

The Children's Alliance of Hawai'i

Formerly known as Friends of the Children's Justice Center of O'ahu



New Beginnings at The Children's Alliance of Hawaii

By Carol Imanaka, Kathy Bowles and Suzie Pearce

The Ho'omaka ("New Beginnings") Mentoring Program was developed in 1989 as a response to staff concerns that youth leaving the foster care system were floundering with little direction and few long-term goals. In short, the adolescents lacked a support system to help them transition to independent life.


Youth who come from the foster care system face many obstacles. Often, they have not learned important life skills or created long-term relationships given their movement from one foster home to another. Many have lacked mature adults in their lives who can help guide them through these transitional years.



An Angel With Wheels

By Carol Gottlieb

Friend, mentor, uncle, and last but not least, professional driver is how we would characterize Robert, of Robert's Taxi. He has been transporting the boys in our Hui Ho'opona (Self Esteem) Program to and from their activities since the program's inception last spring.

Although his mission is to safely drive our boys to and from the activities, he has become a trusted partner in our program. For instance, when one boy said he was hungry, Robert stopped off and bought him something to eat. When another boy talked about the trouble he was having in his foster home, Robert listened...and showed he cared. Mahalo, Robert for listening and caring for our youth. 

The CAH's Ho'omaka program recruits volunteer mentors and matches them with adolescents leaving the foster care system. In 2003, Ho'omaka served 26 young adults, 21 women and five men. Eighteen were matched with a mentor. The additional eight were served by the staff as they waited for a "mentor match."

Youth applicants are between seventeen and twenty-three years old, have been in foster care (or are without a family), and have a high school diploma/GED or are capable of obtaining this degree within one year. The participant's future goals must include higher education or job training. They must be capable of living independently while gaining additional life skills. Finally, they must be willing to work with a mentor. The mentor relationship is the most critical element to the program's effectiveness.

Caring adult mentors provide consistent support, friendship, and modeling. In addition, mentors and staff also provide vocational/educational guidance, direction on financial aid options for higher education work, seminars on a variety of independent living skills, links to services and enrichment opportunities, and social events.

Top right: Ho'omaka participant, Donna Montero-Freitas and mentor Cattie Fujisaki

continued on page 3

Board of Directors

Chairman
Mary Worrall

Vice Chairman
Allen Kubota

Treasurer
George Lumsden

Secretary
Tom Barlow

Directors

Mark Bennett, ESQ.
Timothy Y.W. Chang
A. Joseph Fadrowsky, III
Councilman Nestor Garcia
Jon-Eric Greene
Robert Hale
Gail Mukaihata Hannemann
Candace Pratt Hemmy
Addie L. Lamberth
Brendan Damon Mesker
John Monahan
Clyde W. Namu'o
Gwen Pacarro
Alice Robinson
Michael A. Tongg, ESQ.
Jojo Watumull
Virginia Weinman
Lauren R. Wright

President

Susanne M. Pearce

The Children's Alliance of Hawai'i

677 Ala Moana Blvd.
Suite 725
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 599-2955
email: CAH@CAHawaii.org
www.CAHawaii.org

This newsletter is published three times a year.

Editor: Lynne Wikoff

Graphic Design: Olomana Marketing
Newsletter Coordinator: Cissy Shaner



The Wonderment of Christmas

By Suzie Pearce

The joy of Christmas filled the air as numerous community volunteers embarked on CAH's Christmas gift-giving project with the enthusiasm and dedication of Santa's elves. Volunteers obtained and delivered more than 3,000 presents, making sure to get exactly what children requested. The generosity of the volunteers in our community was never more evident as they took time during the hectic holidays to make sure other families and their children had a Merry Christmas.



Being Santa to so many children is a tremendous undertaking, but imagining the smiles on their faces when they opened their gifts on Christmas morning was all the motivation this team needed. The efficiency of our operation rivaled that of the elves at the North Pole.

It all starts in October, way before we even begin to deck the halls. Social workers collect children's "Dear Santa" letters and we begin to process them right away. Then the shopping begins, buying the requested presents – usually about seven per child. Requests are filled down to the last detail: it's never just a Barbie doll; it must be the skater Barbie with the blue dress and the pink skates. After all, the volunteers want the children to know that their requests are heard, and that they are so valued that the items were delivered exactly the way they wanted it.

Acquiring the seven presents per child means requesting the actual gifts from the Santas in our community – CAH partner organizations such as schools, businesses, churches, law and architectural firms – or by raising the funds to purchase specific items.

When the presents arrive at the CAH office, the children's names must be placed on them. Then all of the presents that belong to a child are put together with the gifts for the other children in the same family. Once all of this has been accomplished, the gift-wrapping begins. About 70 community volunteers help with this task. The lead volunteers direct the activities so that the work is kept efficient – and fun! Once the wrapped and tagged presents are put into the child's "Santa sack" and then into the family's Christmas bag, the social workers take the gifts to the wide-eyed children who have been looking forward to Santa's delivery.

Thanks to the superb teamwork of our volunteers, many of these children will have precious memories of Christmas. And I will always be grateful for the outpouring of kindness and generosity that touch the lives of so many in our community. ☆

Top right: Wrapper, Timothy Chang

Crisis Intervention at the Children's Justice Center

By Lisa Pang-Santos, Crisis Intervention Therapist

In early 2001, the Sex Abuse Treatment Center (SATC) and the Children's Justice Center (CJC) formed a partnership that resulted in a full-time SATC crisis intervention therapist being located at the CJC of Oahu. Federally funded through the Victims of Crime Act, this program serves child victims of sexual assault committed by a non-family member and their families. Children who have been sexually assaulted by a family member and their families and who are not currently involved with Child Welfare Services also receive this service.

At the CJC, the crisis intervention therapist meets with these children and families for crisis counseling and educational information so they understand, and are therefore better equipped to handle, the normal reactions to sexual assault. Immediate concerns such as personal safety and the need for food, shelter, and transportation (if impacted due to the victimization) are addressed. Also, families are helped to understand their legal rights and they are provided with information about the criminal justice process that will follow. Treatment options are discussed, with referrals made to the SATC or providers who specialize in working with victims of sexual assault. With such intervention, these families can begin to regain a sense of control and think more clearly about their circumstances, which enables them to arrive at an effective action plan.

The ability of the SATC crisis intervention therapist to intervene effectively with families is further enhanced its partnership with the CAH, which assists in unique ways once special needs have been identified. In one instance, the CAH paid the tuition for a martial arts program for a child who decided after his assault that he should learn to defend himself. For a family whose financial resources were dramatically reduced after the children disclosed their father's sexual abuse, the CAH provided emergency food, clothing and suitcases to help them as they sought safety in another state. Sensitive to the feelings of shame a victim of sex abuse often experiences, the CAH secured funds to pay for dental services to correct a dental problem that had left one teen victim reluctant to socialize.

One mother, overwhelmed with gratitude for the resources made available to her family by the CAH, described the CAH as "angels."

The impact of a sexual assault on a child and family can be far-reaching and long lasting. But sexual abuse does not have to steal childhood. At the CAH, the healing does not just begin. With resources that enable the "victim to become a child again," it can continue. ☆

New Beginnings at The Children's Alliance of Hawaii

continued from page 1

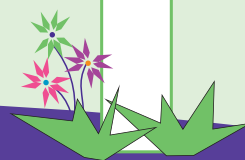
Ho'omaka also addresses some of the participant's physical needs. In-kind donations from CAH "friends" provide youth with clothing, furniture, kitchenware, and food. Additionally, the generous grants from the Hawaii Community and Geist Foundations enable the CAH to support the participants with modest monthly living supplements.

If you are interested in referring a young person to the program or becoming a mentor, please contact Kathy Bowles or Carol Imanaka at 599-2955. ☆

The Children's Alliance of Hawaii
is proud to announce their new website.

Visit us at: www.CAHawaii.org.

A special Mahalo goes out to Virginia Weinman, President of "allusions.com" Multi Media & Website who made this all possible.





A Very Special Mahalo Goes Out to Our Special Angels...

Lead Volunteers for the Christmas Angel Project:

Lorna Wood, Laurie Ching, Susan Szabo

Donors of Gifts for our Children:

CAH Board of Directors, Iolani School – Upper Classmen and Faculty, Punahou School – The academy and Faculty, Assets School, Mary Worrall & Associates, Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society for two-year Colleges, Marr Hipp Jones & Wang employees, Wagner, Choi & Evers employees, Wimberly Allison Tongg and Goo employees, Health Management Association, 657th Area Support Group, Better Business Bureau employees, The Office Century 21 Kailua Beach employees, Honolulu Community College – Human Services Club, Allana Coffee family and friends, Aloha Body Therapy, City Mill, Beth and Mary Daily and friends, Children's Justice Center employees, Punahou Faculty Association Board Members, Olomana Hope Chapel, Lanikai Elementary students and faculty, Friends of CAH

Special Volunteers for wrapping all the gifts:

CAH Board of Directors, First Presbyterian Church of Honolulu Members, Mary Daily and friends, Adam Duncan and friends, Kalaheo Interact Club, Mari Mukai and friends, Kathy Mason and friends, Temple Emanuel, Friends of CAH

Food Drive for Christmas:

677 Ala Moana Blvd. Tenants, First Presbyterian Church of Honolulu Members, Lanikai Elementary Students and Faculty