



NEWS RELEASE

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Mālama Learning Center Plants the Seeds for New Reforestation Initiative

Launched this year, Ola Nā Kini aims to revitalize O'ahu's Wai'anae Mountains

HONOLULU (September 28, 2017) – Mālama Learning Center, a local nonprofit dedicated to conserving the culture and sustainability of Hawai'i through education, recently announced a new initiative aimed at growing awareness and support for re-growing critical sites around the island. Named Ola Nā Kini – which translates to “Life for the Multitude” in Hawaiian – it focuses on replanting native plants that once thrived in the Islands, starting in the Wai'anae Mountains.

The name is an excerpt from a traditional Hawaiian pule (prayer) which seeks to bring life and good deeds to all.

“We are excited to start sowing the seeds for Ola Nā Kini in our own backyard in Leeward O'ahu. This program will work closely with the community and our students to bring back the native Hawaiian plants that once thrived here and help heal the land,” said by Pauline Sato, Mālama Learning Center's executive & program director.

In line with Mālama Learning Center's efforts to bring art, science, conservation, and culture together to promote sustainable living throughout Hawai'i, this specific program aims to inspire others on the importance of healing the land, ocean and multitude of life through engagement and education. Participants will study and explore the significance of various native trees, shrubs and ground cover, as well as culturally important and edible plants, that are known to strengthen the resilience of landscapes.

Ways that the community can support Ola Nā Kini currently include:

School Programs & Conservation Leadership Internships: Ola Nā Kini will partner with students and community volunteers in the classroom. Currently the program collaborates with students and teachers from 10 schools on O'ahu – Waipahu High School, Campbell High School, Kapolei

High School, Kawaihona O Ka Na'auao Public Charter School, Nānākuli High & Intermediate School, Kamaile Academy, Wai'anae Intermediate School, Wai'anae High School, Leeward Community College, and U.H. West O'ahu.

The partnership with these schools will present elementary through college students and teachers the opportunity to study environmental conditions like soil health and water quality, and conduct experiments on planting techniques at various sites within the Honouliuli and Nānākuli watersheds. They will also study the history and cultural significance of these sites, which are on public and private lands. Through these studies, participants will be able to devise creative solutions, working directly with conservation and agricultural professionals and learn first-hand about 21st century careers.

“Lima ilalo - Hands to the Earth” Community Work Days: The program will host monthly, community work days every second Saturday of the month. The work days will take place at various sites in Leeward O'ahu including the Piliokahe Coastline, Nānākuli Wetland and Pālehua. All work days run from 9am-11:30am. To RSVP for a work day or for more information contact chelsey@malamalearningcenter.org or call (808) 305-8287.

Native Plant Give Away Days: Twice a month, Mālama Learning Center offers free native plants at its booth at Mākeke Kapolei, a farmers' and green market at Kapolei High School held on Thursdays from 3 pm – 6:30 pm. Other native plant give away days will be held at special events. Contact info@malamalearningcenter.org or call (808) 305-8287 for a schedule of giveaway days.

Me + Tree Gift: Those interested in supporting this program can make an individual gift. For every donation of \$50 Mālama Learning Center, will be able to plant a native tree. This is a way for schools, businesses, and individuals to get involved and can also serve as a "green" gift to a friend or family member, or as a lasting legacy for an organization. All Me + Tree donors will receive a certificate acknowledging their contribution.

Hawaiian Electric Company has stepped forward as the lead and emergent sponsor of Ola Nā Kini. Other sponsors include: Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center, Monsanto Fund, D.R. Horton – Schuler Division, Aloun Farms, PVT Land Company, R.M. Towill Corporation, Haseko, DuPont Pioneer, The Gentry Companies, and Aloha Poke Shop. Supporting grants have also been received from the Community Restoration Partnership of the Hawai'i Community Foundation, Marisla Fund of the Hawai'i Community Foundation, NOAA B-WET Program, and the Environmental Protection Agency. Kapolei High School is also a key supporter.

“Hawaiian Electric cares about being good environmental stewards, and our longtime partnership with Mālama Learning Center has shown us the value of its enriching, hands-on learning programs that promote conservation, culture and sustainability to west side communities,” said Darcy Endo-Omoto, vice president of government & community affairs at Hawaiian Electric. “From the start, we've been on board with their Ola Nā Kini program and the ambitious goal to regenerate native and edible forests in the Wai'anae Mountain watershed.

Ola Nā Kini will further engage the public in conservation efforts through site visits, field experiences and community workdays, helping to heal the land and ocean while highlighting the rich resources in Leeward O‘ahu that require everyone’s attention and care.”

For more information about Mālama Learning Center’s Ola Nā Kini initiative visit www.malamalearningcenter.org/ or call (808) 497-5323. Also, follow Mālama Learning Center on Facebook at www.facebook.com/malamalearningcenter and on Twitter at www.twitter.com/malamalearning.com.

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About Mālama Learning Center

Since its inception in 2004, Mālama Learning Center has worked to unify schools, residents, and businesses in West O‘ahu through education that incorporates art, science, conservation, and culture. Mālama Learning Center uses a hands-on approach to learning, preparing its participants for diverse real-world experiences and 21st century careers.