Friends of
Hoa'Āina O Mākaha

Email: contact@hoa-aina.org Web Site: www@hoa-aina.org

Year of 2009



Merry Christmas

From the Board of Directors and Staff.

Reflections



I was sitting down in our kitchen with a piece of paper and a pencil and started to think about this past year so we could share with you at least some of the most important things that had happened during the year.

In life there are beautiful things that make you thankful or inspired and other things that just are so painful that it makes the heart ache. After the initial shock passes, we can look back and we can see that everything falls into place, like the pieces of a puzzle.

HALE HAUMANA

In February Pomaika'i and I were in Italy for my nephew's wedding, we stayed with my sister and her family when I received a call from Judy to tell me that the Hale was set on fire again, for the third time. There was a long silence in the house because I could not believe that it could happen again. We lit two candles, one for the people who burnt the Hale, maybe their lives were in turmoil, and one for everyone affected by this senseless act of violence. The act of lighting the candles symbolized our courage to not lose hope or get discouraged. We may never find out who did this or why, but that isn't the important question. All of us were in pain and very angry, but it was the tears of the children and their faith that there was no other thing to do but rebuild. I received many letters , posters, poems and many hugs from the children expressing how they felt, and all of them said they would help to rebuild the Hale with me. None of them said that we should give-up! The students, teachers and faculty from Wai'anae Intermediate took it upon themselves to help by having a "Coins for the Hale" fundraiser, a check for $250 and a great banner with the names of the contributors, was presented at our annual open house. The youth of Ma'o Organic Farm sold vegetables from their farm and donated the income towards the rebuilding of the Hale. Messages came from all over the world expressing encouragement and support to continue our efforts to rebuild something so important to the children and to the community. After a ceremony that prepared everyone to be in the right mind and spirit, Hale Haumana was on its way to be rebuilt . The tragedy of the Hale was a blessing in disguised. The act of rebuilding the Hale brought a community together, the children taught all of us, the courage to continue and hope is always present when we believe and look for the good in every thing





A The physical work of rebuilding the Hale was done by the young people of our community, with their knowledge, strength, commitment and energy, the Hale stands tall. These are our new leaders who will step into the role of re-building a healthier community! On May 2nd, at our Annual Open House the Hale was surrounded by hundreds of people for the re-dedication. One child wrote" They can burn the Hale, but they cannot take away the love we have for the farm!"



ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE



Nine hundred people participated in the Open House. The farm was filled with laughter, enthusiasm, energy and lots and lots of fun! There were many activities that kept the young and old busy, good entertainment, good food, games, a hay ride, a country market, Hawaiian games, children's displays, butter making, pizza making, demonstrations on how to build a solar dryer, poi making, fish drying, container gardening and of course face paintings! During this Open House I was thinking that, exactly thirty years ago on August 12 ,1979 I came to the farm with a mattress, a table, a chair ,a suitcase and my guitar. There was no one living here and there was not even a tree, can you imagine that? Now, the farm was brimming over with people celebrating the life of the land, the accomplishments of the children and friendships that have been created and lasted all these years. Don't forget next year's Annual Open House!



BISHOP SILVA'S VISIT & BLESSING



A special friend of ours, Sergio Mitrotti, the owner of Café Sistina in Honolulu, gave us an incredible gift. He is not only a great chef but an incredible artist. On May 9, Bishop Larry Silva honored us with his presence to bless a life size painting of Saint Francis of Assisi, Father Damien and Sister Marianne painted by Sergio and it was dedicated to the patients and all those people who lived with them in Kalaupapa. The dedication ceremony was celebrated under the Hale. A gathering of friends to say thank you for the inspiration that these three special people gave to us, and to say thank you for the inspiration that we are for each other. The presence and the sharing of Bishop Silva made this day very special. On his trip to Rome for the canonization of Father Damien, Bishop Silva met with a close friend of mine, since we were young seminarians, Mons. Enrico Vigano', a master of ceremony of the Pope, and presented him with the pictures of our three saints that now are in the farm watching over us everyday.

There are gifts that are precious and we were blessed to receive this year.



three saints that are at the farm, in a special place called, *Ke ana Pomaika'i* watching over us everyday.

There are gifts that are precious and we were blessed to receive this year. Many friends from Italy, from the Philippines, from the States, who came to stay and spend time with us helping in the farm and sharing their life with us. We are touched by the presence of those who come to visit even for few hours, people who come with a loving spirit and when they leave to go back home, they leave some of their spirit at the farm. A special person who came and spent a few hours with us is Father Ray, the new Parish priest at the Sacred Heart Church in Wai'anae. He is from the Philippines so we had many stories to share. I was touched by his openness and the joy for being at the farm. Special people who touch our heart.

NA KEIKI O KA'ĀINA

In August the school started. 585 children from Makaha started to come to the farm for many different activities. This year, the old man, me, is not teaching the children anymore. After many years of teaching, it is the time to let someone younger with new ideas, new enthusiasm, new skills take the reigns for the Na Keiki Program. That person is Kumu Vern Kiaha. Many years ago, Kumu taught Hawaiiana at Makaha Elementary, after doing other things in his life, Kumu has returned to Makaha as the lead instructor for our core program, Na Keiki O Ka`Āina. We are really lucky to have found someone we know for many years and who has great knowledge and love for the children and the culture of his ancestors.



KE ALA—The Learning Center

In September, Ke Ala, the learning center, opened their door to the children of other schools on O'ahu. Last year we had 4,870 students and 1,100 adults who came to visit the farm through his program.



One of the most popular and sought after program for young school age children, and a approved field trip site for many public schools, Ke Ala schedule for the school year of 2009-2010 is completely full with a wait list of 23 schools that won't be able to visit the farm this year. Sister Ceny, Maryknoll, a veteran of 30 years in Tanzania, and Jeff Kiaha is the perfect team to take the children , their parents and teachers through the gardens and to the animals area. Many teachers say- that this is the best field trip that the children experience because they never stop talking about it for weeks!".



MĀLAMA MAKAHA CREDIT WORK PROGRAM



Mālama Makaha Credit work program is a unique program that gives the students of Makaha Elementary and their parents and friends the opportunity to earn credits that will help subsidize their educational excursions fees. It takes much of the financial burdens off of the family and allow more students to participate in their field trips. Each grade level has a specialized focus relevant to what they are learning in their respective lesson plans. September was the start of the Mālama Makaha Credit Work. Parents and children participate in workdays at the farm to earn credits towards educational fieldtrips for the 3rd,4th, 5th, 6th grade students of Makaha Elementary. We have had 391 people participate in these past months and there will be workdays twice a month until April. Would you like to join us? After each Saturday work day, participants gather together to share thoughts, reflections, and lunch provided by Hoa'Āina. There is always a lot of things that needs to be taken care of at the farm; planting, weeding, harvesting, raking, painting….



CUCINA ALOHA



There is always many things to fix and repair. The common kitchen was falling apart, The roof was leaking, the floor was not existing. With the help of Hau`oli Mau Loa Foundation, we had the opportunity to renovate the old kitchen. The hardest part was dismantling the roof. Pomaika'i, Ty, Shannon and Arnold did the majority of the work, renovating and fixing the kitchen together with the farm staff and friends from Italy the work was long and hard, but with the energy of these young men, the kitchen is perfect! Today the kitchen is bright, with more room to accommodate the students of Makaha Elementary for their demo in cooking, The kitchen has a welcoming spirit and is used practically every day by teachers and students. The new kitchen was blessed with a new name that reflects the warm energy that fills the kitchen *"La Cucina Aloha*"





Typhoon Relief Fund-Philippines

In September the Philippines were struck by a series of typhoons that left millions of people homeless and many died. Many stories of sorrow and great pain, even today as you are reading this newsletter, many people have no place to live or to go back to. In times of disaster and great hardship, the children and teachers of Makaha Elementary did a creative fundraiser, each grade level and administration staff carved pumpkins and displayed them in the library of the school. The children voted for the best carved pumpkin by donating coins. It was a lot of fun! One teacher wrote; *"A special thanks to all at Makaha Elementary who participated in the Pumpkin Contest last month, hosted by the 3rd Grade Team! The Surfers voted and chose their favorite, most creative jack-o-lantern of all the grade levels, which went to 2nd Grade, with their "Chicken & Baby" display. Not only did the students and staff here at Makaha donate their time in making sure this was a fun event shared by all, but they also donated their money, whatever value they could afford to give, in order to help those in the Philippines who recently had their lives devastated by Typhoon Ketsana, in September. Thanks to everyone's generosity, we were able to raise $570.00! By this simple act of kindness, we hope that the people of the Philippines know they are very much in our hearts, and will be able to rebuild their lives, one piece at a time. Mahalo to everyone… There truly is no place like Makaha!"* It is true. You could see the children with small plastic bags full of pennies!







Ed Gerlock to whom we sent the donations wrote to them:



Mahalo from Ed Gerlock….

Brothers and Sisters at Makaha Elementary,

You know, people gather together at the United Nations from all over the world to talk about how to make peace. I guess that pretty important but what you have done for the poor in the Philippines seems even more important. You may never get to meet these people and I'm sure what you contributed, you could have used yourselves--which makes it all the more valuable. Peace comes when we reach out to one another which you have done to people who have lost everything in the floods. One good thing that has happened though is that you understand how important life itself is--and how wonderful it is when people reach out to you and give you life itself...its not the money its the reaching out which means so much--

CONTAINER GARDENING



Our newest project is Container Gardening. It is not a new concept, but maybe less intimidating for rookie gardeners. We have offered workshops on Container Gardening through the Mālama Credit work program. Parents and children come together to plant seedlings into a container of your choice, we have provided 5 gallon potting container, the soil and seedlings. It has been quite successful that we have been working with Maililand. Pomaikaʻi is the coordinator for this wonderful program. He has been experimenting with different kinds of ingredients (coffee grounds, garlic, neem leaves, etc) for an environmentally friendly pesticide . We have offered this opportunity to families, individuals, Maililand residents and to other agencies in the Waianae area. Participants learn, and share together their knowledge and experience on how to raise vegetables in containers because many people do not have any space to start a garden. In this economic challenging times, people are continually moving, they can always take their gardens with them to their new home. So far eighty-one families have participated and more people are asking to be involved in the work shop. If you are interested in doing *gardening in a container* give us a call at 695-8978 or send us an e-mail: contact@hoa-aina.org. Hey what a wonderful gift to give someone for Christmas!





New Friends...Old Friends...

























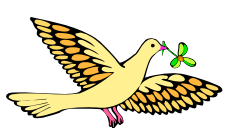






If you would like to help us continue our work, your support will be greatly appreciated!
Please indicate where you would like your donation to go, by checking the appropriate box or boxes next to the program you are interested in.

″ Mālama Mākaha Credit work ″ Ke Ala—Learning ″ Nā Keiki O Ka`Āina Center ″ Hoa'Āina O Mākaha
General Farm Funds





Make Checks payable to Hoa'Āina O Makaha
84-766 Lahaina Street
Wai`anae, Hawai`i, 96792
E mail: contact@hoa-aina.org

Hoa'Āina O Makaha is a registered 501(c) (3)

Reflection…..Thirty Years Later

It was August 12, 1979, a Sunday when I moved from Sacred Heart Church in Wai'anae to the farm in the front Quonset.. I had a mattress, a table, a chair, a suitcase and my guitar. I did not have much and I did not know much about anything, in fact nothing. Ed Gerlock, who was staying with me taught me how to cook –a Polish teaching an Italian to cook, irony of life. Eric Enos introduced me to the different aspects of the Hawaiian culture, Uncle Danny to Hawaiian language, the young people from the Wai'anae Rap Center to the language of real pidgin! Frank Duarte at Hale Mohalu and Cappy Meyers helped me to learn how to fix my old car, Tom Matsuda from HCAP shared his knowledge on gardening and pest control. Greg Pai and Nelson Foster shared their expertise on grant writing (a skill that I have never mastered though!), the counselors I worked with, shared the life of the Wai'anae Community. John O'Brien helped me to learn the virtue of patience. Howard Kam brought his incredible knowledge about cooking, building, animal care, net making, fish raising, compassion and love for people, and many more people I have been lucky to meet.

I came to Makaha with practically zero knowledge of so many things but many people offered me the opportunity to learn and maybe today I know a little more. I think that perhaps our "Mission" at Hoa`Aina, is to offer "opportunities" to those who come and walk with us. I feel that it is the same in a family. As a parent my mission is to offer opportunities to our children and it is up to them to take them or not. Often we are asked to evaluate the results of our "work". I believe that we should evaluate if we were attentive, conscious, passionate, involved in offering opportunities to any one who come in contact with us and it is up to them to take them or not.

We are called to offer an opportunity to the children to appreciate, love the land and each other, to the teachers to show that there are many ways to educate the children. To the parents, new skills of survival, producing our own food and sharing time with their children. To those who come from near and far places the opportunity to discover peace spiritually, physically and mentally.

We are always offered a chance to learn from the children, the adults and the friends that surround us, an opportunity that we cannot ignore. I am thinking about people like Jesus, Father Damien, Buddha, Martin Luther King, Gandhi, Saint Francis, and the people I knew in the Philippines who become martyrs to defend the poor. They are an inspiration to all of us because with their example, more than the words, they have offered us the special opportunities to change our life. Maybe Christmas makes sense because we are once again given the opportunity to bring hope to the world.

We are grateful to all of you who continue to support and inspire us, so that we can continue to be the channel to offer new opportunities to those who come and walk on this land.

Mahalo
Gigi

Mele Kalikimaka
Hau'oli Makahiki Hou