

HAW'OLI MAU LOA FOUNDATION



March 23, 2015

Aloha,

In what feels like the blink of an eye, 2014 has become a fading memory and 2015 already seems overly familiar and well-worn. But before 2014 totally fades, I want to share some highlights from the past year. First of all, I want to note that the Foundation has passed the \$30 million mark in grants made since it was established and began making grants in 1992. We think our benefactor, Helga, would be very pleased. Of that \$30 million, more than \$25 million was made in grants in support of work being done by nonprofit organizations in Hawai'i and in the Global South since the Foundation received full funding and hired its first staff in April 2008.

Those financial milestones are important and certainly something we are mindful of, but they tell only a small piece of the story. With each grant we make, a relationship is forged between the Foundation and the organization receiving the funding. Those relationships are important to the Foundation because it is through the work of our partners that the Foundation has impact. We think of the organizations with which we have funding relationships as our partners. Relationships with our partners are also important to us because they are a primary source of knowledge and ideas; they are our first line of strategists. In this *Year In Review* I thought it appropriate to share a few of the lessons we have learned from our partners over the past year.

The first lesson has to do with the concept of "partnership." Our version of partnership is something we adapted from several qualities of our benefactor. As a funding organization, we know that having a true partnership with organizations we fund is a concept fraught with challenges and, from some perspectives, naïve and pretentious. Mindful of those very real concerns, we still are committed to entering into relationships with grantees in ways we hope embody a spirit of partnering. Inherent to partnership is mutual respect and regard. We acknowledge that each of us brings different skills, experiences and resources to the table and recognize each other's contributions as important and valuable. Partnership means being willing to learn from each other - having an openness to embrace new information and ideas, knowing we don't have all the answers. Over the past year, our partners have continued their work in teaching us about good partnership.



The Foundation and representatives from all ten Hope for Kids Partners met together in February, 2014 in Waimea at the 8th convening meeting. The convening was hosted by The Kohala Center's Hawai'i Island School Garden Network and Mala'ai, the Culinary Garden of Waimea Middle School.



Another lesson we've been reminded of this year is that it takes much longer to do things together in a partnership than alone and we've had to ask ourselves, "Is it worth it?" For us, the answer is a resounding "yes." Together we can go farther and to places we could not go alone. When considering the pace of working with others I am reminded of the Stephen Covey quote, "Change happens at the speed of trust." Over this past year, several of our partners have helped us to more clearly recognize that while our grantmaking relationship is legally with an organization, the work is done by people. The relationships we develop with our partners; the relationships our partners develop with other of our partners; and the relationships they develop with people within their communities are critical to our efforts. At the heart of much of our work is developing effective, respectful relationships that are genuine and based on understanding, caring and shared goals. They are human relationships - people to people. They take time to develop and they take work to maintain.

The other lesson I want to comment on is also not a new one, but an important one to periodically remember and reflect on; and that is the value of curiosity. Over this past year I have seen so many examples of how important it is to be curious. For example, one of our long-standing First Generation Partners, Hale Kipa, has been curious about how they might better meet the needs of the young people they serve. Their curiosity has led them to work on extending their programs to include a more focused effort at educational and career development. Several new educational and vocational programs have resulted from that curiosity. The young people Hale Kipa serves are the beneficiaries of that curiosity. The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) wanted to know if recently graduated attorneys could be useful to state departments in rule-making and solving some of the trickier issues related to preventing invasive species through government entities. As a result, CGAPS placed two bright young lawyers with State of Hawai'i Departments of Agriculture and Land and Natural Resources. The program proved so successful that two new legal fellows have been recruited for two state placements. We will all benefit from their efforts. Always trying to figure out new ways for students in Hawai'i to learn through school gardens, The Kohala Center's School Garden Network has, over the past three years, developed a new teacher training program called Ku `Āina Pa that trains Hawai'i educators to connect classroom curriculum to inquiry and discovery in school gardens, making it possible for more and more of Hawai'i's students to learn through gardening activities at their schools. Students throughout Hawai'i will reap the benefits of this program.



Opened in February, 2015, Paws for a Cause is a new Hale Kipa venture that will provide job skills training for their youth. The Paws for a Cause motto - "Supporting youth, one dog at a time."



As I reflect on this past year, I know we have been privileged to work on important issues with people who care deeply about those issues. They are people who have generously agreed to partner with us in some small and some large ways. Because of our partnerships, we have learned and I hope better positioned ourselves and our partners for the coming year. According to some management theorists, as organizations grow, they lose their capacity to learn because company structures and individual thinking becomes rigid. It is our hope that we are ever mindful of this risk and stay focused on being nimble, curious, reflective and committed to learning.

E lawe i ke a`o a mālama a e `oi mau ka na`auao.

He who takes his teachings and applies them increases his knowledge.

Sincerely,

Janis A. Reischmann

Executive Director