Fall 2017

President’s Message

The Impacts of Summer are Lifelong

With memories of summer in the rear view mirror, I started my Labor Day the same way I have for the last seven years. I drove out to Camp Erdman for the annual Camp Agape day for children who have a parent in prison.

This year there were 200 “angels”, as the children are referred to, ranging in age from 7 to 17. Ordinarily, I make it a point to speak to a few angels, to find out how the experience is affecting them. But this year, I focused on the fathers and mothers who were in prison when their child attended Camp years ago.

One man shared with me that he had a 20-year prison sentence. After ten years in prison, he received a letter from his 12-year-old daughter, who was writing from Camp Agape. She told her Dad that based on what she learned at Camp, she had decided to forgive him for not being a father to her.

The man told me that when he received the letter, he cried like a baby, and said that upon being released three years later, he devoted his life to being a loving, caring Dad to his daughter and his family. He then proudly shared that his daughter is a social worker today working with abused children.

As I watched the male ex-prisoners dance a hula in honor of the angels, the pure love they exuded was palpable, and evident by the tears that streamed down their faces as they danced.

Miracles happen at Camp Erdman. In this issue of the President’s newsletter, we’ll share more stories of life-changing, and in some cases life-saving, work that may have started in the summer months, but has lasting results.

Mahalo nui loa for partnering with us to change lives all year long.

Michael Broderick
President & CEO
YMCA of Honolulu
Food to Nourish Both Body and Minds

During the school year, thousands of low-income children receive free or reduced-price meals, but once the summer bell rings, many relying on these lunches lose access to an important source of nutrition.

The YMCA of Honolulu’s Summer Lunch Program served more than 25,000 free meals to underserved children, many in the Waipahu area at the Jack Hall Memorial housing complex. Leeward Y staff took the program a step further by also offering a mini summer day camp and activities.

“Many of these children did not have access to or funds for summer programs, so instead we decided to bring the program to them,” says Alissa Taniguchi, Leeward Y Program Director.

“What we found was that many of the children living in the complex have never experienced organized summer programs before,” Taniguchi said. Summer activity favorites included field trips, instructional swim and water safety lessons and arts and crafts activities.

Summer Jimenez said her children Schaedez (entering 5th grade) and Zaecon (entering 2nd grade) enjoyed Y summer fun so much that they didn’t want the program to end. “They became more outgoing, open to meeting new people and trying new things. It’s awesome that the Y would have this program right in our community!”

YMCA of Honolulu joined Y-USA’s Anti-Hunger Movement in 2012, offering free meals in communities where 50 percent or more of the school-age population is on the free- and reduced-lunch program. Funding partners this summer also included the Walmart Foundation, as well as the Harry & Jeannette Weinberg Foundation which supported the Jack Hall food and summer day camp program.

“Both of my children (Julia, entering 2nd grade, and Jared, entering 3rd grade) just loved the program and their Y leaders, who were always so enthusiastic and happy, which made the kids happy to be there. The Y leaders also took the time to walk the children to lunch and to the program, which was a big help to the parents. The kids are so excited that they now have new friends close to where they live too!”

–Sandra Proctor, Y Summer Fun parent

A Final Summer Play … Mililani Y Goes Pro!

Mililani Y summer program youth and staff scored a touchdown this summer, as the San Francisco 49ers held a football camp to the delight of our Y day campers!

The 49ers youth football crew partnered with our Mililani Y and USA football to bring camps and coaches clinics to Hawaii centered around player safety and non-contact football drills centered on work ethic and teamwork.

A great way to kick off the fall season at the YMCA of Honolulu!

Check out our keiki in action: https://goo.gl/EZyMjn
Overcoming Challenges Drives Y College Camp

Bob Bass knows the power of a mentor. Growing up in a challenging household, he found his guidance and inspiration to excel in high school and pursue higher education through the mentorship of his best friend’s father.

Today Bob is President for AT&T Washington/Alaska/Hawaii. He continues to help youth to reach their full potential through AT&T’s ongoing financial support of the Y College Camp program, which boasts 289 program graduates since College Camp started in 2012. Eighty percent of those attending College Camp have gone on to attend college.

This summer 108 high school campers, from underserved communities, participated in week-long workshops, service projects, and team-building activities at the Atherton Y and YMCA Nanakuli-Waianae College Camps. Students gained confidence in themselves, a network of new friends and mentors, and a passion and excitement for their future opportunities.

And the mentors gained as well. Erika Kim, a college student, agreed to be a Y College Camp mentor to get out of her comfort zone.

“By asking for my participation, Atherton Y staff showed their belief in my abilities and what I could bring to the table to help students, abilities that I was not able to see for myself,” Kim said. “We were able to open up about nearly everything in our lives, including hopes, dreams and fears. Together we found that relying on each other for support doesn’t make you weak, it makes you strong.”

The program is free for students thanks to generous donors that in addition to AT&T ($35,000 for this year’s YMCA College Camp), also include McInerny Foundation ($20,000) and the Mamoru and Aiko Takitani Foundation ($20,000) which provided college scholarships to camp alumni and mentors.

“In 2012, I was a participant of the very first YMCA College Camp. Ever since then, I was allowed to do and accomplish so much in a short span of five years. I also participated in Y Youth and Government, chaired the Atherton Y Annual Support Campaign and served as a mentor in College Camp. This year I will be the first in my family to obtain a college degree. Rather than to say thank you in words, I want to show that in action and leadership. It’s the least I can do for all that the Y and Takitani Foundation have all done for the Kalihi boy I am very proud to be, the Filipino immigrant, college student, future physical therapist, and dear friend.”

–Louie Sicorsicon, Y College Camp Participant and Mamoru and Aiko Takitani Foundation scholarship recipient
“Let’s Move! Outside” Changes the Lens

Two years ago the YMCA of Honolulu was one of 50 YMCAs chosen to launch with their cities “Let’s Move! Outside”, a national program to engage and inspire youth as our next generation of outdoor stewards. The program included funding for nonprofit KUPU’s AmeriCorps intern Cheyenne Beard, a recent college graduate who as part of the Let’s Move! Outside initiative, worked with YMCA of Honolulu staff and teens on Y environmental education programs.

It was eye-opening for the teens, and for Cheyenne as well.

“At the beginning of a five-mile trip to Pahole Natural Area Reserve for restoration work and shared stories of history and Hawaiian mythology, we learned that a handful of the teens had never been on a hike,” Beard recalls.

“A 15-year-old Kalihi native shared that he had never seen the north side of the island. His parents simply did not drive many places and he usually took the bus where he needed to go. Standing on top of the Waianae Mountains, gazing upon the North Shore and the Leeward coast, I could see his eyes wide taking it all in. It was surely an experience he will not forget.”

As Cheyenne contemplates the next steps of her career, she knows that it will include her link and legacy to the Y, helping youth find their best selves through an appreciation and caring for our environment.

On a statewide level, Cheyenne was an integral part of the launch of the newly enhanced Conservation Connections Website (www.conservationconnections.org), a one-stop resource pulling together more than 200 organizations (and growing) who offer volunteer, internship and research environmental projects and activities statewide.

“I got to connect youth to nature, as my job! My advice for future interns is to put your whole heart, soul, mind and strength into your job and it will bless you back ten-fold. Work hard and be open to learning and you will be surprised how much you can accomplish,” Beard said. “I knew that I wanted to help youth and now I know that my heart loves doing that through nature.”

“One of the most outspoken of our teen group hikers was a 14-year-old young man from Waianae who could sometimes be disruptive to the group dynamics. He amazed us when he suddenly came forward as a leader on service trips because of his experience and knowledge in working on his family farm. He helped the other teens to walk the trails with pono (integrity and respect) and taught them the names of the native Hawaiian plants and their significance. He suddenly transformed into the perfect definition of a servant leader, unknowingly becoming a role model to his peers.”

—Cheyenne Beard, YMCA Let’s Move! Outside Assistant Coordinator and KUPU/AmeriCorp Intern
Power Scholars Program is Proven Winner

Research shows that during the summer, low-income students lose more math and reading skills than their higher-income peers, with cumulative effects on learning and life experiences like college and career advancement.

Don’t tell that to the Y Power Scholars Academy students from Central Middle School, now 141 graduates strong!

Last year’s pilot class of Central Middle School students was so successful -- exceeding by a month the national average by achieving a three-month gain in both math and literacy skills -- the program was repeated again this past summer for 81 students.

Incoming 6th and 7th graders spent the last six weeks of their summer attending academic sessions with certified teachers in the mornings, then enrichment, health, fitness and community service activities with Y staff in the afternoons.

Parent surveys from last summer showed that 75% became more involved in their child’s education, and 90% reported that their child had a more positive attitude about school.

According to Stephanie Mateo, the Academy changed her son dramatically this summer. “He used to be so quiet, and now he has blossomed and opened up, blooming and enthusiastic and engaging with social activities. I am so grateful,” she said.

Power Scholar Melissa Cabico says that the program has helped her get out of her comfort zone and to make new friends, both younger and older. “We learned cooperation and working together as a team, and it felt like a family. I appreciate the program because people thought we were worth it.”

The program is free to students thanks to funding from Y-USA, Honolulu Star-Advertiser’s Subscriber’s Charity of Choice program, the Pettus Foundation and individual donors. Harris United Methodist Church and Saint Peter’s Episcopal Church provided free breakfasts, with hot lunches provided through the Walmart-YMCA Food Program.

“The Y Power Scholars Academy fulfills the vision we have for our students at Central Middle School – to nurture, empower and inspire resilient learners. Power Scholars helps youngsters to break out of the shell of insecurity that we all experienced at that age, to start to believe in themselves as unique individuals, and in who they can eventually be.”

–Anne Marie Murphy, Central Middle School, Principal

“The program instills a sense of community among the students. They have the confidence, ability and willingness to trust each other, and to encourage and support each other, both inside as well as beyond the classroom.”

–Cassidy Inamasu, Nu’uanu Y, Senior Youth Program Director

Watch our Power Scholars in action: https://youtu.be/JBaERm8QQ9w
Stewardship is Natural for the Y

The Windward Y is the only branch in the world with an ancient Hawaiian heiau, or sacred site, in its back yard. Stewarding natural resources is part of the work the Windward Y’s Togetherhood volunteers chose to focus on—restoring, maintaining and beautifying historic Ulupo Heiau and surrounding lo‘i and Kawainui Fishpond.

For the past year, guided by cultural advisor Kaleo Wong of Hika‘alani and under the collective leadership of Hika‘alani, ‘Ahahui Malama I Ka Lokahi, Kailua Hawaiian Civic Club, the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), our Windward Y and volunteers of all ages and families have come together for project work days to learn of the historical and spiritual significance of Ulupo Heiau and to work to restore and cultivate the land including kalo (taro) being grown in lo‘i patches.

Our Y-PAR (Youth-led Participatory Action Research) teens in middle and high school have also joined in and have been mentored by Wong.

“The work of the Y teens is all about re-establishing relationships between people and place,” says Wong. “The Y is located right above the heiau, and turning their hands toward the ground is the best way to learn from land and the land to learn from us.”

This summer two dozen Pasha Hawaii and Hawaii Stevedores also joined our 100+ Y and community volunteers for a work day cultivating the lo‘i patches, donating funds for lunches for all of the volunteers.

“It was a great opportunity to get people ‘in the dirt’ and to learn the historical and spiritual significance of the site,” said David Lau, Windward Y Youth Program Director. “By working together, we want to motivate people to steward our resources and take an active role in environmental restoration.”

See our group in action here: [https://goo.gl/JHmkmn](https://goo.gl/JHmkmn)

All are invited to join our workdays! Our next workday is on Saturday, October 14, 9 am to 1 pm. More information can be found on conservationconnections.org under the Windward YMCA Ulupo Heiau and Lo‘i site.

“Growing up I remembered a time when my friends and I had access to healthy foods in our community. We would snack on mango, avocado, taro, cherry tomatoes and bananas. When we discovered that the nearby Waimanalo school garden had stopped because of a lack of funding, we decided to restore and re-energize it. With three main harvests throughout the year, we made smoothies for over 100 spring intercession students and held tasting days to introduce new fruits and vegetables and encouraged healthy alternatives such as a salad option for lunch at the middle school.”

—Kiani Joseph, teen leader for Y-PAR