Building a Healthy Hawaii for Children & Families

According to the State of Hawaii Department of Health, children and families in poverty are particularly vulnerable for a range of poor health outcomes, including obesity, diabetes, stroke and heart disease. Honolulu Community Action Program wants to be part of changing these statistics. Read on to learn more about HCAP’s initiatives to increase awareness and improve family health, at all income levels.

Keiki Fun Run Promotes Living Active

Held on April 20th, the HCAP Head Start Keiki Fun Run drew over 2,000 children, parents, teachers and community members to celebrate living healthy, active lives. The fun-filled day featured Fun Runs on three different courses and fitness activities for the whole family. The event was the culmination of the Head Start school year, focused on reducing child obesity by involving parents in their children’s health, education and well-being. HCAP would like to thank Keawe Adventures, Kutmaster Spaz, Kaiser Permanente Hawaii, the Honolulu Police Department, Weed & Seed, the University of Hawaii Cooperative Extension Program, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Education and Department of Health for supporting the Fun Run.
Our Voice in the Community
Mark Forman, Board Chair

This is the second in a series of interviews with the new members of Honolulu Community Action Program’s Board of Directors.

“When you think about it, life is often some kind of fight or struggle for most people.”
Mark Forman, HCAP Board Chair

Mark Forman’s first experience with a community action agency was at Maui Economic Opportunity (MEO) on Molokai. He spent hours in MEO’s community hall as a boxer, and later as a coach.

Mark has dedicated his career to helping those who struggle to meet their health and economic needs. He compares his experiences in the boxing ring to the challenges faced by many low-income people in Hawaii. “When you think about it,” he says, “Life is often some kind of fight or struggle for most people.”

At OCS, Mark worked with HCAP and community action agencies statewide to serve economically disadvantaged residents, immigrants and refugees.

As he leads HCAP as Board Chair, Mark has confidence in the agency and the people it serves. “We’ve got leadership and staff with the ability to help people,” he says. “We also have a community of hard-working clients willing to work with us to reach goals.”

Quick Facts:
Poverty & Health
- 146,923 people in Hawaii live in poverty
- Obesity in Hawaii’s public high school schools increased by 73% from 1999 to 2007
- 12% of 2 to 5 year olds are overweight, and 9% are obese

From School to Table
Gardening for Preschoolers

Head Start classrooms throughout Oahu are teaching children to plant and care for the earth. In Waimanalo, Pualani Ramos of the Healthy Hawaii Initiative helped the Pope and Waimanalo Pre-Plus classrooms plant beans in “bucket gardens,” which they made themselves from 10-gallon buckets. At HCAP Head Start Salt Lake Pre-Plus, parents Sarah Bolles and Chelsie Smith helped the students create their own outdoor garden. The children cleared weeds, prepared the soil, and planted tomatoes, eggplants, herbs, and sweet potato. Many other classrooms have started similar projects. As the children water and care for the plants on a daily basis, they learn responsibility and a greater awareness of where their food comes from.

“Fighting Childhood Obesity
Recent figures indicate that 12% of 2- to 5-year olds in Hawaii are overweight, and 9% are obese. While these numbers are below the national average, they are still of significant concern, as obesity increases children’s risk of chronic health conditions and can affect school performance. HCAP Head Start is committed to promoting effective ways to reduce childhood obesity and increase health and self-sufficiency for Hawaii’s low-income families.”

Eating Healthy, on a Budget

HCAP has partnered with the University of Hawaii to bring the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) to its District Centers and Head Start classrooms. Participants start with the 6-week Food and Money Basics, then have the option to attend the next series of classes called Grow Your Own. Through the classes, they learn easy, healthy recipes and how to budget their limited incomes when they shop for food. They also learn how to plant, grow and care for their own fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs at home, whether in the ground or in containers.

HCAP Head Start teacher Debbie Philips and Roxanne Vega from the EFNEP program teach parents to make healthy snacks.
High School Students Create Sustainable Solutions to Community Issues

Students from three Oahu high schools volunteered for community service projects with HCAP this Spring. We gratefully acknowledge these motivated kids and the teachers and administrators who support them.

Class of 2013 Gives New Life to Organic Farm

The Kailua High School Junior class rolled up their sleeves to work on HCAP’s 2-acre organic farm in Waimanalo, Oahu. Several hundred students volunteered for the annual service project, which will help launch an organic farm training program for low-income Oahu residents. HCAP has partnered with LEAF Hawaii and Oahu WorkLinks on the free program geared toward unemployed adults. Participants receive hands-on training and certification as organic farmers, with the goal of becoming employed in the farming industry. The training is part of the State Energy Sector Partnership and Job Training Program (“SESP”) and the Hawaii Green Jobs Initiative, offered through the State of Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and the U.S. Department of Labor. Through their efforts, the Kailua students are supporting HCAP’s larger mission of helping low-income people and communities achieve self-reliance. For more on the program, visit www.leafhawaii.org.
In Search of a New Understanding of Poverty & Homelessness

Along with a group of creative, service-minded students, Nancy Adams and Susannah Johnson developed a new course this year at Assets High School. They integrated Social Studies and English with community service, as they explored poverty from historical, local, global, and personal perspectives. The students read various texts, met with guest speakers, and talked personally with houseless people throughout Oahu, including residents of HCAP’s Kumuhonua Transitional Living Center. They were able to challenge their own beliefs as they listened to personal stories about overcoming homelessness and poverty. The students helped design the course themselves, culminating in the creation and production of their own documentary film, “Hope in the Street.”

Senior’s Project Makes Science Fun for Kids After-School

Farrington High School student Krystal Seymour planned and delivered an afternoon of fun science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) activities for the kids at the Ha Initiative, HCAP’s new after-school program. The kids, who range in age from Grades 2 to 8, built a tower with spaghetti and marshmallows, designed a usable chair out of newspaper and tape, made homemade lava lamps, and learned about robotics from the program’s teacher, Mr. Chris. Most of the Ha Initiative kids live in public housing and their families cannot afford after-school enrichment activities. Through the generosity of Krystal and her fellow volunteers, HCAP is able to give these kids a safe, free place to learn and play during their out-of-school hours. The program is always seeking adult and youth volunteers for its Kalihi and Waianae sites. If interested, please call (808) 842-7686.
Free Tax Preparations for Working Families

The Free Tax Help Program helps low-income taxpayers file for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a refundable tax credit for working individuals. HCAP again offered the program this year at six Oahu locations. In addition to helping taxpayers claim earned credits, it also provides them with opportunities to learn about other financial support services.

Lynn, a mother of 6, qualified for $9,588 through the Free Tax Help Program. She will use her refund to pay bills, make car repairs, and buy school clothes for her kids.

HCAP is an original member of the Hawaii Asset Building Coalition, which started the tax assistance program a decade ago along with the Internal Revenue Service and Chaminade professor, Wayne Tanna. The program is now a highly successful statewide initiative of the Family and Individual Self-Sufficiency Program, coordinated by the Hawaii Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development (HACBED).

Quick Facts

- HCAP helped 460 households file for $790,008 in tax refunds this year
- 52% of HCAP clients qualified for the EITC, the largest percentage statewide
- Overall, the program helped 4,386 Hawaii families qualify for $7 million in tax refunds
Interim Financial Update

Fourth Quarter FY 2012
January 1, 2012—March 31, 2012

GRANTS & OTHER SUPPORT

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PROGRAMS

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DISTRICT CENTERS:
For help with jobs, finances, family support, or questions about our programs, call the District Center nearest you.

LEEWARD
Tel: 696-4261  Fax: 696-0169
85-555 Farrington Hwy.  Waianae, HI 96792

CENTRAL
Tel: 488-6834  Fax: 488-7862
99-102 Kalakoa St.  Aiea, HI 96701

KALIHI-PALAMA
Tel: 847-0804  Fax: 841-7971
1555 Haka Dr. #2408 Honolulu, HI 96817

LEAHI
Tel: 732-7755  Fax: 735-6034
1915 Palolo Ave.  Honolulu, HI 96816

WINDWARD
Tel: 239-5754  Fax: 239-3912
47-232 Waihee Rd.  Kaneohe, HI 96744

HCAP HEAD START:
For affordable preschool care and support & skills for parents, call us at:

HEAD START KAPALAMA (KMR)
Tel: 847-2400  Fax: 847-2302

HEAD START KUNIA
Tel: 621-5099  Fax: 621-3842

Please visit our website! www.hcapweb.org

PROGRAMS:

YOUTH SERVICES
Tel: 591-1766  Fax: 591-1768

SENIOR EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)
Tel: 521-4531  Fax: 521-4538

WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
Tel: 521-4531  Fax: 521-4538

KUMUHONUA TRANSITIONAL LIVING CENTER
Tel: 682-5494  Fax: 682-5495

HA INITIATIVE: CREATIVE STEM
AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM
Tel: 842-7686  Fax: 842-7689

With 46 years of experience and 86 locations, HCAP Head Start offers FREE and AFFORDABLE PRESCHOOL to children ages 3 to 5.

Accepting applications now for the ‘12-‘13 school year.
Call (808) 847-2400 or apply online at www.hcapweb.org.

Support HCAP by giving a secure donation on-line:
Donate

Click “Donate” at www.hcapweb.org

Every keiki deserves a HEAD START.