunalua Bay.

Facing page: Harpist Megan Conley founded the nonprofit Ocean Music Action in 2021 to promote music and environmental preservation.



# the man who saves lives

words Lynn Shibuya

### Earlier this year, Ryan Roberts saved

a woman's life. She was choking on a cough drop and he performed the Heimlich maneuver on her. She was 100 years old.

Amazingly, it wasn't the first time Roberts saved a life. He's saved four other lives before that day.

#### Meet Ryan Roberts

Roberts is a local boy, family man, and ceramics teacher at 'Iolani School in Honolulu.

When Roberts was a student at 'lolani School, his father, Dave, taught ceramics at the school. After college, Roberts followed in his father's footsteps, becoming a ceramics teacher at 'lolani School. Father and son had the opportunity to work together for a decade before the elder Roberts retired.

Ryan Roberts' two sons, who are in 6th and 8th grade at 'Iolani School, similarly get to see their dad working with and mentoring students in the school's ceramics studio.

### **Saving lives**

Roberts was driving home from 'Iolani School with his sons when he noticed two women, a daughter and her elderly mother, outside their car. The elderly woman was in distress. Roberts pulled over to help. He learned that the woman was choking and performed the Heimlich maneuver on her. She expelled a cough drop and cried tears of relief.

After Roberts saved the woman's life, his older son called Roberts' wife, Kira, to tell her what happened. The car ride home was a proud dad moment because his sons were in awe of what he had done.



Roberts oversees a student's wheel-throwing technique

Roberts' first lifesaving moments occurred in high school. He helped a classmate out of a fire. On a separate occasion, he saved a classmate from drowning. In college, he witnessed a moped-truck collision that pinned the moped rider under the truck. He helped get the moped rider out. More recently, he and a friend were at Manoa Marketplace when they saw a woman who had fainted. Ryan administered CPR while his friend ran across the street to the fire station for help.

Roberts has been trained in CPR for 20 years. The training is required for 'Iolani School faculty. In fact, the faculty had renewed their CPR training just two weeks before Roberts saved the woman's life.

While Roberts acknowledges that it's unique to save so many lives when it isn't his line of work, he insists that he isn't special. "I think that if people are given the opportunity to do something good, most people would do it," he says.

Roberts believes that helping people is the right thing to do. He hopes that someone would help his aging parents or other family members if they were in a life-or-death situation. And while willingness to help is the first step, knowing first aid can help improve the outcome.

"Life is fragile, and we may need help ourselves or need to help someone when we least expect it," he says. "The more that people know life-saving skills and are willing and able to help, the better we'll be as a community."



Ryan Roberts, his wife, Kira, and sons enjoying a day on the water



### Conscious choking: How to help

If someone is choking and conscious, they may not be able to speak, cough, or breathe. Scan the QR code to learn how to help them.

To contact the American Red Cross of Hawaii, visit redcross.org/local/hawaii.html, email CHHonoluluHIInfo@redcross.org, or call (808) 734-2101. To sign up for classes online or in person, including CPR and first aid, visit redcross.org/take-a-class or call 1 (800) 733-2767.





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These providers joined HMSA's network between March 21 and June 20, 2023.

For a complete list of providers, contact information, and plans accepted, visit Find a Doctor on hmsa.com.



### health matters

### Get grateful

Thanksgiving isn't the only time you should pause to reflect on what you're grateful for. Expressing gratitude can help your mental and physical health by improving sleep, mood, and immunity. "We're all wired to reduce the amount of positive emotions we experience, so we have to learn to remember to savor it," says James Westphal, M.D., medical director at HMSA and Carelon Behavioral Health.

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He adds that writing in a gratitude journal regularly and focusing on the positive helps us reframe our thinking and boost our wellness. "Afterward, spread the positivity by sharing what you're thankful for with a spouse, child, or relative," Dr. Westphal says.



#### Jellyfish stings

Like clockwork, jellyfish appear near Hawai'i's shorelines eight to 10 days after a full moon. If you get stung, experts at the University of Hawai'i say the best treatment is to rinse the affected area with vinegar and apply heat, which prevents further stinging and decreases venom activity. And before you approach the water, check warning signs posted at the beach that warn of dangerous wildlife and conditions.



### Panic or anxiety?

Your heart is pounding, it's hard to breathe, and you're in distress – is it an anxiety attack or a panic attack? Although the terms may seem interchangeable, they typically have different causes and levels of severity. According to *Medical News Today*, anxiety attacks are a response to a perceived stressor or threat. Anxiety can build gradually over time after a period of excessive worry. In comparison, panic attacks are shorter, more-sudden episodes of intense fear with no apparent cause.

Talk to your doctor if you're not sure what's causing your symptoms. At home, practicing mindfulness and relaxation techniques, eating healthy, and getting enough sleep can help reduce anxiety and fear.

## A lifetime of good health is powered by a healthy smile

Your dental health can greatly impact the rest of your body. If you have a medical condition such as diabetes or heart disease, HMSA's Oral Health for Total Health can help you live healthier and save money.

The program provides extra dental services to members with eligible conditions. And in 2024, the program will expand to include even more services.

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### for your benefit

### Help with managing diabetes

Whether you're newly diagnosed or have been living with type 2 diabetes for decades, HMSA has diabetes management classes to help you successfully manage the condition. Class facilitators include a diabetes educator, registered nurse, and health coach who'll help you live more fully.

The free two-part series of classes is held the second and third Wednesday of each month at the HMSA Center in Honolulu; virtual options are also available.

For more information or to register, call 1 (855) 329-5461.



#### All-in-one care

QUEST Integration members who have special health care needs or receive long-term services and supports can benefit from Health Coordination Services. This HMSA program reviews and implements options and services members may need on their well-being journey.

Both children and adults may be eligible for Health Coordination Services, including children with autism and members who:

- Have a chronic condition such as asthma, diabetes, hypertension, cancer, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.
- Use the emergency room significantly more than average.
- Are being discharged from an acute care setting.
- Have been readmitted to a hospital within the last 30 days.

If you're a QUEST Integration member and think Health Coordination Services can help you or your family, talk to your primary care provider.

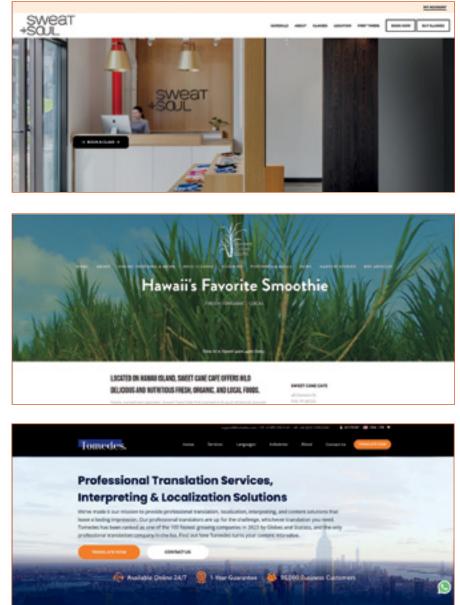
### A break for your wallet

With HMSA365, you can save money on health and well-being products and services. To get a discount, simply show your HMSA membership card at participating businesses. There's no paperwork to do or claims to file.

Check out these discounts:

- CHI Health Center: Pearl City. Receive a discounted rate of \$60 for acupuncture services. (808) 387-4678.
- Sweat & Soul Studio: Honolulu. Save \$10 on any starter pack with code HMSASTART. Save \$50 on a first-month membership with code HMSA50. Save \$100 on an annual unlimited membership with code HMSA100. Restrictions may apply. (808) 593-8384.
- Sweet Cane Café: Hilo. Get 10% off the soup of the day. (808) 937-0160.
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Go to hmsa.com/hmsa365 and browse for more discounts by island or categories. If you have questions, call 1 (855) 329-5461.



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### by the book

# get your hands dirty

words Courtney Takabayashi

ardening is a great hobby. It can provide a steady source of nutritious food and beautify your living space. And according to the Mayo Clinic, there are health benefits such as increased exercise and reduced stress.

Here are some book recommendations to help you get started.



#### Growing Fruits in Hawaii – Also Herbs, Nuts, and Seeds: A How-To Guide for the Gardener By Kathy Oshiro

Since Hawai'i is made up of different microclimates, a plant that grows successfully in one place might not do so well one town over. And when you take soil conditions into account, starting a garden in your backyard may seem overwhelming. Oshiro's book addresses what you need to know about soil preparation, fertilizers, seed and plant selection, fences, trellises and containers, watering, and pest control. She also includes recipes.

### Native Hawaiian Plants: How to Grow, Cultivate, and Enjoy 25 **Popular Plants**

By Kerin Lilleeng

This guide to native plants is a useful reference for local gardeners. Included are "species that propagate, bloom, and flower in accordance with Hawai'i's natural climate and on their own schedules." Each entry includes a description, info on the plant's origins, growing methods, pest and disease control, and planting instructions.

#### Super Simple Guide to **Creating Hawaiian Gardens:** For Kama'aina and Malihini By Barbara Fahs

This book is a good beginner's guide to maintaining native vegetation, planting trees, and growing your own produce. It also details how to identify and clear invasive plants. Learn about Hawai'i's flora ranging from fruits and vegetables to decorative and medicinal plants.

#### RHS Little Book of Small-space Gardening: Easy-grow Ideas for Balconies, Window Boxes & Other Outdoor Areas By Kay Maguire

This project-based gardening book is perfect for anyone who wants to start small or doesn't have a yard. Grow a variety of plants on your lānai, windowsill, porch, or even doorstep. Projects include "wildlife pots, fragrant baskets, and green garden walls." Plus, learn about plant profiles, which can help you understand what's best to grow in a variety of conditions, such as wind, shade, and heat.

### Your Information is Private

HMSA works hard to keep the information you share with us confidential.

Learn more about your privacy rights as an HMSA member and how we use your health information to serve you.

See the Privacy Notice at hmsa.com/privacy/notice or call (808) 948-6079 or 1 (800) 776-4672.





1010-797500

### Convenient Care 24/7

Telehealth lets you get the health care you need when you need it without leaving home. Ask your doctor if your next appointment can be on your smartphone, tablet, or computer.

If you don't have a doctor, use **HMSA's Online Care**<sup>®</sup> from anywhere in Hawaii 24/7.

Try Online Care for convenient care anytime. Simply visit hmsaonlinecare.com, download the app, or scan the QR code.





You don't have to be an HMSA member to use Online Care. Depending on your health plan, you may be charged a copayment.

Amwell is an independent company providing hosting and software services for HMSA's Online Care platform on behalf of HMSA.

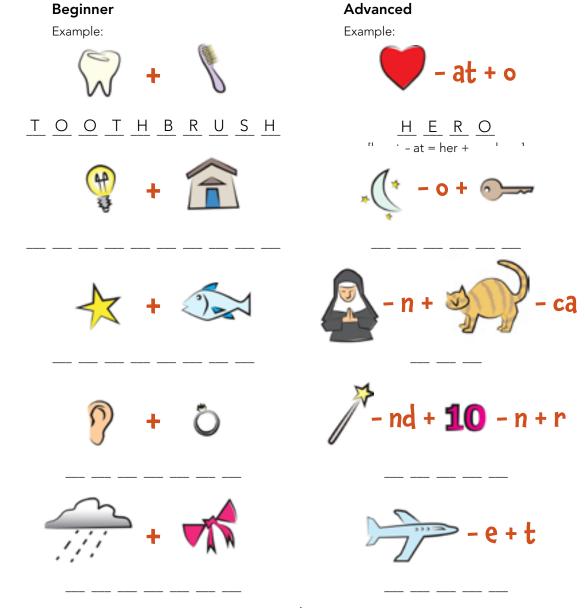




## keiki corner

## Rebus fun

Have you solved a rebus before? In a rebus, words are represented by a combination of pictures and letters. It's a good exercise for your brain. See if you can solve these puzzles!



family matters **52** 

### Lost nene

Follow the letters that spell out "NENE" and help the nene find its way home!



Ε F Ν Ε Ν Ν А Ε Y Ε Ρ А Ε U Κ Ν Ν Ν V Ν Ν W E Х С E В Μ Ο Ν Ε Y Ρ E V Е R Е Ν Ν Ρ F U J Ν А Ν Ο О V Ν Е Н Ε С Е Ν Е W Ζ Ν R Κ Ν Ε В Ν Ν Μ Ζ S S Е W Е Е L Ο D Ν С Ν Ε Ν Е Ν Ν E А Е Ν G J В Т D  $\bigcirc$ Ρ



### DIY Halloween stress balls

Squeeze and squish these Halloween stress balls. It's a relaxing sensory activity for kids and adults. Plus, they're inexpensive to make and you can use supplies you already have!

You'll need:

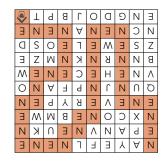
- Orange and white balloons
- Permanent marker
- Funnel
- Filling rice, popcorn kernels, small dried beans, cornstarch, or playdough

#### Instructions

Stretch balloons by blowing them up and holding them for 30 seconds. Let the air out. Use the funnel to add your choice of filling. Tip: Another set of hands to stretch the top of the balloon is helpful. Once balloons are filled, tie them closed. Decorate with permanent maker. Your stress balls are ready for squeezing!















### CONGRATULATIONS to the 2023 Kaimana Recipients

The HMSA Kaimana Awards & Scholarship Program celebrates 18 years of recognizing Hawaii high schools and high school seniors for excellence in academics, athletics, community service, healthy activities, and sportsmanship.



hmsa.com/kaimana

### Kaimana School Award Winners

### **Big Island Interscholastic Federation**

Small School: Parker School Large School: Kea'au High School

#### Interscholastic League of Honolulu

Small School: University Laboratory School Large School: Saint Louis School

Kauai Interscholastic Federation Kapa'a High School

#### Maui Interscholastic League

Small School: Maui Preparatory Academy Large School: Kamehameha Schools Maui

### Oahu Interscholastic Association

Small School: Kahuku High & Intermediate School Large School: Moanalua High School

SPONSORS







The Kaimana Awards & Scholarship Program is proudly sponsored by HMSA and the Hawaii High School Athletic Association. For the complete list of scholarship recipients and school winners, visit hmsa.com/kaimana.

### Kaimana Scholarship Winners



EMMA BURGESS Kaua'i High School



LANDON CHOY Kamehameha Schools Kapālama



TAYLOR GUERRERO Honoka'a High & Intermediate School



DAVID KALILI Nānākuli High & Intermediate School



KAIMANA KAU Kamehameha Schools Kapālama



CHANCEN LAW Kamehameha Schools Kapālama



ANDREW LEE Kalani High School



ERIN NAKAMURA Roosevelt High School



HOPE NEWTON Waimea High School



KRISTEN OTSUBO Baldwin High School



GABRIELLA PINHEIRO Kamehameha Schools Maui



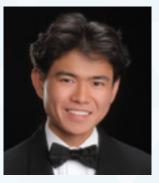
JASMINE LIANALYN ROCHA Maryknoll School



REBECCA TANG Parker School



AIMEE VIERRA Kaiser High School



MAVERICK YASUDA Waipahu High School

# is it 'ulu season yet?

words Marlene Nakamoto

HAWAI'I 'ULU COOPERATIVE

The next time you crave 'ulu (breadfruit), you may not need an answer to that question. That's because the Hawa'i 'Ulu Cooperative works to make sure that you can enjoy 'ulu even when it's not in season.

"'Ulu season is pretty long, typically from July to January," says Kenta Nemoto, the co-op's marketing manager. "Peak season is around October and November. Sometimes we get a bonus crop in the spring."





With the goal of making it easier for consumers to eat more locally grown staples, the co-op processes farmer-members' crops – 'ulu, kalo (taro), 'uala (sweet potato), and pala'ai (pumpkin) – into frozen "recipe-ready" packs sold in the frozen food section at retail stores. The co-op also develops other products such as 'ulu flour, hummus, and chocolate mousse.

Nine farmers formed the co-op in 2016 hoping to revitalize the demand for Hawai'i-grown staples such as 'ulu to strengthen the state's food security. "Our first major client was the Hawai'i Department of Education," says Nemoto. "We participated in a program called 'Harvest of the Month,' that featured a local food that students could learn about. We supplied the entire state school system with 'ulu, kalo, 'uala, bananas, and green papaya."





- 1) Imaika Yeaman, a fisherman, works as a harvester.
- 2) Periodically, the co-op hosts workshops to help farmers better manage their trees. This group learned the finer points of pruning.
- 3) Co-op farmer Stanley Eugenio
- 4) Noa Kekuewa Lincoln, an assistant professor in the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, demonstrates how to graft an 'ulu scion on a pruned tree.





Then COVID-19 hit and the schools were shut down. "We lost our biggest source of revenue," says Nemoto. "That's when we launched our retail line."

At its modest headquarters in Kona, 'ulu, kalo, 'uala, and pala'ai are washed, peeled, steamed, packaged, and frozen.

Other drop-off sites in Hilo, North Kohala, and Puna, and on Maui and O'ahu, allow an efficient farm-to-table process. "We have a standardized process that allows us to partner with certified kitchens to prepare the crops to the same, exact specifications," says Nemoto. "Our vision is to have many more drop-off sites and the use of more commercial kitchens."

Hawai'i Food Service Alliance, who has a similar mission to make local produce more accessible, handles retail distribution of the co-op's products.

The co-op is steadfast in their mission to revitalize the demand for local, staple foods. Now, with more than 140 member-farms on the Big Island, Kaua'i, Maui, and O'ahu, there's plenty for everyone all year round.

Visit Hawai'i 'Ulu Cooperative's website at eatbreadfruit.com for their online store, product locator and descriptions, recipes, member application, and more.



ALL PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE COURTESY HAWAI'I 'ULU COOPERATIVE

- 1) Mature 'ulu ready for processing
- 2) Production supervisor Leilani Aveiro (left) works with the processing team.
- 3) Steamed 'ulu cools before packing and freezing
- 4) Frozen, recipe-ready 'ulu makes it possible for consumers to eat it year-round.





### Easy 'Ulu Chili

Kealakehe High School Culinary Arts Program

- 12 oz. recipe-ready 'ulu, thawed
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1½ cups vegetable stock, divided
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced 1½ tsp. chipotle powder
- 2 Tbsp. ground cumin
- 2 Tbsp. chili powder
  8 oz. can tomato sauce
  14 oz. can diced tomatoes with juice
  ½ cup chopped cilantro
  15 oz. can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
  12 oz. corn, fresh or canned (drained)
- Sour cream, shredded cheese, and diced avocado for serving

Dice 'ulu into 1/2-inch cubes and set aside. In a large saucepan, heat oil over medium heat. Sauté onion and garlic 2 minutes, then add half the stock. Add carrot, bell pepper, chipotle powder, cumin, and chili powder. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add remaining stock, 'ulu, tomato sauce, tomatoes, cilantro, kidney beans, and corn. Simmer uncovered 10 minutes. Serve with sour cream, cheese, and avocado. Makes 10 servings.

Approximate nutrient analysis per serving (without sour cream, cheese, or avocado): 140 calories, 2.5 g fat, 0.5 g saturated fat, 300 mg sodium, 26 g carbohydrate, 5 g fiber, 8 g sugar, 4 g protein

recipe photo Rae Huo food styling Marjie Beaton

### 'Ulu Chocolate Chip Cookies Nina Beatty

1¼ cups 'ulu flour
½ tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. sea salt
3/8 tsp. xanthan gum\*
½ cup coconut oil
¾ cup packed dark brown sugar
1 egg plus one egg yolk

- 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> tsp. almond milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup chopped roasted unsalted macadamia nuts

In a medium bowl, stir together flour, baking soda, salt, and xantham gum. Stir in coconut oil and brown sugar. In a small bowl, beat egg with egg yolk, almond milk, and vanilla extract. Add to dry ingredients and mix well. Add chocolate chips and nuts and blend well. Cover and refrigerate overnight or at least 1 hour. (Don't skip this step. It prevents the cookies from being gritty.)

Preheat oven to 350 F. Divide dough into 12 balls and place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Press the balls slightly. Bake 10-14 minutes or until the edges start to brown. Makes 12 cookies.

\*Available at health food stores.

Approximate nutrient analysis per cookie: 320 calories, 19 g fat, 12 g saturated fat, 30 mg cholesterol, 160 mg sodium, 38 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 28 g sugar, 3 g protein

Learn how to pūlehu 'ulu – roast a whole 'ulu in a fire – at **islandscene.com/more**.

### **Akamai Living Fair** Free drive-through event for kupuna and families. Hilo • Get a flu shot. Friday, Oct. 20 Get health information and other resources. 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. • Enter a drawing to win a prize. **Hilo Civic** Auditorium For more information, call Elderly Recreation Services at the Kamana Senior Center at (808) 961-8710. Mahalo to our partners for their support: hmsa 🕲 🕅

# **HMSA Health Education Workshops**

Check out these free health education workshops we're offering this fall.



### Just the Facts

Learn how to read, understand, and compare nutrition facts labels to help you make healthier food and drink choices.

Oct. 17, 10–11 a.m. • HMSA Center in Honolulu Oct. 27, 10–11 a.m. • HMSA Center in Pearl City Oct. 28, 10–11 a.m. • HMSA Center in Hilo Nov. 18, 10–11 a.m. • HMSA Center in Kahului Nov. 30, noon-1 p.m. • Online at hmsa.com

There's no cost to attend workshops. Workshop dates and times are subject to change.



### **Rest Easy?**

Stress can sometimes affect our ability to get a full night's rest and impact our overall health. Join us to learn how you can rest easy.

Oct. 28, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. • HMSA Center in Hilo Nov. 6, 10–11 a.m. • HMSA Center in Honolulu Nov. 18, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. • HMSA Center in Kahului

Nov. 21, 10–11 a.m. • HMSA Center in Pearl City Dec. 15, noon-1 p.m. • Online at hmsa.com

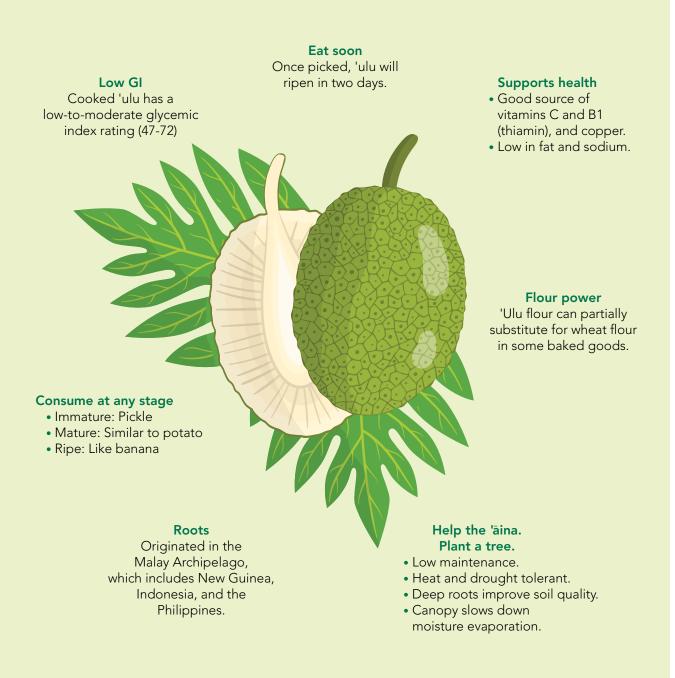
Visit hmsa.com/HealthEducation or call 1 (855) 329-5461 to register.



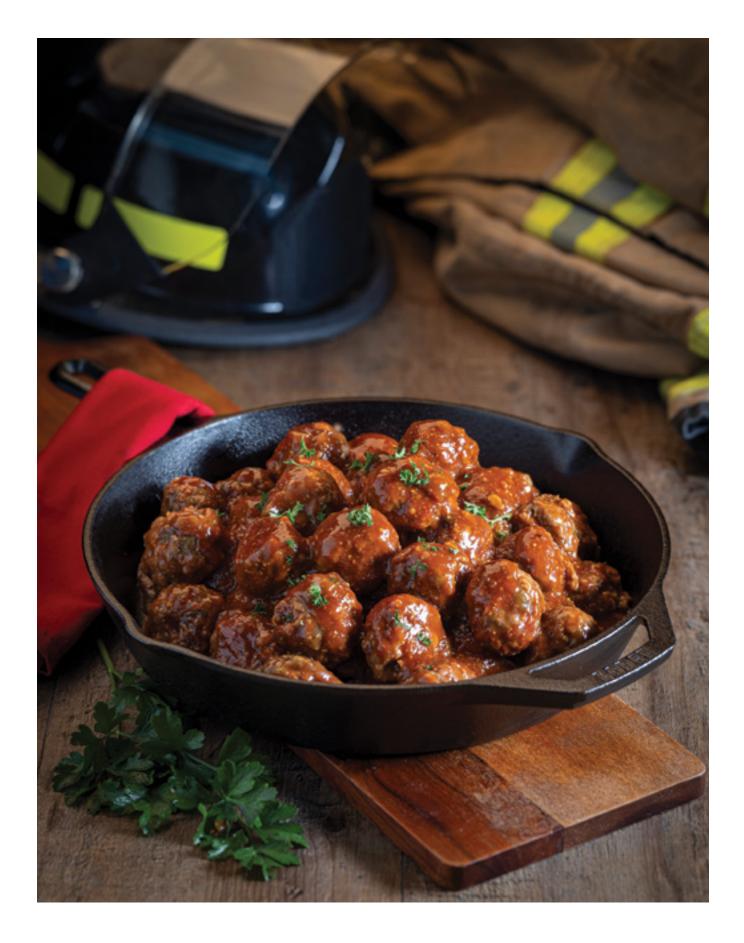
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## 'ulu: planet and palate pleaser

The fruit of the 'ulu tree is a sustainable, nutritious, and accessible food source that can be prepared in many ways. And like many other plants, breadfruit trees can help maintain a vibrant 'āina and mitigate the effects of climate change.



words Marlene Nakamoto



## hot recipes

words Craig DeSilva and Marlene Nakamoto photos Lew Harrington food styling Marjie Beaton

Firefighters are our heroes. They're the first responders for those unexpected moments – whether there's a fire, medical emergency, or collision on the road. We salute firefighters for their service and for keeping our communities safe.

In addition to being skilled lifesavers, firefighters are also skilled cooks. Preparing hearty meals at the fire station keeps the crew nourished and ready for the next call.

To acknowledge this life-enhancing skill, we share recipes from the Honolulu Fire Department for you to enjoy at home.

### **BBQ** Meatballs

Waipahu Fire Station, 2nd Platoon

2 lbs. ground beef 1 lb. ground pork ¾ cup oatmeal 1 Tbsp. salt ½ tsp. pepper 1 cup milk 1 green bell pepper, minced

#### Sauce

1½ cups ketchup
¼ cup plus 2 Tbsp. vinegar
3 Tbsp. reduced-sodium shoyu
¼ cup plus 2 Tbsp. packed light brown sugar
3 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
2 Tbsp. mustard

In a large bowl, combine beef, pork, oatmeal, salt, pepper, milk, and bell pepper. Shape into balls. Brown meatballs in a skillet and transfer to a baking pan. Combine sauce ingredients in a bowl and pour over meatballs. Cover baking pan with foil and bake in preheated 350 F oven for 1 hour. Makes 8 servings.

Approximate nutrient analysis per serving: 550 calories, 31 g fat, 12 g saturated fat, 120 mg cholesterol, 1,800 mg sodium, 33 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 24 g sugar, 34 g protein



#### Moku's Beef Stew HFD Headquarters

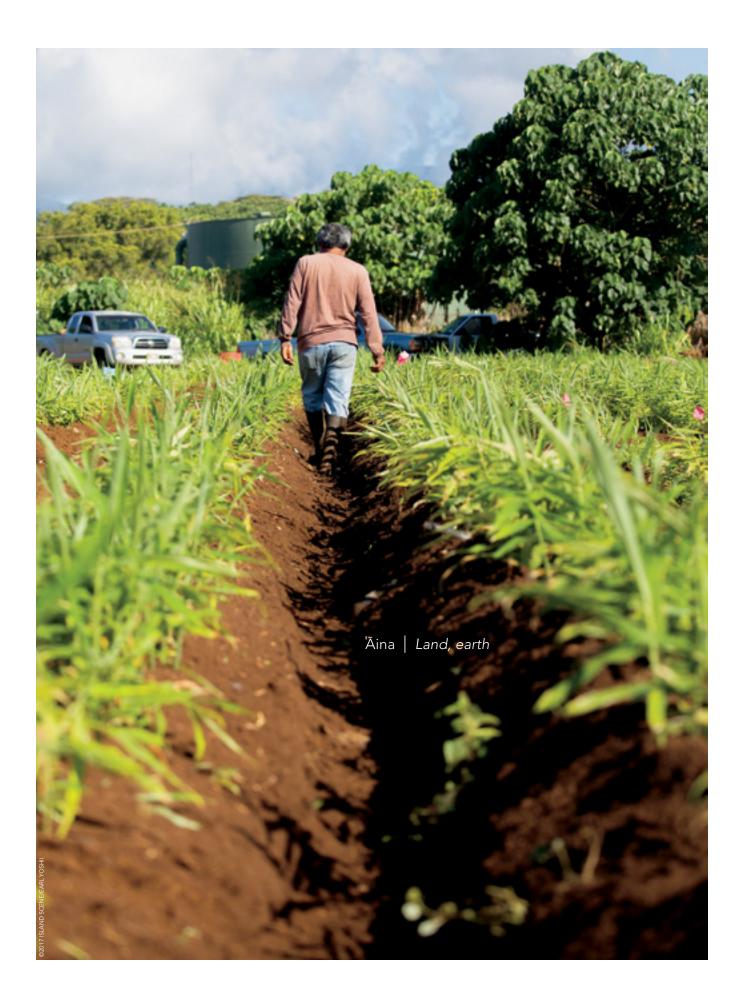
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 6 lbs. beef stew meat
- 1½ Tbsp. Hawaiian salt
- 3 large onions, chopped
- 4-6 stalks celery, chopped
- 8-10 cups water
- 4-6 bay leaves
- 1 beef bouillon cube
- 1 8 oz. can tomato sauce
- 4 large carrots, chopped into 1-inch pieces
- 2 large potatoes, chopped
- 5 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 5 Tbsp. water

In a large pot, heat olive oil on medium-high heat. Brown meat with Hawaiian salt. Add onions and celery and fry 5-7 minutes. Stir in water, bay leaves, bouillon cube, and tomato sauce. Increase heat and bring to a rapid boil. Reduce heat, cover, and cook until meat is fork-tender, about 2 hours. Skim the fat and adjust seasonings, if needed. Add carrots and cook 10-15 minutes; add potatoes and cook 10-15 minutes. Mix cornstarch and water in a small bowl. Add to stew, stirring until thickened. Serve with rice. Makes 18 servings.

Approximate nutrient analysis per serving (not including rice): 270 calories, 8 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 100 mg cholesterol, 900 mg sodium, 15 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 3 g sugar, 35 g protein

Fire Prevention Month in October is a good time to review cooking and grilling safety tips. Visit **islandscene.com/more** for tips and a poke nachos recipe.

eat well 64



Island Scene PO Box 3850 Honolulu HI 96812-3850

islandscene.com

# "He's my hero ...

... watching him do all those things and still smile and be the happy kid that he is."

> - Dad Jeremy Yim, talking about his son, Elijah

Thanks to the quality care he received through HMSA, Elijah Yim overcame challenges to help him live his best life.

Families like the Yims mean everything to us. It's why we're here. It's why we're HMSA.

hmsa 🖓

Watch their story at hmsa.com/Elijah.

