



Mālama  
Learning  
Center

## NEWS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **West O‘ahu High School Students to Perform Original Plays on the Environment and Culture**

KAPOLEI – Inspired by Hawaiian myths and legends and the need to care for the environment, students from Kapolei and Nānākuli High Schools will perform original new plays for neighboring elementary schools. The “Indigenous Stories Theatre Project” includes three stories about sustainability, environmental issues, and Hawaiian culture. Seven performances will be made over two weeks starting November 27, 2007 at Kapolei Elementary School, sponsored by the Mālama Learning Center.

Twenty-two drama students will be performing in the plays but more than 85 students from both schools began this first-time collaboration in September 2007. Guided by teachers Robin Kitsu of Nānākuli High and Rachelle Amparo of Kapolei High, students conducted classroom research into environmental issues and went on a field trip to the Ka‘ala Cultural Learning Center in Wai‘anae Valley to get a feel for a sustainable Hawaiian farm. They also learned to transform words into movement from instructors at the Movement Center.

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A visit to the Nānāikapono Community School Museum helped the students connect Hawaiian legends to real artifacts, which provided inspiration for their stories.

Three stories about sustainability, based on Hawaiian myths and legends of the Leeward area, are presented. Students learn the consequences of not managing resources in a wise and responsible manner. What can students do to preserve Hawai'i's natural resources?

- "The Tree of Life" - trees provide food, shelter and medicine. What happens when too many trees are cut down?
- "Beautiful Pearls" - pearls were plentiful in Pu`u-Loa (Pearl Harbor) at one time. Where did the pearls go?
- "Vog – Fire vs. Water" - vog is made when fiery lava from the volcanoes flows into the ocean. Where did vog originate?

"During this school year, our students have been learning about sustainability. There's so much talk about it but most people don't know what it means. This project helped our students explore the concept of sustainability through the lens of environment, culture, and community," said Rachelle Amparo, drama teacher at Kapolei High.

While only a quarter of the students will be performing, everyone has contributed in some way. Students shared responsibilities in researching and writing the stories, developing costumes and sets, and even developing lesson plans for elementary school students who will see their performances.

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“We had talked about working on a production together for years but never got to it until now. Seeing our students work as a team to tell stories relevant to their community has been very rewarding,” said Robin Kitsu, drama teacher at Nānākuli High.

This collaborative project involved other teachers from various disciplines at both schools, including in art, social studies, and English.

The performance schedule has the drama students traveling to Kapolei, Barbers Point, Mauka Lani, Nānāikapono, Makakilo, and Nānākuli Elementary Schools from November 27 to December 12.

**The media is invited to view the performance at Makakilo Elementary at 12:45 p.m. on Tuesday, December 11. Please meet at the cafeteria. Media members will have the opportunity to interview teachers and students involved in the production.**

Free public performances are planned for March and April in Kapolei and Nānākuli, dates and locations to be confirmed.

The Indigenous Stories Project is made possible by funding from the Ka Papa O Kakuhihewa Fund, Change Happens Foundation and PILI and support from the Mālama Learning Center, Ka’ala Cultural Learning Center, The Movement Center, Alu Like, and Nānāikapono Community School Museum.

The Mālama Learning Center brings art, science, conservation and culture together to promote sustainable living throughout Hawai‘i.

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