



Mālama
Learning
Center

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Office of Hawaiian Affairs Awards \$500,000 grant to the Mālama Learning Center in Kapolei

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**Center will bring art, science, conservation, and culture together to promote
sustainable living**

Kapolei, September 30, 2008 – The Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs have awarded a two-year grant of \$500,000 to the non-profit Mālama Learning Center in support of creating an environmental and cultural learning center. The grant will be applied to the preconstruction phase of the “green building” and support the \$10,500,000 capital campaign to complete the project.

“We are pleased to be able to provide this grant, which will be instrumental in the early planning work of the facility and will assist the Office of Hawaiian Affairs in meeting our goals of benefiting the Hawaiian community,” said Clyde Namu‘o, Administrator of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

Kapolei community member Shirley Swinney, president of the Malu‘ōhai Community Association, shares Namu’s excitement. “Our growing community on Hawaiian Homelands is hungry for information and hands-on experiences that will connect them to their culture and the ‘āina. The Mālama Learning Center is an excellent place for this learning and sharing of knowledge to take place for the enrichment of our keiki, kūpuna and the entire ‘ohana,” she said. Swinney also serves as a board member of the Mālama Learning Center.

The Mālama Learning Center will include a performance hall, outdoor amphitheatre, classrooms, meeting rooms for the community, a native plant nursery, and native and cultural plant demonstration gardens. It will also have a green, living roof, which will keep the facilities cool. The conceptual design of the Mālama Learning Center was created with the environment and culture of Hawai‘i in mind by local design firm 8 inc.

Several pilot programs have already begun, including native and edible plant workshops, indigenous cultural plays with Kapolei and Nānākuli high school students, a teacher training workshop on invasive species, classes on creating artwork from reused products, a sustainability summit and creation of an outdoor performance mound landscaped with Hawaiian plants by students. Earlier this year, Nainoa Thompson, navigator of the Polynesian Voyaging Society, guided students in creating a Hawaiian “star compass” on the grounds of the future Mālama Learning Center.

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The Mālama Learning Center will be designed to be a LEED certified facility located on the campus of Kapolei High School, currently with a growing student body of more than 2100. “We are honored to be the host of the Mālama Learning Center,” said Al Nagasako, principal of Kapolei High School. “Our participation in this public-private partnership gives our students opportunities to integrate real life experiences in the arts and sciences,” he added.

The site is nearby Pu‘uokapolei, a natural landmark, after which the City of Kapolei was named, and a site of great Hawaiian cultural significance. “As a longtime community member and volunteer, I see the Mālama Learning Center as a means to educate current and future generations to the significance of this area, and the need to take care of our ‘āina and ourselves. Many people think that Kapolei is a new place – but it actually has many important stories from old Hawai‘i that need to be told,” said Shad Kane, Makakilo resident and past President of the Kapolei Hawaiian Civic Club, Ahahui Siwila Hawai‘i o Kapolei.

Board President Lloyd Haraguchi said, “This major leading gift from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs is greatly appreciated by all involved in our capital campaign. Combined with grants also received from the State and private donors, we are off to a great start and look forward to breaking ground in 2010.”

The Mālama Learning Center brings art, science, conservation and culture together to promote sustainable living throughout Hawai‘i. Its mission is to teach and inspire communities to participate in creating healthy living environments. See www.malamalearningcenter.org for more information.

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